

Watertown Free Public Library

123 Main Street

Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

Local History Collection

**Charles F. Fitz, Sr. collected papers,
1866-1905 (inclusive)**

SC202

Summary

Collection name: Charles F. Fitz, Sr. collected papers, 1866-1905 (inclusive)

Collection number: SC202

Repository: Watertown Free Public Library (Watertown, Massachusetts)

Creator: Fitz, Charles F., Sr., 1835-1917

Fitz family

Extent: 0.44 cubic feet (2 clamshell boxes)

Language: English

Provenance: Donated to WFPL in or before 1982 with other Fitz family collections.

Processing information: This collection unites two accessions which were catalogued separately on or before 1982:

- [Collected papers of Charles F. Fitz, senior, first series], 1866-1882
 - Circa 26 items; CX 275 .F547 C4 1835-1917; HIST 929.2 FITZ 1866-1882
- [Collected genealogical papers] of Charles F. Fitz (1835-1917), circa 1870-1905
 - Circa 33 items; CS 71 .F547 1869-1905; HIST 929.2 FITZ 1871-1905

The former makes up SC202 Series I, the latter makes up SC202 Series II. These catalog records are the primary source of provenance information for this collection. Archivist Julia Grabianowski processed both collections and created the description in this Finding Aid in the winter of 2018/19, drawing on catalog card description and inventories created by Local History Librarian Kay Gardner-Westcott. This finding aid was completed by Local History Librarian/Archivist Caroline Littlewood in 2021.

Conditions governing access: Collection is open for use in the Local History Room, Watertown Free Public Library.

Preferred citation: Charles F. Fitz, Sr., collected papers, SC202, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

Historical Note

Charles Frederick Fitz was born in 1835 to Asa Fitz (1810-1878) of Candia, New Hampshire and Susan Burroughs (1803-1855) of Amesbury, Massachusetts. Fitz grew up in the Greater Boston Area with his sisters, Ellen Eliza (1835-1886) and Susan Maria (ca. 1839-1871). He attended the Bridgewater State Normal School, graduating January 1853.

Charles Fitz married Annie Gibson Cummings (1842-1924) in 1863. The couple lived in Roxbury and Newton, Massachusetts with their two children, Abby Manly Fitz (1866-1956)

and Charles F. Fitz, Jr. (1870-1941), before settling at 18 Common Street in Watertown. Fitz Sr. worked as a clerk at Watertown Union Bank for over 40 years (from 1870 to 1912) and served on the Town of Watertown Board of Selectmen (from 1891 to 1895), the Board of Trustees of the Watertown Free Public Library (from 1879 to 1881), and other town committees.

Fitz was a member of several local societies. He was an avid genealogist and local historian who advocated for the transcription and publication of the *Watertown Records* and served as Secretary of the Historical Society of Watertown. He spent decades researching the kinship ties of his paternal (Fitts/Fitz) and maternal (Burroughs) ancestors. He also investigated his wife's Cummings ancestry. Fitz was also a member of the Watertown Book Club, though as a Library Trustee he once argued that library collections should only include materials that instruct, rather than entertain.

In 1882, Fitz took a leave of absence from work to travel to Europe. He traveled to London and Chester, England and Paris, France before returning to Massachusetts on the Cunard Steam Ship Company's RMS Servia later that year.

Charles F. Fitz died on October 24, 1917. He is buried with his wife and two children in Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Organization and Arrangement

This collection is arranged into two series:

Series I. Personal papers, 1866-1882 (inclusive)

Series II. Genealogy research, 1869-1905 (inclusive)

Subseries i. Annotated 1869 edition of *Genealogy of the Fitts or Fitz Family in America*

Subseries ii. Notes, 1891-1893, undated

Subseries iii. Letters, 1871-1905, undated

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains papers created or compiled by Charles F. Fitz, Sr. It primarily consists of personal writings and ephemera documenting Fitz's 1882 trip to Europe and his personal genealogy research.

Series I. Personal papers, 1866-1882 (inclusive)

Extent: 0.22 cubic feet (1 clamshell box containing about 26 items)

Administrative information: Box 1

Scope and Content: This series primarily consists of personal papers and ephemera relating to Fitz's 1882 trip to Europe. It contains a documents granting leave of absence from National Union bank; a journal with regular entries from February 27, 1882 to April 23, 1882; a menu, cabin plan, and passenger list for the RMS Servia; a Salvation Army booklet; a letter from Ellen Fitz (addressed to "Charlie"); a letter from Charles F. Fitz, Sr. to Abby Fitz with observations on Chester, England and its people; a playbill for Romeo and Juliet; a program for services at St. Paul's Cathedral and a calendar of services at Westminster Abbey; and various flyers, bills, tickets, and receipts. The series also includes letters from William Ritchie Whitaker, New Orleans attorney, about national politics (dated 1866 and 1870); a certificate of election to the Watertown Free Public Library Board of Trustees; and a bill for expenses related to the death of Fitz's father, Asa Fitz.

