

**Branlière/Stickney/Hunton Family Papers,  
1759-1965 (bulk 1809-1965)  
MSC 44, MSA 849**

**Introduction**

The Branlière, Stickney and Hunton Family papers primarily consist of the papers of Dr. Ariel Hunton and his descendants—including his daughter Mary Hunton Parker, his son Sylvanus Hunton, his son Augustus Hunton's daughter Mary Hunton Stickney, and her daughter Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière. The collection spans the period from 1750 to 1965 (bulk 1809-1965) and is housed in one archival document box and one archival flip top box, consuming 1.5 linear feet of shelf space.

**Provenance**

The papers were found in the home of Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière (1882-1965) upon her death. They came to the Vermont Historical Society in 1967 and/or 1971 from the lawyer and executor settling her estate, along with many books from her library.

**Biographical Note**

Dr. Ariel Hunton (1789-1857) was born on July 5, 1789, in Unity, Sullivan Co., New Hampshire, the son of Nathaniel Huntoon (1764-1857) and Dorothy Thruston (1769-1828). He studied medicine with Dr. Howard of Springfield, NH, and commenced practice at Grafton, New Hampshire, in 1814. He practiced in Grafton for four years and moved to Hyde Park, Vermont, where he practiced until his death. He was distinguished as a surgeon and obstetrician, as well as a botanist and geologist, and collected a large collection of mineralogical specimens. He received honorary degrees from the Vermont State Medical Society (1835), Dartmouth College (1847) and the Eclectic Medical Institute of Cincinnati, Ohio (1855). He was a Jeffersonian Democrat and a devoted Freemason.

Ariel Hunton married Mary (Polly) Pingry (1791-1874) on March 18, 1809 in Salisbury, New Hampshire. Ariel and Polly Pingry Hunton raised seven children: Parmenas Hurd Hunton (1809-1839), Sylvanus Richard Hunton (1811-1847), Eudisia D. Hunton (1813-1844), Augustus Pingry Hunton (1816-1911), Trypena R. Hunton (1827-1843), William Pingry Hunton (1832-1856), and Mary A. Hunton (1832-1920).

Sylvanus Richard Hunton (1811-1847) was born June 2, 1811 in Groton, Grafton Co. New Hampshire, the son of Dr. Ariel and Polly Hunton. Sylvanus studied medicine and worked as a teacher and a doctor. He married Clarissa M. Bailey (1811-1842) on September 5, 1841. Following many years of ill health, Sylvanus died in Georgia on February 25, 1847.

Mary Augusta Hunton Parker (1832-1920) was born November 24, 1832, in Hyde Park, Vermont, the daughter of Dr. Ariel and Polly Hunton. She married the Reverend Sylvester Ames Parker (1834-1901) on July 8, 1860. Parker was ordained (1859) in the Universalist Church in Stowe, Vermont, where the Parkers lived until he was called in 1862 to the pastorate of the

Universalist Church in Bethel. Mary Hunton Parker was the author of many poems (including “Ethan Allen’s Grave” and “Autumn”) and prose pieces. She died on January 14, 1920 in Bethel.

Mary Hunton Stickney (Mrs. William B.C. Stickney) (1851-1942) was born in Bethel, Vermont, on April 25, 1851, the daughter of Augustus P. Hunton (1816-1911) and Caroline Paige Hunton (1817-1884) and the granddaughter of Dr. Ariel and Polly Hunton. She attended Tilton Academy in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, and assisted her father in his law office until her marriage to William B.C. Stickney on February 1, 1877. They had a son, William Stickney (1878-1924) and a daughter Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière (1882-1965). Mary Hunton Stickney died in Bethel at the age of 90 on March 6, 1942.

William Brunswick Curry Stickney (1845-1930) was born in Marblehead, Massachusetts on January 16, 1845, the son of Moses Parsons Stickney and Jane Frances Curry. After graduating from Harvard (1865), he studied law and moved to Bethel, Vermont, in 1874. In 1875 Stickney went into the law practice of Augustus P. Hunton, whose daughter Mary (1851-1942) he married in 1877. For most of his adult life, Stickney lived and practiced law in Bethel except for an interval from 1912-1924 when he and his family lived in Rutland. Stickney was State’s Attorney for Windsor County (1888-1890) and president of the Vermont Bar Association. Stickney died on July 31, 1930.

Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière (1882-1965) was born November 24, 1882, the daughter of William B.C. Stickney and Mary Hunton Stickney. She studied at Wheaton Seminary (later Wheaton College) and after receiving a diploma from Boston Museum of Fine Arts, she studied art in Paris for a year. She married, first, Robert Ashton Lawrence, a Rutland attorney, on April 25, 1911, and was widowed March 12, 1912. During WWI she served in France in a Red Cross canteen. On September 8, 1919 she married, second, Jules Branlière; they were divorced in 1935. Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière died on May 27, 1965.

