Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 71
Seth E. Benson Papers
1855-1870

¾ box
.325 linear feet
Accession No. 1980.9

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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:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Box</th>
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