

# Shirley Brown Materials (2018.25)

Finding Aid for the Shirley Brown Collection  
at the Natick Historical Society



**THE NATICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**58 ELIOT STREET**  
**NATICK, MA 01760**  
[www.natickhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.natickhistoricalsociety.org)

# The Shirley Brown Collection, 1850s-1966

2018.25

## Collection Summary:

Extent: 11.25+/- linear feet

Creator: Shirley Brown

Date Range: 1850s-1966

Language: English

Conditions for Access and Use: Open for research use

Copyright Notice: Copyright restrictions may apply

Preferred Citation: Shirley Brown Collection, Natick Historical Society, Natick, MA.

Repository Code: Natick Historical Society, 207 Union Street, Natick, MA 01760

Acquisition Information: Gift of Pamela Koskovich, 2018.

Processed by: 2018 Marya Van't Hul; Updated 2019 by Abbie Sandoval-Focil & Rachel Speyer Besancon

*\*\*There is a folder of genealogy notes and family trees included in this collection to assist with research, however these are not archival materials from the Brown family\*\**

## Abstract

The Shirley Brown Collection focuses on the family members of Shirley Brown, including extended family, going back three generations to her great-grandparents. The collection primarily focuses on Shirley's great-grandparents Albert and Emma Smith, her grandparents Charles and Hattie Smith, and her mother Mildred Smith. The materials include archival documents - photographs, letters, and organizational records, all reflecting Shirley's family history. Other materials found in the collection document the history of the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps, a Natick branch of the Grand Army of the Republic: a veterans' support organization. Additionally, there are artifacts as part of the collection that are housed in the Natick History Museum, which include personal items of family members, and items related to the GAR.

## Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research". If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law

extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the collections manager.

### **Items Separated**

See Series 3: Artifacts Housed in Museum

### **Related Collections**

Henry **Wilson** Collection, Natick Historical Society

GAR Collection, Morse Institute Library, Natick

Old Dell Park Cemetery

New Dell Park Cemetery (Shirley Brown)

### **Biographical Sketches**

This collection includes materials from both the Smith and the Ambler families. The Smith family lived in Natick for several generations, raising tens of children in the area over generations. Albert Smith married Emma Cummings and had four children, only two of whom survived to adulthood: Edward and Charles. Edward and Charles were born and raised in Natick. Albert and Emma lived at 9 Waban Street (Natick) and their son Charles later built the house at 10 Pitts Street (Natick) where he lived with his wife. The homes at 10 Pitts St and 9 Waban St were adjacent lots: the backyards of one another. Edward married a woman named Mabel, and Charles married Hattie Ambler of the Ambler family. Hattie was one of eight children born to Maranda Williams and Horace Ambler in Natick. Hattie's older brother Percy married Ella Shute, a woman known to perform scenes at events around town. Hattie Ambler Smith was a member of the Natick Grange. Living in Natick together for decades, Charles and Hattie had nine children: Mildred, Charles, Helen, William, Ralph, Herbert, Robert, and two unnamed twins. Charles served in the armed forces in World War I. Ralph and Herbert went to school in Natick, and a photograph of the boys' classes in the local school house is included in this collection. Mildred Emma Smith, the oldest of the nine, married Adelbert Libby Kilmer and had two children: Howard Lewis Kilmer and Shirley Muriel Kilmer. Shirley married Richard J. Brown and had two children: Deborah and Pamela.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The materials in this collection fall into two major categories: of the Smith and Ambler families or in relation to the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps. Each of these two themes have both archival materials and museum artifacts. The first series, the family papers, spans both the Smith and Ambler families and includes correspondence between family members, photographs of the family, and papers relating to local organizations like the Natick Grange that some of the family were members of. The second series, about the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps, includes books listing the members of the organization, the organization's constitution and bylaws, traditions and rituals, and meeting minutes. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) are represented in these documents as well as these organizations

were the national veterans' support organizations that the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps was a local offshoot of. The third series, housed in the museum, includes all artifacts in this collection and therefore spans both familial objects as well as GAR- and WRC-related things. These objects include a christening dress, boxes full of war medals, and flags of the GAR.

**Arrangement:**

Series 1: Family papers and other materials, 1850s -1966

Series 2. Gen. Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps (1871-1931)

Series 3: Artifacts

Series 4: Books

**Description of the Collection**

**Series 1. Family papers and other materials, 1850s-1966**

4 document boxes

The materials in this series include correspondence between members of the families, booklets from organizations the families were members of, legal documents, photographs and daguerreotypes, clothing and textiles, porcelain china, and other personal materials of the Smith and Ambler families. The papers primarily focus on Albert and Emma Smith, their son Charles Smith and his wife Hattie Ambler, Charles and Hattie's children, and Hattie's mother Maranda Williams.

