Bliss/West/Backus Collection

3 boxes (1.2 linear ft.)
Collection number: AM-349

Abstract:
The Bliss, West, and Backus' were three early Pittsfield families, some of whom settled here even prior to the city's 1761 incorporation. The Backus family had significant involvement with the Pittsfield Fire Department, and owned a prominent storefront in the downtown area. During the 19th-century, intermarriage created associations between these three families. Members of the Bliss, West, and Backus families are referenced throughout the four-volume History of Pittsfield, covering the years 1734-1955. The four volumes, and a comprehensive index, are available in the Margaret H. Hall Library at the Berkshire Historical Society.

Finding aid by Louisa Lebwohl, July 2012.

Margaret H. Hall Library and Archives
Berkshire County Historical Society
Pittsfield, MA

Terms of Access and Use:
The papers are open to research according to the regulations of the Margaret H. Hall Library and Archives, without any additional restrictions.

Scope and Contents of the Collection:
The bulk of the collection consists of images produced through a variety of photographic processes, most of which depict members of the Bliss, West, and Backus families and their Pittsfield surroundings. The collection also includes one written document and some genealogical information provided by the donor.

This collection is organized into 3 series:

I: Documents.
II: Photographs.
III: Ambrotypes, daguerrotypes, tintypes, etc.

Contents List:

**SERIES I: Documents.**
Naturalization paper, Charles C. West, 1852            box 1: folder 1

**SERIES II: Photographs.**
Assorted photographs, I            box 1: folder 2
Assorted photographs, II            box 1: folder 3
Photographic postcards            box 1: folder 4
Laura West Backus            box 1: folder 5
Unidentified photographs            box 1: folder 6

**SERIES III: Ambrotypes, daguerrotypes, tintypes, etc.**
Grace West and father, Charles C. West            box 3: folder 1
Florilla Bliss            box 3: folder 2
Wedding ambrotypes: Charles C. West & Mary Bliss West            box 3: folder 3
Charlotte West            box 3: folder 4
Mrs. Simon Bliss; unidentified silhouette, daguerrotype, tintype            box 3: folder 5

Object Categories:
- Naturalization papers
• Photographs
• Photo albums
• Ambrotypes
• Daguerrotypes
• Tintypes
• Silhouettes

Search Terms:
The following terms represent persons, organizations, and topics documented in this collection.
• Camp Devens, Ayer, Mass.
• Empire Theatre, North Adams, Mass.
• Pittsfield, Mass.
• Pittsfield High School basketball
• Backus, Frank
• Backus, Grace West (Grace West)
• Backus, Laura West (Laura Backus Nicholls)
• Backus, Will
• Bliss, Harriet (Harriet Bliss Ford)
• Bliss, Mary (Mary Bliss West)
• Bliss, Simon
• Bliss, Mrs. Simon
• Ford, George
• Ford, Harriet Bliss (Harriet Bliss)
• Nicholls, John Muir
• Nicholls, Laura Backus (Laura West Backus)
• Smith, Arthur
• West, Charles C.
• West, Charlotte
• West, Grace (Grace West Backus)
• West, Mary Bliss (Mary Bliss)