

Guide to the Charles H. Burns Papers, 1855-1944, bulk 1857-1909

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

Charles H. Burns Papers, 1855-1944, bulk 1857-1909

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
<http://www.nhhistory.org/>

Collection Number:

2020.054

Author of Finding Aid:

Sandra L. Wheeler

Creator:

Burns, Charles H., 1835-1909

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

7 boxes, 4 loose volumes, and 1 oversize folder ; 5.53 linear feet

Abstract:

Charles H. Burns (1835-1909) was a lawyer who lived in Wilton, NH, and practiced there and in Nashua, NH. He served as U.S. District Attorney for New Hampshire from 1881 to 1877 and was active in Republican politics, presiding at the Republican State Convention in 1878. He had some local renown as an orator. He married Sarah Mills of Milford, NH, in 1856; they had 8 children, four of whom survived him. His papers consist primarily of his diaries, kept between 1855 and 1908. In addition, there are notes on and accounts of some of his legal cases, financial records, scrapbooks, and photograph albums.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The Charles H. Burns Papers were a gift of Christie A. Sanborn in September 2020.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by Sandra L. Wheeler in July 2021. The finding aid was written by Sandra L. Wheeler in July 2021. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Scrapbook 1 consisted of newspaper clippings pasted into a printed volume “Annual Report of the Attorney-General of the United States,” which was heavily water damaged and moldy. Pages with clippings were photocopied and the book discarded. These photocopies are found in Box 5, folder 5.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use. One of the photograph albums is fragile and should be handled with care.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

Preferred Citation:

Item title, Charles H. Burns Papers, 2020.054. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH.
Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information

Charles H. Burns was born in Milford, New Hampshire, on January 19, 1835 to Charles A. Burns (1809-1857) and Elizabeth (Hutchinson) Burns (1816-1885). His father, Charles A. Burns, was an early and active abolitionist; later commentators thought Charles H. Burns' commitment to the Republican Party was in part because of his early exposure to those sentiments. He was educated at Appleton Academy and after graduating in 1854, taught school for four years. He then attended Harvard Law School, graduating in 1858; he immediately began to practice law in Wilton, New Hampshire. Eventually, he was busy enough to open an office in Nashua, New Hampshire. According to the New Hampshire Bar Association's remembrance of him, he practiced general law, including representing both defendants and plaintiffs in several murder

cases. He was the U.S. District Attorney for New Hampshire from 1881 to 1887 and a member of the New Hampshire State Senate in 1873 and 1879, when he chaired the Judiciary Committee.

Burns had a reputation as a gifted orator and public speaker, attributes his fellow attorneys thought contributed to his success in presenting cases to juries. He used those skills to campaign for Republican candidates throughout the state and was an influential member of the party, serving on numerous committees. He presided at the New Hampshire Republican Convention in 1878.

He married Sarah Mills of Milford, NH, on January 19, 1856. She was born at Milford on December 15, 1835, the daughter of John and Sarah P. (Putnam) Mills. Charles and Sarah had eight children (only seven are identified), four of whom were still living at his death:

Arthur H., 1856-1876

Sarah E., born 6 July 1859, married William A. Gregg, died November 9, 1953

Bessie, born 1860

Mary Belle, 1861-1863

Charles Alonzo, born January 3, 1863, married Arabelle Grace (Chappelle) Gillis, died December 31, 1930

Blanche May, born May 5, 1868, died April 28, 1960

Benjamin Emery born July 21, 1872, married Lenore R. Wingate, died April 14, 1936

Charles H. Burns died May 22, 1909 and Sarah died April 14, 1915, both at Wilton.

