

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:

Earle Family, Papers, 1727-1892

Location:

Microform Room

Size of collection:

3 reels microfilm

N.U.C.M.C. number:

RLIN id:

Sources of information on collection:

See accompanying sheet(s) for additional information.

Source of collection:

Manuscripts owned by Thomas Earle, Mattapoisett, Mass. Filmed 1994

Collection description:

John Milton Earle (1794-1874) and his brother Pliny Earle (1809-1892) were born into a Quaker family in Leicester Mass. They were children of Pliny Earle (1762-1832) and Patience (Buffum) Earle (1770-1849). From 1827 to 1858, John Milton Earle was editor and proprietor of the Worcester Spy. He was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1844 to 1852, and to the Massachusetts Senate in 1858. From 1859 to 1862, he served as Commissioner to the Indians of Massachusetts. The younger Pliny Earle attended Leicester Academy and the Friends' School in Providence, R.I., and earned his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1837. A physician and psychiatrist, Pliny Earle studied in Europe between 1837 and 1839 and served as superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital in Northampton, Mass., from 1864-1885.

In 1821, John Milton Earle married Sarah Hussey (1799-1858) of Nantucket, Mass. They had nine children, of whom eight survived infancy: Ann H. (1822-); Elizabeth (1824-1858); Catherine (1828-1874); Martha B. (1829-); Sarah F. (1831-); Pliny (1834-); Samuel H. (1837-1837); and Frances C. (1840-).

The earliest letters in this collection are between the elder Pliny Earle and his brothers Jonah (1765-1846), Henry (1774-1837) and Timothy (1778-1819) regarding the wool card manufacturing business. The correspondence of John Milton Earle and his family begins with letters between Earle and Sarah Hussey in the period of their courtship, and these letters contain much discussion of reading and Quakerism. Later letters include many to and from Earle's children, particularly Ann H. Earle, although many members of the family are correspondents and recipients. Other correspondents include Lucy Chase (1822-

1909) of Worcester. Although focusing on family and local matters, these letters cover a very wide range of topics. Numerous letters between John Milton Earle and his wife Sarah date to the period after their marriage, as she frequently visited Nantucket. These letters contain much news of events in Worcester and Nantucket.

The papers of the younger Pliny Earle include a series of diaries from the years 1831 to 1833 as well as travel and medical notes from his visits to Europe and Turkey in 1838-1839. There are also genealogical notes on the Earle family and a "description of Elizabeth B. Chase's Spiritual Communications" dated 1852.

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Collection description (continued):

Miscellaneous materials include a group of subscriptions for the Quaker Meeting, Leicester Mass., 1790's; genealogical notes compiled by John Milton Earle, and penmanship exercise books and an account book of Sarah Hussey. There is also a small amount of material concerning the Mulberry Grove Boarding School, a school for young women in Leicester conducted from 1827 to 1839 by John Milton and Pliny Earle's sisters Sarah (1800-1834), Lucy (1805-1887), and Eliza (1807-1846).

19 February 2010

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Sources of background information on this collection:

Pliny Earle, The Earle Family: Ralph Earle and his Descendants (Worcester: Charles Hamilton, 1888), especially 104-114, 205-209.

D. Hamilton Hurd, History of Worcester County, Massachusetts vol 1 (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1889)

Emory Washburn, Historical Sketches of the Town of Leicester, Massachusetts (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1860)

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Contents List

Reel 1:

Folder 1: Correspondence, n.d.

Folder 2: Correspondence, 1789-1790; 1801-1819

Folder 3: Correspondence, 1820-1829

- Folder 4: Correspondence, 1830-1839
- Folder 5: Correspondence, 1840-1842
- Folder 6: Correspondence, 1843-1844 (to August 26, 1843)

Reel 2:

- Folder 6: Correspondence, 1843-1844 (beginning Sept.15, 1843)
- Folder 7: Correspondence, 1845-1882
- Folder 8: Receipted Bills, etc.; n.d., 1743-1819
- Folder 9: Deeds, etc.; 1727-1867
- Folder 10: Leicester, Mass. Quaker church subscriptions, 1790's
- Folder 11: Estate accounts, 1819-1827
- Folder 12: Pliny Earle (1762-1832), recipes, n.d.
- Folder 13: Sarah Hussey (Mrs. John Milton Earle) (1799-1858), penmanship exercises, ca. 1817
- Folder 14: Sarah Hussey Earle, accounts, 1821
- Folder 15: John Milton Earle, miscellaneous papers, n.d., 1836- 1861
- Folder 16: John Milton Earle, genealogical notes and inquiries, n.d., 1873-1892
- Folder 17: Poetry, etc., probably John Milton Earle family
- Folder 18: Pliny Earle (1809-1892), diary, January-July, 1831
- Folder 19: Pliny Earle, diary, August-November, 1832
- Folder 20: Pliny Earle, diary, April-June, 1833
- Folder 21: Pliny Earle, diary fragment, November, 1833
- Folder 22: Pliny Earle, "Notes on Europe," December, 1838-April, 1839 (Pages 1-101)

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Earle Family, Papers, 1727-1892 Contents List (cont.)

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Reel 3:

- Folder 22: Pliny Earle, "Notes on Europe," December, 1838-April, 1839 (Pages 102-end)

- Folder 23: Pliny Earle, "Notes from Drs. Barth and Cazeaux," 1838
- Folder 24: Pliny Earle, "Sagacity etc. of Animals," 1832-1842
- Folder 25: Pliny Earle, Description of Elizabeth B. Chase's spiritual communications, 1852
- Folder 26: Notes on Earle genealogy prepared in England for Pliny Earle, n.d.
- Folder 27: Passports of Pliny Earle and Anna Southwick

Quakers
Worcester
Nantucket
J.M. Earle
Sarah Hussey Earle
Pliny Earle
Anne H. Earle
Lucy Chase
wool card manufacturing
Worc. Spy
Women--correspondence
Physicians --(or notes on medical cases)
Europe, description and travel (especially Italy)
poetry
Spiritualism

related collections:
John Milton Earle Papers
Pliny Earle Papers