

**Justin Smith Morrill (1810-1898)**  
**Papers, 1830-1896**  
**MSC 31**  
**MSC 32, Doc 422, XMSC 5, XMSC 143**

## **Introduction**

The Justin Smith Morrill Papers are the account books and records kept by Morrill during his mercantile career in Strafford and Derby, Vermont, 1830-1896 (bulk 1831-1855). The collection is housed in three record center boxes and includes 29 oversized volumes shelved separately. It occupies 8.0 linear feet of shelf space. This finding guide was prepared in 1996 as part of project sponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and amended in April 2017 to include 12 account books donated by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation in January 2014.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Justin Smith Morrill was born in Strafford, Vermont, April 14, 1810, the son of Nathaniel and Mary Hunt Morrill. His formal education, at the Strafford schools and Thetford and Randolph academies, ended at age fifteen. He immediately went into the mercantile business beginning with a six month clerk's job at a store kept by Royal Hatch in Strafford Village. He then worked for the J. H. and T. J. Harris store for two years. Upon completing his two years with the Harris's, Morrill went to Portland, Maine, and worked as a bookkeeper for Daniel Fox's West Indies shipping business, and then in the dry-goods business of Jeremiah Dow. In 1830 he returned to Strafford and was requested to help close and settle the mercantile business of the late Ralph Hosford, and his partners, Latham and Kendrick. After completing that job he again worked for Jedediah Harris and the 1834 became his partner in a store known as Harris and Morrill. It was located in the lower village in Strafford but eventually they operated two additional local stores, plus one in Derby Line, Vermont. In 1840 Harris and Morrill joined with N. S. Young to form a new partnership known as Morrill, Young, and Company, and operated a store in the Upper Village. Based on evidence in this collection Morrill was also involved in businesses known as Morrill, George and Company (ca. 1845-1851), with Alonzo George (1822-1895); and Morrill, Russ, and Company (ca. 1850-1851). Although still nominally involved in several partnerships, Morrill effectively resigned from business in 1848.

At the time of his early retirement from business Morrill was preparing to build a house in Strafford in anticipation of his 1851 marriage to Ruth Barrell Swan (ca. 1820-1898). In 1855 he began a long and distinguished career in public service. From 1855 until his death in 1898 Morrill represented Vermont first as a congressman then in 1866 as a senator where he gained recognition for his Land Grant College Acts of 1862 and 1890.

Justin and Ruth Morrill had two children: Justin Harris (1853-1855), and James Swan (b. 1857). Because of his long tenure in government the Morrills built a house in Washington, D.C. but maintained the house in Strafford. Justin Morrill died in 1898.

### **Scope and Content**

The Justin Morrill Papers document Morrill's early career as a general store clerk, partner, and owner, as well as other business pursuits prior to his 1855 election to Congress. His first partnership was with Jedediah Harris and there are account books of their stores in and near Strafford, and in Derby, Vermont. Included is a blotter, 1844; journals, 1831-1848; ledgers, 1831-1838; inventories, 1833-1844; records of bills payable, 1831-1854, and lists of notes and accounts, 1835-1847. There are also miscellaneous financial records of this partnership including several of which are identified as being for the Copperas Hill store. In addition to Harris and Morrill there are records from Morrill's other partnerships including Morrill, Young, and Company, 1840-1845; Morrill, George and Company, 1845-1851; and Morrill, Russ, and Company, 1850-1851.

Morrill was treasurer for the Strafford Mill Company, a gristmill, and the treasurers' account book, 1843-1853, is included in this collection. Receipts and memos, many with miller Truman Burr, and agent F. Smith, have been removed from the volume and placed in folders.

Morrill's association with Harris lasted from the 1820s until Harris's death in 1855, at which time Morrill helped settle his estate. This collection includes some of the estate records (XMSC 5:20 and Doc 422:4b), and account books of Harris's other business including Harris and Prior, 1837-1840, Harris and Russ, 1846, and Harris and Chamberlin. There is also a diary of Harris from 1853.

The majority of the collection concerns Justin Morrill's mercantile business but there are a few personal papers and some papers from his political career. The most significant personal papers are floor plans for his gothic revival house in Strafford which he built between 1849 and 1851. In one of the account books there are records concerning construction of a building which may also be for the Strafford house (Doc 422:26). There are several folders of correspondence from Morrill, 1837-1896, including a series of letters to Salomon Foot, 1848-1863, primarily concerning Whig politics. There are also letters to Morrill, 1840-1875. A list of Morrill's correspondents can be found in the appendix to this finding guide.