### **Scope and Content**

The Branlière, Stickney and Hunton Family papers primarily consist of the papers of Dr. Ariel Hunton, and his descendants—including his daughter Mary Hunton Parker, his son Sylvanus Hunton, his son Augustus Hunton’s daughter Mary Hunton Stickney, and her daughter Mary Stickney Branlière. There is also some material relating to Ariel Hunton’s siblings and parents, as well as other family members.

The collection contains considerable material relating to Dr. Ariel Hunton. The papers reveal Ariel Hunton as a family man concerned with the education and wellbeing of his children as well as a man of science with strong political opinions. Included is correspondence from the early 1820’s concerning the health of Ariel’s siblings Reuel Huntoon and Tryphena Huntoon, who both died young. There are a number of letters from Ariel to his son Sylvanus as Sylvanus moved from his uncle’s home in Unity, New York, to Chester Academy, Chester, Vermont, Woodstock, Castleton, Boston, South Carolina and Georgia. The letters described the steps Sylvanus needed to take to become a doctor. Ariel wrote about family news, medical books, mention that he amputated a leg, and that in May 1834 there were 10-50 cases of scarlet fever in Hyde Park and adjoining towns.

Other material relating to Ariel Hunton include letters to Ariel from Ebenezer Chase of Andover, New Hampshire, about publishing Ariel's poetry and subscribing to his paper, letters to Ariel from Zadock Thompson and his wife about geology, medicine, and meteorology and receipts of payments by Ariel to Zadock for books, as well as a letter from Louis Agassiz to Ariel. Also included are meteorological records (Hyde Park, Vermont) from 1833-1857 which include the temperature at sunrise, noon and sunset, a description of weather and direction of wind. The meteorological records also contain Ariel's list of treatments for various medical conditions (1848-1853). In addition, there are some political essays and essays on the duties of a physician. Included is Ariel's last will and testament, and an inventory of Ariel Hunton's estate. Alvah C. Smith wrote to Sylvanus about his father in 1834: "he makes the crooked straight and the blind see..."

The collection contains significant material concerning Sylvanus Hunton, a teacher and doctor who struggled with ill health for much of his adulthood. There are letters (1831-1832) to Sylvanus from his uncle Ransom Hunton, a cadet at West Point, as well as other letters concerning medicine, politics, health and family news. An 1843 letter concerns the death of his wife Clarissa. There are a number of essays by Sylvanus concerning politics, as well as political newspaper clippings from the 1830's and 1840's.

Also in the collection is a commonplace book with poems and prose by Ariel's daughter Mary Hunton Parker, as well as a schoolbook of her husband Sylvester A. Parker. There are considerable letters to Mary Hunton Stickney dating from 1862-1941 from various friends, cousins, her husband William B.C. Stickney, her son William Stickney, and her daughter Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière. Included are letters from cousins about family genealogy, as well as letters (1913) to Mary Hunton Stickney from her husband W.B.C. Stickney while he was on a European cruise with their daughter Mary Lawrence.

Included are letters (1917-1918) from Mary Stickney Lawrence to her parents about her experiences working in Red Cross canteens in France during WWI, as well as a detailed account written after the war by Mary Lawrence of her work in the canteens. There are a number of letters to Mary Hunton Stickney from her son Dr. William Stickney (1878-1924). They include letters written while William was in Europe in 1910, and letters written (1918-1919) during his service in the Medical Corps during WWI. Letters (1940-1941) from Jean Aitken Stickney (Mary Hunton Stickney's widowed daughter-in-law) describe London during WWII.

### **Related Collections**

Additional manuscript collections at the Vermont Historical Society relating to the Branlière, Stickney and Hunton Families:

- Dr. Ariel Hunton, "Treatment of Gonorrhoea," in Nelson's American Laucet, 1854, v. 8, no. 6, p. 237-8, is in the VHS library: call no. 610.5 N333a
- Lyndon State College Collection: Pingree (Pingry)/Hunton/Stickney Family Papers (1832-1962): Doc 382
- Hunton and Allied Families: Misc. File Add.
- Lawyers' account books, Bethel, Vermont, 1838-1923: XMSC 27:1-5 (Augustus P. Hunton, Stephen M. Pingree, William B.C. Stickney, Allen P. Dudley)