Scope and Content Note:

The Charles H. Burns Papers consists of his largely undated commonplace books (bound notebooks into which he copied excerpts from things he read, facts he wanted to remember, etc.), diaries with cash expenditures listed, kept from 1855-1857 and 1879 to 1908, scrapbooks of mostly undated newspaper clippings about political campaigns, and undated and unidentified photographs, including some of Camp Algonquin. There are three photograph albums consisting of cabinet cards and carte de visite, of which most of the images are unidentified. His legal career is documented by notes on cases, New Hampshire Supreme Court dockets, and printed proceedings of one or two cases involving railroads. A volume of conveyances includes an annotated list, plot plans, and blueprints – some tipped in and others loose. There are printed copies of two of his speeches, a printed eulogy, and a copy of the New Hampshire Bar Association's "Memoir of Charles H. Burns."

There is also some miscellaneous material: checkbooks belonging to James Gregg and a few photographs of Gregg children. Finally, there is miscellaneous printed matter, some related to the towns of Milford and Nashua, New Hampshire.

There is no correspondence and no information about his wife, children, or other family members in this collection.

Arrangement:

The Charles H. Burns Papers are arranged by type in the following order: commonplace books,

diaries, financial records, legal records, writings, scrapbooks, photograph albums, and miscellaneous material.

Contents List

Box 1

Folder 1	Biographical Information, 1909
Folder 2	Commonplace book, 1857, 1872, undated
Folder 3	Commonplace book, 1880, undated
Folder 4	Commonplace book, undated
Folder 5	Minutes, Wilton, New Hampshire Lyceum, 1877-1879
Folder 6	Diary, 1855-1857

Box 2

Volume 1	Diary, 1879-1881
Volume 2	Diary, 1882
Volume 3	Diary, 1883
Volume 4	Diary, 1884
Volume 5	Diary, 1885
Volume 6	Diary, 1886
Volume 7	Diary, 1887
Volume 8	Diary, 1888
Volume 9	Diary, 1889
Volume 10	Diary, 1890
Volume 11	Diary, 1891
Volume 12	Diary, 1892
Volume 13	Diary, 1893
Volume 14	Diary, 1894

Box 3

Volume 1	Diary [European trip], 1895 June-September
Volume 2	Diary, 1895
Volume 3	Diary, 1896
Volume 4	Diary, 1897
Volume 5	Diary, 1898
Volume 6	Diary, 1899
Volume 7	Diary, 1900
Volume 8	Diary, 1901
Volume 9	Diary, 1902
Volume 10	Diary, 1903
Volume 11	Diary, 1904
Volume 12	Diary, 1907-1908

Box 4

Folder 1	Conveyances, 1858-1905
Folder 2	Estate of Peter Putnam, 1878

- Folder 3 “Argument of Hon. Charles H. Burns in favor of a general railroad law, with provisions authorizing the union or consolidation of New Hampshire Railroads, before the Railroad Committee, July 26, 1883”
- Folder 4 Notes on cases, 1904
- Folder 5 Supreme Court Docket, 1880-1886
- Folder 6 Supreme Court Docket, 1885
- Folder 7 Supreme Court Docket, 1859-1868
- Folder 8 Supreme Court: Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad vs. Boston and Maine Railroad, and Boston and Lowell Railroad Corporation, 1884-1889
- Folder 9 Blank stationery, letterhead United States Attorney, District of New Hampshire, undated

Box 5

- Folder 1 Financial records: receipts, 1859-1864
- Folder 2 Financial records: cash book, 1861-1871
- Folder 3 Financial records, 1863-1905
 - Item 1: Cash book, 1863-1865
 - Item 2: Cash book, 1871-18800
 - Item 3: summary, 1893-1905
- Folder 4 Writings, 1889, 1894
 - Address: Dedication of Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument, Nashua, 1889 October 15
 - Oration, Centennial Anniversary, Milford New Hampshire, 1894 June 26
- Folder 5 Scrapbook, #1 of 5, undated
- Folder 6 Scrapbook, #2 of 5, undated
- Folder 7 Scrapbook, #3 of 5, undated
 - Postcards of Camp Algonquin and Squam Lake; also contains unidentified, undated photographs of outdoor scenes, perhaps at Camp Algonquin.

