

Kingsbury Family Papers

COLLECTION, M-7

DATE

1783 – 1937

CONTRIBUTOR

Mattatuck Museum

ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY ELEMENT

The Kingsbury family was a significant family who were involved in legal, industrial, commercial, and financial endeavors in nineteenth century Waterbury. Of special interest are the images and remarks by the Kingsbury family of several black women who were employed or indentured to the Kingsbury family. There are not many other images or remarks about black women in the nineteenth century in the Mattatuck's archive.

John Kingsbury (1762-1844) Served as a Judge in the County Court and the Probate Court, and held the office of Warden for several years when Waterbury was considered a Burrough. John was also a farmer.

Charles Kingsbury (1795-1890) was a merchant who owned a general store on Exchange Place in downtown Waterbury. In 1837 Charles' business partner F. Leavenworth dissolved their partnership in order to build a new store with his son Elisha. Afterwards, Charles closed his store and focused on his various properties.

Frederick J. Kingsbury(1823-1910) graduated from Yale in 1845 and became a member of the Bar. He served as president of the Scovill Manufacturing Company from 1868 into the early 1900's and he helped to organize the Silas Bronson Library, the Mattatuck Historical Society, the Waterbury Hospital, and Riverside Cemetery. In 1876, he designed the City of Waterbury Seal. In the 1880s and 1890s he researched and wrote several chapters in Anderson's Town and City of Waterbury which is a 3 volume history of Waterbury.

Alice Kingsbury (1858 – 1937) became involved in the Mattatuck Historical Society in 1903, serving on several committees. She bequeathed her house to the Mattatuck in order to have physical exhibits and collection storage. She was a well known philanthropist and never married.

Rosetta was the name of an indentured black girl who Charles Kingsbury purchased in 1839. She was to work for him for 11 years as his household servant, based on a document in the archive. Further research is continuing to be conducted about her.

Georgianna Lewis was a servant in Frederick John Kingsbury's household. William Kingsbury's photograph album has a carte-de-visite of her. She is spoken of in Alice Kingsbury's Autobiography and in Frederick John's Autobiography – though readers should be aware that Alice writes of a difficult incident in which the n-word is used.

Biographical information was gathered from ANDERSON, Joseph. 1896. The Town and City of Waterbury, Connecticut, from the aboriginal period to the year eighteen hundred and ninety-five. New Haven: Price and Lee Co; and the Kingsbury, Frederick John (1946). The Autobiography of Frederick John Kingsbury. Waterbury: Mattatuck Historical Society; 4v.

SCOPE & CONTENT

Contains the Papers of Alice Kingsbury, Charles D. and Eliza Leavenworth Kingsbury, Judge John Kingsbury, Frederick J. Kingsbury and Alatheia Scovill Kingsbury, spanning the period from 1783 through 1937. The collection is largely paper based, but also contains publications related to the Kingsbury family, daybooks, diaries, account ledgers, a scrapbook, daguerreotypes, an ambrotype, a tintype, cart de visites, cabinet cards, and photograph albums.

The collection is divided into 7 series, largely based on person. General Family Papers contains documents about or written by various family members that were not well represented in the collection. Charles; John; Frederick John; Alice; and Mary each have their own series based on the quantity of documents associated with them. Lastly, there is a separate series for photographs of varying types.

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is divided into 7 series, largely based on person.

RELATED PEOPLE/INSTITUTIONS

Frederick J. Kingsbury (created by)

Alice E. Kingsbury (created by)

Georgianna Lewis (created by)