
Finding Aid for the Shirley Brown Collection
at the Natick Historical Society

THE NATICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
58 ELIOT STREET
NATICK, MA 01760
www.natickhistoricalsociety.org
The Shirley Brown Collection, 1850s-1966
2018.25

Collection Summary:
Extent: 11.25+/ linear feet
Creator: Shirley Brown
Date Range: 1850s-1966
Language: English
Conditions for Access and Use: Open for research use
Copyright Notice: Copyright restrictions may apply
Preferred Citation: Shirley Brown Collection, Natick Historical Society, Natick, MA.
Repository Code: Natick Historical Society, 207 Union Street, Natick, MA 01760
Acquisition Information: Gift of Pamela Koskovich, 2018.
Processed by: 2018 Marya Van’t Hul; Updated 2019 by Abbie Sandoval-Focil & Rachel Speyer

**There is a folder of genealogy notes and family trees included in this collection to assist with research, however these are not archival materials from the Brown family**

Abstract
The Shirley Brown Collection focuses on the family members of Shirley Brown, including extended family, going back three generations to her great-grandparents. The collection primarily focuses on Shirley’s great-grandparents Albert and Emma Smith, her grandparents Charles and Hattie Smith, and her mother Mildred Smith. The materials include archival documents - photographs, letters, and organizational records, all reflecting Shirley’s family history. Other materials found in the collection document the history of the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps, a Natick branch of the Grand Army of the Republic: a veterans’ support organization. Additionally, there are artifacts as part of the collection that are housed in the Natick History Museum, which include personal items of family members, and items related to the GAR.

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extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the collections manager.

**Items Separated**
See Series 3: Artifacts Housed in Museum

**Related Collections**
Henry Wilson Collection, Natick Historical Society
GAR Collection, Morse Institute Library, Natick
Old Dell Park Cemetery
New Dell Park Cemetery (Shirley Brown)

**Biographical Sketches**
This collection includes materials from both the Smith and the Ambler families. The Smith family lived in Natick for several generations, raising tens of children in the area over generations. Albert Smith married Emma Cummings and had four children, only two of whom survived to adulthood: Edward and Charles. Edward and Charles were born and raised in Natick. Albert and Emma lived at 9 Waban Street (Natick) and their son Charles later built the house at 10 Pitts Street (Natick) where he lived with his wife. The homes at 10 Pitts St and 9 Waban St were adjacent lots: the backyards of one another. Edward married a woman named Mabel, and Charles married Hattie Ambler of the Ambler family. Hattie was one of eight children born to Maranda Williams and Horace Ambler in Natick. Hattie’s older brother Percy married Ella Shute, a woman known to perform scenes at events around town. Hattie Ambler Smith was a member of the Natick Grange. Living in Natick together for decades, Charles and Hattie had nine children: Mildred, Charles, Helen, William, Ralph, Herbert, Robert, and two unnamed twins. Charles served in the armed forces in World War I. Ralph and Herbert went to school in Natick, and a photograph of the boys’ classes in the local school house is included in this collection. Mildred Emma Smith, the oldest of the nine, married Adelbert Libby Kilmer and had two children: Howard Lewis Kilmer and Shirley Muriel Kilmer. Shirley married Richard J. Brown and had two children: Deborah and Pamela.

**Scope and Content Note**
The materials in this collection fall into two major categories: of the Smith and Ambler families or in relation to the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps. Each of these two themes have both archival materials and museum artifacts. The first series, the family papers, spans both the Smith and Ambler families and includes correspondence between family members, photographs of the family, and papers relating to local organizations like the Natick Grange that some of the family were members of. The second series, about the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps, includes books listing the members of the organization, the organization's constitution and bylaws, traditions and rituals, and meeting minutes. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Woman’s Relief Corps (WRC) are represented in these documents as well as these organizations.
were the national veterans’ support organizations that the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps was a local offshoot of. The third series, housed in the museum, includes all artifacts in this collection and therefore spans both familial objects as well as GAR- and WRC-related things. These objects include a christening dress, boxes full of war medals, and flags of the GAR.