Approximately one third of the archival material in this collection are photographs or other images relating to the Smith and Ambler families. There are letters exchanged between Emma and her husband Albert, Albert's building records for the construction of his house on Pitts St, Emma's childhood bible, and Ella Shute Ambler's (Percy Ambler's wife) performance practices. The photographs preserved in the collection are of many members of the Smith and Ambler families, including Emma and Albert Smith, their sons Edward and Charles Smith, Harriet Ambler and her siblings, Maranda Williams and her siblings, and several of Mildred Smith and her siblings.

**Box 1**

*Albert Smith Papers (1841-1966)*

Dell Park Cemetery receipt, 1890

Dell Park Cemetery receipt, 1872

Albert Smith war pension, 1915

Albert Smith war pension receipts, 1915-1916

Emma and Albert 50th Anniversary invitation, 1913

Albert Smith discharge paper, 1862

Albert Smith retroactive birth certificate, 1904

Emma Smith sewer rental, n.d.

*Letters: Albert to Emma*

“The Disbanding of the Boston Light Artillery in May 1862”

*Alfred J. Hall Letter to Emma Cummings (1861)*

*Charles Howard Smith Letters*

Correspondence with Hattie Smith during war (1918)

*Charles Howard Smith WWI Card*

*Brown Family Materials*

Mildred Smith report card

American Campaign Medal (WWII)

Shirley Brown Class Photos

News clipping

*Shirley Brown Letters*

Anniversary Airmail feat. imagery of Natick (1938)

*Emma Cummings (1842-1922) Smith Bible*

includes notes of family births and deaths

*Mary F. Ambler (1837-1924) Pattern Book*

*Albert Smith Math Book*

## **Box 2**

*Emma Cummings Smith and Albert Smith*

photographs of Emma, Albert, and family

*Charles Smith (1867-1937)*

photographs

school books and notes (Pond Street School, Natick)

*Children of Hattie Ambler Smith and Charles Smith, photographs*

Ralph Smith

Robert Smith

Helen Smith

Earle Winn

Howard Smith

Alice Dunham Smith  
Alice Ambler  
Herbert Smith  
Mildred Smith  
Herbert Smith  
Hattie Smith  
Shirley Kilmer Brown  
Richard James Brown

*Hattie Ambler Smith (1873-1966)*

misc. family photos, inc. 10 Pitts Street  
legal documents (birth and marriage certificates)  
news clippings  
citizenship certificate (Natick residency and US citizenship)  
funeral announcement and mass card, 1966

*Photographs: Charles (1867-1937) and Edward Smith (1865-1902)*

Charles and Edward Smith (mid 1870s)  
Mabel Smith  
Edward Smith

*Photographs: Horace Ambler (1829-1884) and Maranda Williams Ambler (1833-1916)*

Maranda Williams Ambler  
Horace Ambler

*Photographs: Mildred Emma Smith Kilmer (1895-1970)*

Mildred Smith Kilmer  
Howard Kilmer  
Wilson School graduation exercises, 1909  
Natick High School graduation exercises, 1913  
class of 1900 class portrait  
Cameo Club

*Photographs: Hattie Ambler's Siblings*

Eliza Maranda Ambler Hall (1856-1923)  
Charles Hall (Eliza's husband)  
Joseph E. Ambler (1857-1902)  
Hanna Lavinia Ambler Valentine (1860-1916)  
Clara W. Ambler (1861-1915)  
Clara Mabel Rice (daughter of Clara and George Rice) (1890-?)

Percy W. Ambler (1864-1925)  
Ella Shute Ambler (Percy's 2nd wife)  
Harvey W. Ambler (1875-?)  
May Ambler (wife of Harvey)  
Dorothy Ambler (daughter of Harvey and May)  
Morton Ambler (son of Harvey and May)  
Arley Ambler (son of Harvey and May)

*Hattie Ambler Smith Natick Grange*  
booklet of photographs and records, 1939

*Hattie Ambler Smith Rewards of Merit*  
cards and prints

### **Box 3**

*Albert Smith Building Records*  
Charlie A. Smith drawing cards  
Albert Smith record book of building houses  
photograph of 10 Pitts St (Charles and Hattie's house)  
photograph of 9 Waban St (Emma and Albert's house)

*Ralph and Herbert Smith School Photos*  
photograph of Herbert Smith in Miss Donohue class  
photograph of Ralph Smith in Mrs. Barnard class  
photograph of Ralph Smith in Miss Donohue  
photograph of children standing outside schoolhouse

*Daguerreotypes: Horace Ambler and Maranda Williams Ambler*  
Maranda  
Horace (2)  
Horace and Maranda (c. 1850s/60s?)