Also in this collection is a series of letters to Ruth Swan Morrill. The letters were originally placed loose in a scrapbook, but have now been removed for conservation reasons and placed, in their original order, in folders. The letters are mostly personal letters written to Ruth before and after her marriage to Justin Morrill.

## Organization

The collection is organized in the following series and subseries:

- I. Account books
  - a. Harris and Morrill
  - b. Morrill, Young and Company
  - c. Morrill, George and Company
  - d. Other partnerships and unidentified accounts
- II. Correspondence
- III. Miscellaneous

## Related Collections

The Vermont Historical Society library holds a collection of letters to Morrill and printed items for the period 1851-1897 (MSA 654) received at the same time as the items that were added to this collection in 2017.

For more papers of Justin Smith Morrill at the Vermont Historical Society consult the online and manual manuscript index under Morrill's name. There are collections of Morrill's papers at the Library of Congress, Harvard Business School, Cornell University, Syracuse University, and the University of Vermont.

## Inventory

### I. Account Books

#### a. Harris and Morrill

- MSC 31:1 Blotter, 1844 April 9 to 1844 December 11
- XMSC 5:1 Journal, 1831 April 7 to 1832 July 9
  - 2 \_\_\_\_\_, 1832 July 9 to 1833 July 11
  - 3 \_\_\_\_\_, 1833 July 11 to 1834 January 25
  - 4 \_\_\_\_\_, 1834 June 26 to 1835 May 1
  - 5 \_\_\_\_\_, 1835 May 4 to 1836 November 4
  - 6 \_\_\_\_\_, 1836 November 5 to 1838 February 9
  - 7 \_\_\_\_\_, 1838 February 12 to 1839 January 24
  - 8 \_\_\_\_\_, 1839 January 25 to 1842 November 8
  - 9 \_\_\_\_\_, 1844 November to 1848 January 1
  - 10 Ledger, 1831-1838 (alphabetical index inserted)
- XMSC 143.1 \_\_\_\_\_, "Harris & Morrill Leger B" [sic], 1838-1847; includes Justin S. Morrill "house a/c", 1832-1870.
- MSC 31:2a Alphabetical index (for unidentified ledger), n.d.
- MSC 31.2b \_\_\_\_\_, "Geo H. Morrill Strafford Vermont", undated.
  - 3 Inventory, 1833 April 1
  - 4 \_\_\_\_\_, 1835 April 13
  - 5 \_\_\_\_\_, 1837 April 15
  - 6 \_\_\_\_\_, 1839 April 1

- 7a \_\_\_\_\_, 1844 April 1
- 7b \_\_\_\_\_, "Inventory, H & M 1853 as April 1st", 1853-1855, includes accounts, notes due, payables. Insert shows plat of a real property, 8/14/1854.
- 7c \_\_\_\_\_, "Inventory 1859 Justin S. Morrill and Harris & Morrill" with insert of essay re: planting trees in the west by P.Y. Bliss .
- 8 Cash book, 1831 May 13 to 1833 December 9
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_, 1833 December 12 to 1837 March 20
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_, 1837 May 22 to 1839 December 21 (includes J.H. Harris accounts, VMF Company account, records of cash lent)
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_, 1839 December 21 to 1845 February 26 (includes Orange County Bank accounts, Vermont Copperas Company account, Harris and Russ exchange records, J. H. Harries exchange records, records of cash lent)
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_, 1845 February 26 to 1849 December 28 (includes records of cash lent, J.H. Harris accounts, Vermont Copperas Company account, Harris and Russ account, Russ, Frary and Company account)
- 13 Bills payable, 1831 June 22 to 1933 November 1
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_, 1833-1843
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_, 1842-1854
- 16 List of notes and accounts, 1833 April 1
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_, 1835 April 13
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_, 1837 April 15
- 19 List of demands due, 1837 April 15
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_, 1839 April 1
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_, 1840 April
- 22 \_\_\_\_\_, 1845 April (2 parts)
- 23 \_\_\_\_\_, List of ledger accounts, 1846
- 24 \_\_\_\_\_, List of notes and accounts, 1847 June 30
- 25 J.H. Harris account with Harris and Morrill, 1831-1836
- 26 B.F. Wood and Company account of stock sold to Harris and Morrill, 1838 October 18
- 27 Harris and Morris purchase book, 1831 April 11 to 1849 June 4
- 28 Harris and Morrill's Cash book, 1833 January 1 to October 5
- XMSC 5:11 Journal for Copperas Hill Store, South Strafford, 1834 March 19 to 1835 April, and 1838 October 18 to 1838 December 24
- MSC 31:29 Harris and Morrill sales book, 1835 July 6 to 1840 March 3
- XMSC 143.2 Cash book, 1851 April 28 to 1852 November 18
- 143.3 \_\_\_\_\_, "J.H. Harris Cash Book", Mar. 13, 1850-Feb. 12, 1855. Includes accounts and demands payable.
- MSC 32:1 \_\_\_\_\_, Copperas Hill Store, 1834 to 1835 April 9 (includes notes due 1835 April 6, and inventory ca. 1835)
- 2a \_\_\_\_\_, 1833 May 21 to 1834 July 8

