

PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 71

Seth E. Benson Papers

1855-1870

$\frac{3}{4}$ box
.325 linear feet
Accession No. 1980.9

Stephen Phillips Memorial Library

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PMM 71

Seth E. Benson Papers

Benson, Seth E., 1802-1870

Papers, 1855-1870

¾ box (0.325 linear feet)

Ship broker and commission merchant in Bangor, Maine

Business and family papers from Seth E. Benson, a commission merchant and ship broker in Bangor, Maine. The bulk of the collection is business correspondence, supplemented with receipts and bills of lading, documenting the cargoes, logistics, and networks of merchants involved in shipping in Bangor during the mid-nineteenth century. Family material is mostly correspondence, including letters about Benson's sons who served in the Civil War.

In English

James B. Vickery; Gift; 1980; 1980.9

Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:

Benson, Seth E. (Seth Ellis), 1801-1870.

Benson, Seth E. (Seth Ellis), 1828-1903.

Benson, George H. (George Henry), 1833-1863.

Bangor (Me.)

Maine

Bounties -- Maine.

Coastwise shipping

Commerce

Commission merchants

Freight and freightage

Hay trade

Lumber trade

Maine -- Commerce.

Maine -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.

New England -- Commerce.

Pensions -- Maine.

Ship brokers

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.

Local Subject Headings:

Potato trade

Acquisition:

This collection was given to the Penobscot Marine Museum by James B. Vickery.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. There are no special restrictions.

Condition:

This collection is in good condition.

Historical Note:

Seth E. Benson (1802-1870) was a ship broker and commission merchant in Bangor, Maine in the mid-nineteenth century. He was the middleman between shippers and ship owners, finding cargoes for vessels coming to Bangor and Penobscot Bay, and finding ships to carry cargoes of lumber, potatoes, hay, and other goods from Bangor. Much of Benson's work involved coastwise trade from Philadelphia north, but he also occasionally arranged cargoes for destinations in the West Indies and South America. In addition, Benson served as Justice of the Peace in Bangor, and was in charge of distributing Civil War pensions and bounties for the region.

Benson and his wife, Ellen G. (1804-1889) had nine children. Their oldest son, Seth E. Benson Jr. (1828-1903) moved to Rockland, where he became part of his father's business network while also working as a dentist. Two other sons, George H. (1833-1863) and Benjamin E. (1838-1862), served and died in the Civil War.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains business and family papers from Seth E. Benson, a ship broker and commission agent in Bangor, Maine. The bulk of this collection is business correspondence to Benson from merchants, ship captains, and other ship brokers trading in Bangor and the Penobscot Bay region. These provide a detailed record of shipping networks and logistics in the mid-nineteenth century, including merchant voyages undertaken during the Civil War. Benson himself generally specialized in coastal cargoes of lumber, potatoes, hay, and other bulk products, a focus reflected in these letters. This correspondence is augmented by bills of lading, accounts, and receipts for freight commissions on cargoes arranged by Benson in Bangor.

Family material in this collection primarily consists of correspondence from Benson's sons. Much of this is from Seth E. Benson Jr., which mixes family and business news as the younger Benson looked out for his father's affairs in Rockland. There are also letters about George H. and Benjamin E. Benson's deaths in the Civil War.

The collection also contains a folder of receipts for Civil War pensions and bounties that Benson distributed to veterans and widows in the Bangor area.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	
1	1	Correspondence, general, to Seth E. Benson, 1856-1859
	2	1860-1863
	3	1864-1866
	4	1867-1868
	5	1869-1870
	6	Correspondence with Philip Fitz & Co., 1867-1870
	7	Correspondence to George H. Benson, 1856
	8	Commission receipts, 1861-1866
	9	Bills of lading, 1865, 1869
	10	Accounts and bills, 1862-1869
	11	Civil War pension and bounty receipts, 1865-1869