Loose

- Volume 1 Scrapbook, #4 of 5, undated

Box 6

- Scrapbook, #5 of 5, 1920s and 1930s
 - Newspaper clippings about celebrities

Loose

- Volume 2 Photograph album #1, undated

Loose

- Volume 3 Photograph album #2, undated

Loose

- Volume 4 Photograph album #3, undated

Box 7

- Folder 1 Photographs: Burns, Putnam, undated
Folder 2 Photographs: unidentified people, undated
Folders 3-4 Photographs: unidentified places, undated
Folder 5 Gregg, James, cancelled checks, 1913
Dartmouth National Bank of Hanover N.H.
Folder 6 Gregg, James, cancelled checks and checkbook, 1919
Alabama Bank & Trust, Montgomery, Alabama
Folder 7 Gregg, James, checkbook, 1919
4th National Bank of Montgomery, Alabama
Folder 8 Gregg children: Eva, Harry, and Helen, photographs, undated
Folder 9 Printed matter: Somerville Massachusetts Inaugural Address of Mayor Charles A.
Burns, 1912
Folder 10 Printed matter: Nashua, N.H. 75th Anniversary Souvenir Book, 1928
Folder 11 Printed matter: Wilton, N.H. Annual Report, 1940
Folder 12 Printed matter, 1942, 1944
Pamphlet "Mail from Home, his most treasured possession," 1942
Pamphlet "The Pitch Pocket News," 1944 December
Folder 13 Unidentified author, handwritten notes about insurance, undated

Separated Materials:

The following item was removed to Oversize Manuscript Box "B":

Burns, Arthur, Junior High School Diploma awarded by the City of Nashua, 1918

Subject Terms**People:**

Burns, Charles H., 1835-1909

Organizations:

Boston and Lowell Railroad Corporation

Boston and Maine Railroad

Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad

Camp Algonquin

New Hampshire. Supreme Court

Republican Party (N.H.)

Subjects:

Account books

Diaries

Law

Politics and government

Railroads

Locations:

Nashua, NH

Wilton, NH

Occupations:

Lawyers

Politicians

Related Materials

Archives

Republican Ticket, Ward 6, Ephemera Collection – Politics, 1870-1889, 2018.036

Library

Burns, Charles H. *Additional brief for the defendants*. Concord, N.H. : Republican Press Association, 1889. Call number: 385.2 B748bu

Burns, Charles H. *Argument of Hon. Charles H. Burns in favor to a general railroad law, with provisions authorizing the union or consolidation of New Hampshire railroads, before the railroad committee, July 26, 1883 : together with the argument of Hon. John W. Sanborn before the railroad committee on same evening, upon the lease of the Eastern and Boston & Maine Railroads, and in reply to Hon. Jonas H. French*. Concord, N.H. : Republican Press Association, 1883. Call number: 385.2 B9673

Burns, Charles H. *Brief for plaintiff against recommitting report*. 1893. Call number: 385.2 M2682bur

Burns, Charles H. *Brief for plaintiff*. Concord, N.H. : Republican Press Association, 1894. Call number: 385.2 M2682bu

Burns, Charles H. *Final argument of Hon. Charles H. Burns, before the Railroad Committee of the House of Representatives, August 16, 1887*. Concord, N.H. : Republican Press Association, 1887. Call number: 385.1778 N532rcb

Richardson, Cyrus and Robert M. Wallace. *Charles H. Burns : a memorial and appreciation ; scripture passages, poem and eulogy read by Rev. Cyrus Richardson, D.D. at Wilton, New Hampshire, May 25, 1909 ; memoir of Charles H. Burns prep. by Hon. Robert M. Wallace*. circa 1909. Call number: 920 B9673

Museum

Engraving, Charles H. Burns, 2010.501.0171

Engraving, Charles H. Burns by Alexander H. Ritchie, 2010.501.0172