- XMSC 5:12 Ledger Copperas Hill store, 1832 November 8 to 1834 November 30
- MSC 32:2b Misc. account book, J.S. Morrill, 1847-1854, includes Harris & Morrill to J.H. Harris, shares bought, payables, loan, and labor accounts, livestock, highway tax.

b. Morrill, Young and Company

- MSC 32:3 Blotter, 1840 November 21 to 1841 June 19
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_, 1842 February 28 to 1842 July 30
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_, 1842 August 1 to 1843 July 11
- XMSC 5:13 Journal 1840 March 2 to 1842 March 8
- XMSC 5:14 \_\_\_\_\_, 1842 March 12 to 1844 November 23
- MSC 32:6 Inventory 1842 March 12
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_, 1843 April 1
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_, 1845 April 10
- 9 Cash book, 1840 March 23 to 1844 March 23 (includes short list of newspapers subscribers, pork accounts, cash lent, and J.H. Harris accounts)
- XMSC 5:15 Ledger, 1840-1847 (with alphabetical index inserted)
- MSC 32:10 Bills payable, March 1842
- 11 List of ledger accounts, 1843 April 1
- 12 Pay down blotter, 1840 March
- 13 Invoice goods sold by Harris and Morrill to Morrill, Young and Company
- 14 Account of sales, 1840 March to 1845 March

c. Morrill, George and Company

- 15 Inventory ca. 1846 April 10
- 16 Blotter, 1844 December 13 to 1845 April 17
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_, 1845 April 9 to 1845 November 11
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_, 1845 November 13 to 1846 July
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_, 1847 February 2 to 1848 March 21
- XMSC 5:16 Journal 1845 April 9 to 1847 April 24
- MSC 32:20 Inventory, 1846 April
- XMSC 5:17 Cash book, 1845 June 17 to 1851 July 1
- Doc 422: 1 Ledger, 1845 April 10 to 1846 November 2
- :2 Barter, butter and eggs, 1844 November 2 to 1847 February

d. Other partnerships and unidentified accounts

- XMSC 5:18 Harris and Prior, ledger, 1837 April-1840
- Doc 422:3 Unidentified index
- XMSC 5:19 Harris and Russ, inventory of goods and accounts, 1846
- Doc 422:4a Jedediah H. Harris diary, 1853
- XMSC 5:20 Cash book, with some of J.H. Harris estate records, 1852-1855
- Doc 422:4b Account book, Jedediah H. Harris estate, 1855-1870. Includes inventory, promissory notes, "property not on inventory list"