**Arrangement:**
Series 1: Family papers and other materials, 1850s -1966
Series 2. Gen. Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps (1871-1931)
Series 3: Artifacts
Series 4: Books

**Description of the Collection**

**Series 1. Family papers and other materials, 1850s-1966**

4 document boxes

The materials in this series include correspondence between members of the families, booklets from organizations the families were members of, legal documents, photographs and daguerreotypes, clothing and textiles, porcelain china, and other personal materials of the Smith and Ambler families. The papers primarily focus on Albert and Emma Smith, their son Charles Smith and his wife Hattie Ambler, Charles and Hattie’s children, and Hattie’s mother Maranda Williams. Approximately one third of the archival material in this collection are photographs or other images relating to the Smith and Ambler families. There are letters exchanged between Emma and her husband Albert, Albert’s building records for the construction of his house on Pitts St, Emma’s childhood bible, and Ella Shute Ambler’s (Percy Ambler’s wife) performance practices. The photographs preserved in the collection are of many members of the Smith and Ambler families, including Emma and Albert Smith, their sons Edward and Charles Smith, Harriet Ambler and her siblings, Maranda Williams and her siblings, and several of Mildred Smith and her siblings.

**Box 1**

*Albert Smith Papers (1841-1966)*

- Dell Park Cemetery receipt, 1890
- Dell Park Cemetery receipt, 1872
- Albert Smith war pension, 1915
- Albert Smith war pension receipts, 1915-1916
- Emma and Albert 50th Anniversary invitation, 1913
- Albert Smith discharge paper, 1862
- Albert Smith retroactive birth certificate, 1904
- Emma Smith sewer rental, n.d.
Letters: Albert to Emma
   “The Disbanding of the Boston Light Artillery in May 1862”

Alfred J. Hall Letter to Emma Cummings (1861)

Charles Howard Smith Letters
   Correspondence with Hattie Smith during war (1918)

Charles Howard Smith WWI Card

Brown Family Materials
   Mildred Smith report card
   American Campaign Medal (WWII)
   Shirley Brown Class Photos
   News clipping

Shirley Brown Letters
   Anniversary Airmail feat. imagery of Natick (1938)

Emma Cummings (1842-1922) Smith Bible
   includes notes of family births and deaths

Mary F. Ambler (1837-1924) Pattern Book

Albert Smith Math Book

Box 2
Emma Cummings Smith and Albert Smith
   photographs of Emma, Albert, and family

Charles Smith (1867-1937)
   photographs
   school books and notes (Pond Street School, Natick)

Children of Hattie Ambler Smith and Charles Smith, photographs
   Ralph Smith
   Robert Smith
   Helen Smith
   Earle Winn
   Howard Smith
Alice Dunham Smith
Alice Ambler
Herbert Smith
Mildred Smith
Herbert Smith
Hattie Smith
Shirley Kilmer Brown
Richard James Brown

_Hattie Ambler Smith (1873-1966)_
  misc. family photos, inc. 10 Pitts Street
  legal documents (birth and marriage certificates)
  news clippings
  citizenship certificate (Natick residency and US citizenship)
  funeral announcement and mass card, 1966

_Photographs: Charles (1867-1937) and Edward Smith (1865-1902)_
  Charles and Edward Smith (mid 1870s)
  Mabel Smith
  Edward Smith

_Photographs: Horace Ambler (1829-1884) and Maranda Williams Ambler (1833-1916)_
  Maranda Williams Ambler
  Horace Ambler

_Photographs: Mildred Emma Smith Kilmer (1895-1970)_
  Mildred Smith Kilmer
  Howard Kilmer
  Wilson School graduation exercises, 1909
  Natick High School graduation exercises, 1913
  class of 1900 class portrait
  Cameo Club

_Photographs: Hattie Ambler’s Siblings_
  Eliza Maranda Ambler Hall (1856-1923)
  Charles Hall (Eliza’s husband)
  Joseph E. Ambler (1857-1902)
  Hanna Lavinia Ambler Valentine (1860-1916)
  Clara W. Ambler (1861-1915)
  Clara Mabel Rice (daughter of Clara and George Rice) (1890-?)
Percy W. Ambler (1864-1925)
Ella Shute Ambler (Percy’s 2nd wife)
Harvey W. Ambler (1875-?)
May Ambler (wife of Harvey)
Dorothy Ambler (daughter of Harvey and May)
Morton Ambler (son of Harvey and May)
Arley Ambler (son of Harvey and May)

_Hattie Ambler Smith Natick Grange_
booklet of photographs and records, 1939

_Hattie Ambler Smith Rewards of Merit_
cards and prints

**Box 3**

_Albert Smith Building Records_
  Charlie A. Smith drawing cards
  Albert Smith record book of building houses
  photograph of 10 Pitts St (Charles and Hattie’s house)
  photograph of 9 Waban St (Emma and Albert’s house)

_Ralph and Herbert Smith School Photos_
  photograph of Herbert Smith in Miss Donohue class
  photograph of Ralph Smith in Mrs. Barnard class
  photograph of Ralph Smith in Miss Donohue
  photograph of children standing outside schoolhouse

_Daguerreotypes: Horace Ambler and Maranda Williams Ambler_
  Maranda
  Horace (2)
  Horace and Maranda (c. 1850s/60s?)