*Daguerreotypes: Maranda Williams Ambler's Siblings*  
Abigail Williams (~1825-?) and Eliza Ambler (1856-1923)  
Percy Williams (~1837-?), 1868  
Edgar Williams (~1851-?)

### **Box 4**

*Ella Shute Materials (wife of Percy W. Ambler, aunt of Mildred Emma Smith)*  
postcards

Wellesley Grange pamphlets  
Independent Order of Good Templars Commission (1914)  
Myrtle Temple Correspondence  
Correspondence (1908-1914)

*Journal of Recitations with some news clippings*

*Ella Shute Photographs*

misc. photos  
journal of tickets sold by Ella Shute  
autographs collection album

*Edward C. Smith Books*

Grammar book  
Young reader book

**\*\*\*\*Box 5 and on (Family books)**

*Currently just a list of books in the large oversized box on lower shelf, need to be wrapped and separated into individual boxes*

Natick Illustrated, n.d.  
High School Music Reader, 1877, Bertha Valentine's  
The Cecilian Series of Study and Song, 1892, Mildred Smith's  
Eighty Years of Progress (Albert Smith, Charles Smith), 1869  
Edward Smith holy bible, 1875  
Evolution in Economics: An Analysis of Social Problems, by James Arthur Ambler, 1899  
The Bride's Fate by Emma Southworth (Albert Smith), 1869  
Hard Tack and Coffee (Albert Smith, Ralph Waldo Smith), 1888  
Blue and Gray (Albert Smith, Charles Smith), 1884  
The Boys of 61 (Albert Smith, Howard Smith), 1881  
History of Meridian Lodge, AF&AM, 1892

**Series 2. Gen. Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps (1871-1931)**

1 oversized document box, 3 standard document boxes

The materials in this series focus on veterans' support organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC), and their local offshoot for Natick: the General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps. These materials include books outlining the organizational constitutions and bylaws, meeting minutes, and member rosters. There are also records about the Independent Order of Good Templars, an organization focusing on temperance, which had its own local offshoot in Natick: the Natick Lodge. The final box in this series (box 8) includes a sixteen-part series of illustrated booklets documenting the history of the civil war,



featuring photographs by Mathew Brady. There is also a songbook for soldiers dating back to the Civil War.

**Box 6**

*WRC Members, By-Laws, Rituals, Etc.*

book with roll of members 1883-1920 and bylaws

book of rituals kept at secretary's desk

book of rituals

book of installation and ceremonial procedures

*WRC Medical Descriptive Book*

*WRC Meeting Minutes 1897-1902*

*WRC Record Book 1917-1923*

*WRC Members, By-Laws, and Minutes*

book with roll of members 1871-1926, bylaws, and minutes 1871-1873

**Box 7**

*WRC Rules and Regulations, 1908*

booklet

*WRC Roster, 1901*

booklet and copies

*WRC Correspondence with Veterans, 1891*

letters

*WRC Souvenir Booklet, 1890*

booklet and copies

*Wadsworth Portraits*

James Samuel Wadsworth printed portraits (from book pages?)

*GAR General Orders, 1886, 1930-1931*

*Misc. Newspapers, 1887, 1891*

The Natick Bulletin, June 24 1887

The Natick Review February 14 1891

*I OGT Natick Lodge Records*

Independent Order of Good Templars, Natick Lodge constitution and bylaws booklet  
Natick Lodge record book 1884

**Box 8**

Soldier Song Book (1864)

M. Brady Civil War Photographs

Features Preserved Williams (b. ~1837), brother of Maranda Williams Ambler

A History of the Civil War Section 1/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 2/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 4/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 5/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 6/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 7/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 8/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 9/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 10/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 11/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 12/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 13/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 14/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 15/16 (1912)

A History of the Civil War Section 16/16 (1912) - Missing cover

**Series 3: Artifacts - Housed in Museum (Boxes 126 and 127)**

Two large flat object boxes, stored in the museum

Collection includes personal objects from the Brown family such as a christening gown, table linens, childrens' gloves, porcelain china, and small crafts. Beyond objects relating directly to the Brown family, there are objects relating to the GAR and WRC, organizations the Brown family were members of. These objects include a ballot box, flags, military medals, and a military cap.