- :4c \_\_\_\_\_, J.H. Harris estate and others, "Oct 1, 1859." Notes, receivables; homestead, other property.
- :4d \_\_\_\_\_, "List of Old demands due the Estate of J. H. Harris April 1, 1861."
- :4e Ledger, "H. Barrett, Batavia, Ill." includes J.H. Harris estate account; Justin S. Morrill cash account; 1855-1862.
- :5 Notes and bills payable, unidentified, 1854
- 6 Journal of account for general merchandise, including a few sketches of architectural details and records of timbers needed for building, 1842-ca. 1849
- XMSC 5:21 Scrapbook possibly kept by Morrill, in journal of Hatch and Frary, 1851
- XMSC 5:22 Strafford Mill Company, treasurers' book, 1843-1853
- Doc 422:7 Receipts and memos from Strafford Mill treasurers' book
- :8 \_\_\_\_\_
- :9a \_\_\_\_\_
- XMSC 5:23 List of notes taken, unidentified, 1837-ca. 1849
- XMSC 5:24 [J. H. and J. J. Harris and Company?] general store accounts, 1830 April-September
- XMSC 5:25 Morrill, Russ and Company, Derby, Vermont, journal, 1850-1851
- XMSC 5:26 Miscellaneous accounts including accounts of Harris and Chamberlin, Harris and Morrill, 1834-1835, Harris and Bliss; and sheep and wool accounts, and records of highway work and cash accounts
- Doc 422:9b Cash book, Justin S. Morrill with L.A. Clark, Oct 24, 1883 to Nov 3, 1884.
- :9c P.Y. Bliss account book, 1857-1867, includes cash accounts, loan accounts, last wishes, invention of a method to raise sunken boats, essays, musings, diary-type entries addressed to others, schedule of personal property in 1863.
- :9d \_\_\_\_\_, insertions.
- :9e P.Y. Bliss, "An Old Man's Soliloquy (or an apostrophe upon the Flag of our Country with a slight touch at Young America)," June 1865.

## II. Correspondence

- Doc 422:10 Ruth Swan Morrill, letters, ca. 1840-1862
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 Correspondence from, n.d., 1837-1896
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_, to Solomon Foot, 1848-1863
- 17 Correspondence to, n.d., 1840-1860
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_, 1861-1865
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_, 1866-1869

20 \_\_\_\_\_, 1870-1875

III. Miscellaneous

21 Petitions, resolutions  
22 Speeches, essays, notes  
23 \_\_\_\_\_,  
24 House plans  
25 Receipts, financial papers  
26 Miscellaneous

Eileen O'Brien  
October 2, 2007  
Rev. by Marge Garfield  
April 2017

**APPENDIX**  
Correspondents

## Letters from Justin Smith Morrill to:

Parker, J. D.  
 Tyson, Isaac, 1839  
 Barrett, 1837  
 Walton, 1844  
 Johnson, E., 1849  
 Hale, 1850  
 Editor of the *Journal*, 1847  
 Morrill, David (uncle), 1856,  
 1866  
 Fletcher, Governor, 1856

Carpenter, A. B. 1858  
 Thompson, D. P. 1860  
 Randall, A. W., 1868  
 Houghton, Geo. F., 1860  
 The Speaker, House of  
 Representatives  
 Walton, E. P. 1877  
 Hatch, Henry C., 1885, 1891  
 Walton, Mrs., 1896

## Letters to Justin Smith Morrill from:

Edwards, n.d.  
 Hale, Edward, N.d.  
 Weymouth, 1840  
 Taylor, Nelson A., 1852  
 Danforth, Solon, 1856  
 Hale, Harry, 1856  
 Parrish, J. K., 1856  
 Richardson, Chauncey, 1856  
 Mason, George, 1856  
 Hubbard, T. S.  
 Stevens, Henry, 1856  
 Walton, E. P., 1857  
 Bradley, J. D., 1858  
 Swan, A. N., 1860  
 Bull, A. H., 1860  
 Underwood, A., 1860  
 Daniels, Francis, 1861  
 Underwood, A., 1861  
 Bridgemen, 1861  
 Crawford, D. 1861  
 Morrill, Calvin, 1862

Houghton, George F., 1862  
 Baxter, J. N., 1862  
 Chapman, Clark H., 1862  
 Daniels, Francis, 1863  
 Hyde, Heil, 1863  
 Davis, B. N., 1864  
 Steele, John, 1866  
 Pratt, S., 1866  
 Marsh, L. A., 1866  
 Baker, Luther, 1867  
 Veazie, J. A., 1867  
 Smith, W. C., 1868  
 Dann, Edward  
 Shute, James  
 Eads, Jas. B.  
 Witt, H. R., 1870  
 Converse, L. M., 1871  
 Jocelyn, William, 1872  
 Morrill, W.F., 1874  
 Malley, 1875  
 Chamberlin, S. E., 1875