_Daguerreotypes: Maranda Williams Ambler’s Siblings_
  Abigail Williams (~1825-?) and Eliza Ambler (1856-1923)
  Percy Williams (~1837-?), 1868
  Edgar Williams (~1851-?)

**Box 4**

_Ella Shute Materials (wife of Percy W. Ambler, aunt of Mildred Emma Smith)_
  postcards
Wellesley Grange pamphlets
Independent Order of Good Templars Commission (1914)
Myrtle Temple Correspondence
Correspondence (1908-1914)

*Journal of Recitations with some news clippings*

*Ella Shute Photographs*
- misc. photos
- journal of tickets sold by Ella Shute
- autographs collection album

*Edward C. Smith Books*
- Grammar book
- Young reader book

****Box 5 and on (Family books)****
*Currently just a list of books in the large oversized box on lower shelf; need to be wrapped and separated into individual boxes*

- Natick Illustrated, n.d.
- High School Music Reader, 1877, Bertha Valentine’s
- The Cecilian Series of Study and Song, 1892, Mildred Smith’s
- Eighty Years of Progress (Albert Smith, Charles Smith), 1869
- Edward Smith holy bible, 1875
- The Bride’s Fate by Emma Southworth (Albert Smith), 1869
- Hard Tack and Coffee (Albert Smith, Ralph Waldo Smith), 1888
- Blue and Gray (Albert Smith, Charles Smith), 1884
- The Boys of 61 (Albert Smith, Howard Smith), 1881
- History of Meridian Lodge, AF&AM, 1892

**Series 2. Gen. Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps (1871-1931)**

1 oversized document box, 3 standard document boxes
The materials in this series focus on veterans’ support organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Woman’s Relief Corps (WRC), and their local offshoot for Natick: the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps. These materials include books outlining the organizational constitutions and bylaws, meeting minutes, and member rosters. There are also records about the Independent Order of Good Templars, an organization focusing on temperance, which had its own local offshoot in Natick: the Natick Lodge. The final box in this series (box 8) includes a sixteen-part series of illustrated booklets documenting the history of the civil war,
featuring photographs by Mathew Brady. There is also a songbook for soldiers dating back to the Civil War.

**Box 6**

*WRC Members, By-Laws, Rituals, Etc.*
- book with roll of members 1883-1920 and bylaws
- book of rituals kept at secretary’s desk
- book of rituals
- book of installation and ceremonial procedures

*WRC Medical Descriptive Book*

*WRC Meeting Minutes 1897-1902*

*WRC Record Book 1917-1923*

*WRC Members, By-Laws, and Minutes*
- book with roll of members 1871-1926, bylaws, and minutes 1871-1873

**Box 7**

*WRC Rules and Regulations, 1908*
- booklet

*WRC Roster, 1901*
- booklet and copies

*WRC Correspondence with Veterans, 1891*
- letters

*WRC Souvenir Booklet, 1890*
- booklet and copies

*Wadsworth Portraits*
- James Samuel Wadsworth printed portraits (from book pages?)

*GAR General Orders, 1886, 1930-1931*

*Misc. Newspapers, 1887, 1891*
- The Natick Bulletin, June 24 1887
- The Natick Review February 14 1891
IOGT Natick Lodge Records

Independent Order of Good Templars, Natick Lodge constitution and bylaws booklet
Natick Lodge record book 1884

Box 8
Soldier Song Book (1864)
M. Brady Civil War Photographs
  Features Preserved Williams (b. ~1837), brother of Maranda Williams Ambler
A History of the Civil War Section 1/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 2/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 4/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 5/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 6/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 7/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 8/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 9/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 10/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 11/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 12/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 13/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 14/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 15/16 (1912)
A History of the Civil War Section 16/16 (1912) - Missing cover

Series 3: Artifacts - Housed in Museum (Boxes 126 and 127)
Two large flat object boxes, stored in the museum
Collection includes personal objects from the Brown family such as a christening gown, table linens, children’s gloves, porcelain china, and small crafts. Beyond objects relating directly to the Brown family, there are objects relating to the GAR and WRC, organizations the Brown family were members of. These objects include a ballot box, flags, military medals, and a military cap.