- Letter from Olivia Cate (Le Bosquet) to Mary Stickney Branlière, May 15, 1955: MS B L493
- Hunton family photographs, ca. 1860's-1870's: FB-86:7
- Two commonplace books of poetry, 1829-1866: MSA 828:2-3 (Hannah Curry Putnam and Jane Frances Curry Stickney)

## Inventory

### I. First Generation, Ariel Hunton (1789-1857)

- MSC 44:01    Hartford, Connecticut, store ledger, 1750
- 02    Barnard, Vermont, store ledger, 1807
- 03    Hunton family genealogy, n.d.
- 04    Ariel Hunton and other family members financial and legal records, 1791-1865
- 05    Hunton family letters, primarily to Ariel Hunton, 1809; 1819-1877
- 06    Poems attacking the clergy and Federalist and defending the Masons (by Ariel Hunton?), 1813; n.d.
- 07    Letters to Ariel Hunton, 1819-1826 n.d.
- 08    Letters to Sylvanus Hunton from his father Ariel, 1827-1838; n.d.
- 09    Letters to Ariel Hunton, 1829-1855
- 10    Meteorological records of Ariel Hunton, 1833-1839; 1848-1857
- 11    Ariel Hunton's writings re: politics and medicine, 1834-1856; n.d.
- 12    Letters to Ariel Hunton from Zadock Thompson and his wife, 1848-1857
- 13    Letter from Louis Agassiz to Ariel Hunton, n.d.
- 14    Tryphena Hunton's (1827-1843) account of a visit to Bethel from Hyde Park, 1842

### II. Second Generation, Sylvanus Hunton (1811-1847)

- 15    Ransom Hunton's West Point course notebook on field fortifications, 1833
- 16    Newspaper clippings re: New Hampshire politics (Sylvanus Hunton), 1830's-1840's
- 17    Letters to Sylvanus Hunton from his Uncle Ransom Hunton (West Point cadet), 1831-1832

- 18 Letters to and essays by Sylvanus Hunton, 1831-1847
- 19 “An Inquiry Upon the Principles of the Present Banking System” by Sylvanus Hunton, 1837
- 20 “A Romance, or Simpson Ridgely, Esqr. The Sugar River Politician...” by Sylvanus Hunton about Edmund Burke, 1844

### III. Second Generation, Mary A. Hunton Parker (1832-1920)

- 21 Mary A. Hunton (Mrs. Sylvester A. Parker) commonplace book with poems and prose, 1850-1870, n.d.
- 22 Schoolbook of Sylvester A. Parker, [1853]
- 23a Schoolbook of ? Hunton—Lists U.S. Presidents, distinguished writers, etc., n.d.
- 23b History Miss Fiske’s Young Ladies Seminary, Keene, N.H., 1824-44 (typescript, 1904)

### IV. Third Generation, Mary Hunton Stickney (1851-1942)

- 24 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) from Kate Fairbanks in Ottawa, 1872-1874
  - 25 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) in French from a Montreal friend, 1872-1884
  - 26 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney), 1873-1874
  - 27 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) re: her French education in Quebec, 1874
  - 28 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) from her friend Hattie, 1874-1895
  - 29 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney), 1875-1882; n.d.
  - 30 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) from her cousin Mary H.P. Bigelow, 1893; 1901-1904
  - 31 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) from her son William in Europe, 1910
  - 32 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) from her husband W.B.C. Stickney while on cruise in Egypt and Europe, February 1913-April 1913
  - 33 Letters to Mary Hunton (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) and Mary Stickney Branlière from Jean Aitkin Stickney and Raymo Aitkin, 1940-1941; 1960-1961
- MSA 849:01 Stickney family letters, 1887-1912; 1917

- 02a Mary Hunton Stickney (Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney): Letters, photos, etc. from friends and cousins, 1867-1930; 1938-1939

V. Fourth Generation, Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière (1882-1965)

- 02b Mary Stickney (Lawrence Branlière): Boston Museum of Fine Arts school books, 1903-1904
- 03 Letters from Robert and Mary Stickney Lawrence to Robert's parents while on their wedding trip in Europe, 1911
- 04 Letters from Mary Stickney Lawrence to her parents (Mr. and Mrs. W.B.C. Stickney) about life in Red Cross canteens in France, 1917-1918
- 05 Mary Stickney Lawrence's account of life in Red Cross canteens in France, 1917-1918
- 06 Mary Stickney Lawrence Branlière: Letters, photos and news clippings, c. 1917-1926
- 07 Book of notes about materials found in the home of Mary Stickney Branlière upon her death, 1965

VI. Fourth Generation, William Stickney (1878-1924)

- 08 Letters from Major William Stickney in France to his parents in Rutland, 7/17/1918-4/28/1919

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