Series II. Genealogy research, 1869-1905, undated (inclusive)

Extent: 0.22 cubic feet (1 clamshell box)

Administrative information: Box 2

Scope and Content: This series contains Charles F. Fitz, Sr.'s genealogy research, compiled in notes, letters, and other documents. His research documents the relationships between Fitz/Fitts and Burroughs family members, their professional and personal lives, and their geographical movement and origins. It contains information on several generations of Fitz/Fitts ancestors and relatives.

Subseries i: Annotated 1869 edition of *Genealogy of the Fitts or Fitz Family in America*

Extent: 1 bound volume

Scope and content: This subseries is Charles F. Fitz, Sr.'s annotated 1869 copy of the book *Genealogy of the Fitts or Fitz Family in America*. The book includes hand-pasted pictures and newspaper clippings, annotations, transcriptions, and an attached piece of handwritten correspondence. Dates have been crossed out and corrected or added in several places. Fitz pasted obituaries in the section on Asa Fitz. See page 24 for a later attached picture as well as an obituary of Asa Fitz. Pages 24 to 26 include numerous glued newspaper clippings, a photograph, and detailed notes on Asa Fitz's immediate family. Fitz transcribed the Revolutionary War journal of Abram Fitz in the back the book. He also transcribed information about Sir John Fitz of Tavistock, England in the back of the book, along with an 1871 letter from English novelist Anna Eliza Bray.

Subseries ii. Notes, 1891-1893, undated

Extent: 17 items (1 folder)

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains handwritten notes with vital and biographical information and transcriptions of genealogical records from the New England

Historical Genealogical Society and genealogical books and registers. Some of the notes are signed by Charles F. Fitz and others are unsigned.

Subseries iii. Letters, 1871-1905, undated

Extent: 11 letters (2 enclosures)

Scope and content: This subseries contains letters received by Fitz about his paternal and maternal ancestry. Letters discuss the lives, relationships, and movements of members of the Burroughs/Burrows and Fitz/Fitts families. Letters from F. P. Burroughs, G. F. Burroughs, Miss J. Frances Thomas Paine, Z. S. Crooker span 1893 to 1899 and discuss Burroughs ancestors. Letters from Charles' cousin James H. Fitts and A.B. Huntington (Mrs. Edwin R. Huntington) and other correspondents Jas. H. Fitts, J. Lane Fitz, and N.T. Allen span 1871 to 1905 (with one undated item) and discuss Fitz/Fitts ancestors.

Related Materials

Asa Fitz collected papers, SC201, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

Ellen E. Fitz collected papers, SC203, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

Fitz Family collected papers, SC204, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

The Local History Collection includes several volumes donated by Charles F. Fitz in the 1870s and 1880s.

White, Rev. Henry. *The early history of New England: illustrated by numerous interesting incidents*. Concord, N.H.: I.S. Boyd, 1841. [HIST 974 WHI 1841 FITZ COLL](#)

Felt, Joseph B. *The customs of New England*. Boston, Press of T.R. Marvin, 1853. [HIST 974.03 FEL 1853 FITZ COLL](#)

The Massachusetts Register and United States Calendar. Boston: 1819-1823, 1826-1831, 1833-1839, 1841, 1843-1847. [HIST 974.4025 MAS 1819-1823 FITZ COLL](#)

Gifted in 1887.

Access Points

People:

Burrows Family

Bray, Mrs. (Anna Eliza), 1790-1883

Cummings Family

Fitz, Abby M., 1866-1956

Fitz, Annie G. Cummings, 1842-1924

Fitz, Asa, 1810-1878

Fitz, Charles F., Jr., 1870-1941

Fitz, Charles F., Sr., 1835-1917

Fitz Family

Whittaker, William Ritchie, 1838-1886 (Judge)

Corporate bodies:

Cunard Steamship Company, Ltd.

Subjects:

Administration of estates

Genealogy—history

Names, Personal -- New England

Places:

Watertown (Mass.)—officials and employees

Watertown (Mass.)—social life and customs