Box 126
2018.25.50 Pitcher, cream
2018.25.51 Saucer
2018.25.52 Bowl
2018.25.53a-b Bowl, Sugar & Lid
2018.25.62a-b Ballot box, removable handle, contains black and white voting tokens, GAR or WRC
2018.25.64a-d Gloves, Mildred Smith, for graduation, 1913
2018.25.65 Runner, Table, Linen, Hattie Smith
2018.25.66 Dress, Christening, Mildred Smith
2018.25.67a-b Blanket & Pillow Cover, Baby, Mildred Smith
2018.25.68a-b Batons, wooden with red, white and blue ribbons on ends

**Box 127**

2018.25.54 Cap, Military
2018.25.55a-b Pillbox, Mary Esty
2018.25.56 Flag, GAR Post 63
2018.25.57 Flag, GAR Post 63
2018.25.58 Flag, GAR Post 63
2018.25.59 Box, “Liquid Cherries,” with ribbons and pins, WRC
2018.25.60a-b Box, Metallic painted bird and flowers
2018.25.61 Sachet, “Happy Birthday”
2018.25.69 Gavel, Dark-brown wood
2018.25.70 Gavel, Mid-brown wood
2018.25.71 Box, Bear Brand Hosiery, Full of ribbons and pins, WRC
2018.25.72 Embroidered grapevine
2018.25.73 Stick, walking, GAR, 1892
2018.25.74 Bag, drawstring, for cap (2018.25.54)?

**Series 4: Oversized Books**

**Oversized Box 1**
Ledger, 1903-1904
GAR Meeting Pamphlets, 1921-1930

**Oversized Box 2**
GAR Record Book, 1907-1913
GAR Record Book, 1886-1896
GAR Record Book, 1914-1930

**Oversized Box 3**
GAR Personal War Sketches, 1891 (bigger box measurements: 44cm x 33cm x 7cm)

**Oversized Box 4**
GAR Veteran Surveys, 1891 (smaller box measurements: 44cm x 33cm x 6cm)

**Oversized Box 5**
Maranda Williams portrait
Horace F. Ambler portrait
Charles A. Smith portrait
Graveyard photograph with Horace Ambler
Group photograph with Mildred Smith
Boston Musicians’ Protective Association Contract, 1930
Martin family photographs with Mrs. Martin, Harold, and Kenneth
Mildred Smith high school diploma, 1913
Mildred Smith middle school diploma, 1909
Fort Clayton, Panama photograph of Military Police Battalion Company B, 1945
Old Home Day at Groton, NH, 1929
C.W. Hall painting name plate
Natick High School postcard
Downtown Natick photograph
South Natick flood photograph, 1886
Natick High School junior class photograph, 1875

Oversized Box 6
see ***Box 5 and on (Family Books) above in Series 1

Additional Collection Information:
Persons: (found in documents or photographs)
Ambler, Arley (?-?)
Ambler, Clara W. (1861-1915)
Ambler, Dorothy (?-?)
Ambler, Harvey W. (1875-?)
Ambler, Horace Erastus (1829-1905)
Ambler, Joseph E. (1857-1902)
Ambler, Mary F. (1837-1924)
Ambler, May (?-?)
Ambler, Morton (?-?)
Ambler, Percy W. (1864-1925)
Ambler Hall, Eliza Maranda (1856-1923)
Ambler Smith, Hattie Augusta (1873-1966)
Ambler Valentine, Hanna Lavinia (1860-1916)
Brady, Mathew (~1822-1896)
Brown, Richard J. (?-?)
Cummings Smith, Edward (1865-1902)
Cummings Smith, Emma (1842-1922)
Hall, Alfred J. (?-?)
Hall, Charles (?-?)
Kilmer, Howard Lewis (?-?)
Kilmer Brown, Shirley Muriel (1924-2018)
Rice, Clara Mabel (1890-?)
Shute Ambler, Ella (?-?)
Smith, Albert (1841-1915)
Smith, Charles Albert (1867-1937)
Smith, Charles Howard (1896-?)
Smith, Herbert Horace (1906-?)
Smith, Mabel (?-?)
Smith, Ralph Waldo (1904-1918)
Smith Kilmer, Mildred Emma (1895-1970)
Wadsworth, James Samuel (1807-1864)
Williams, Abigail A. (~1825-?)
Williams Ambler, Maranda M. (1833-1916)
Williams, Edgar (~1851-?)
Williams, Percival (Percy) (~1837-?)

Organizations: (mentioned in documents or photographs)
Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)
Woman’s Independent Relief Corps (WRC)
General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps
Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), Natick Lodge
Natick Grange
Wellesley Grange

Subjects: (mentioned in documents or photographs)
Ambler family
Smith family
Civil War
Civil War, music
Civil War, photography
Civil War, veterans
Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)
Grange, Natick
Grange, Wellesley
Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), Natick Lodge
Natick, residents
Woman’s Relief Corps (WRC)
World War I
World War II, medals