**Box 126**

2018.25.50 Pitcher, cream

2018.25.51 Saucer

2018.25.52 Bowl

2018.25.53a-b Bowl, Sugar & Lid

2018.25.62a-b Ballot box, removable handle, contains black and white voting tokens, GAR or WRC

2018.25.64a-d Gloves, Mildred Smith, for graduation, 1913

2018.25.65 Runner, Table, Linen, Hattie Smith

2018.25.66 Dress, Christening, Mildred Smith  
2018.25.67a-b Blanket & Pillow Cover, Baby, Mildred Smith  
2018.25.68a-b Batons, wooden with red, white and blue ribbons on ends

**Box 127**

2018.25.54 Cap, Military  
2018.25.55a-b Pillbox, Mary Esty  
2018.25.56 Flag, GAR Post 63  
2018.25.57 Flag, GAR Post 63  
2018.25.58 Flag, GAR Post 63  
2018.25.59 Box, "Liquid Cherries," with ribbons and pins, WRC  
2018.25.60a-b Box, Metallic painted bird and flowers  
2018.25.61 Sachet, "Happy Birthday"  
2018.25.69 Gavel, Dark-brown wood  
2018.25.70 Gavel, Mid-brown wood  
2018.25.71 Box, Bear Brand Hosiery, Full of ribbons and pins, WRC  
2018.25.72 Embroidered grapevine  
2018.25.73 Stick, walking, GAR, 1892  
2018.25.74 Bag, drawstring, for cap (2018.25.54)?

**Series 4: Oversized Books**

**Oversized Box 1**

Ledger, 1903-1904  
GAR Meeting Pamphlets, 1921-1930

**Oversized Box 2**

GAR Record Book, 1907-1913  
GAR Record Book, 1886-1896  
GAR Record Book, 1914-1930

**Oversized Box 3**

GAR Personal War Sketches, 1891 (bigger box measurements: 44cm x 33cm x 7cm)

**Oversized Box 4**

GAR Veteran Surveys, 1891 (smaller box measurements: 44cm x 33cm x 6cm)

**Oversized Box 5**

Maranda Williams portrait  
Horace F. Ambler portrait

Charles A. Smith portrait  
Graveyard photograph with Horace Ambler  
Group photograph with Mildred Smith  
Boston Musicians' Protective Association Contract, 1930  
Martin family photographs with Mrs. Martin, Harold, and Kenneth  
Mildred Smith high school diploma, 1913  
Mildred Smith middle school diploma, 1909  
Fort Clayton, Panama photograph of Military Police Battalion Company B, 1945  
Old Home Day at Groton, NH, 1929  
C.W. Hall painting name plate  
Natick High School postcard  
Downtown Natick photograph  
South Natick flood photograph, 1886  
Natick High School junior class photograph, 1875

**Oversized Box 6**

see \*\*\***Box 5 and on (Family Books)** above in Series 1

**Additional Collection Information:**

**Persons:** (found in documents or photographs)

Ambler, Arley (?-?)  
Ambler, Clara W. (1861-1915)  
Ambler, Dorothy (?-?)  
Ambler, Harvey W. (1875-?)  
Ambler, Horace Erastus (1829-1905)  
Ambler, Joseph E. (1857-1902)  
Ambler, Mary F. (1837-1924)  
Ambler, May (?-?)  
Ambler, Morton (?-?)  
Ambler, Percy W. (1864-1925)  
Ambler Hall, Eliza Maranda (1856-1923)  
Ambler Smith, Hattie Augusta (1873-1966)  
Ambler Valentine, Hanna Lavinia (1860-1916)  
Brady, Mathew (~1822-1896)  
Brown, Richard J. (?-?)  
Cummings Smith, Edward (1865-1902)  
Cummings Smith, Emma (1842-1922)  
Hall, Alfred J. (?-?)  
Hall, Charles (?-?)  
Kilmer, Howard Lewis (?-?)

Kilmer Brown, Shirley Muriel (1924-2018)  
Rice, Clara Mabel (1890-?)  
Shute Ambler, Ella (?-?)  
Smith, Albert (1841-1915)  
Smith, Charles Albert (1867-1937)  
Smith, Charles Howard (1896-?)  
Smith, Herbert Horace (1906-?)  
Smith, Mabel (?-?)  
Smith, Ralph Waldo (1904-1918)  
Smith Kilmer, Mildred Emma (1895-1970)  
Wadsworth, James Samuel (1807-1864)  
Williams, Abigail A. (~1825-?)  
Williams Ambler, Maranda M. (1833-1916)  
Williams, Edgar (~1851-?)  
Williams, Percival (Percy) (~1837-?)

**Organizations:** (mentioned in documents or photographs)

Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)  
Woman's Independent Relief Corps (WRC)  
General Wadsworth Independent Relief Corps  
Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), Natick Lodge  
Natick Grange  
Wellesley Grange

**Subjects:** (mentioned in documents or photographs)

Ambler family  
Smith family  
Civil War  
Civil War, music  
Civil War, photography  
Civil War, veterans  
Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)  
Grange, Natick  
Grange, Wellesley  
Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), Natick Lodge  
Natick, residents  
Woman's Relief Corps (WRC)  
World War I  
World War II, medals