Maine Historical Society

Coll. 2244
Lane, Isaac, 1765-1833
Collection
1777-2000
(bulk, 19th century)

Accession number: 2006.160
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Size: .5 linear ft.

Biographical information:
This collection consists chiefly of documents assembled by Ellis B. Usher, II, a grandson of Isaac Lane, and family histories written by him, such as the pamphlet “Captain Daniel Lane and his wife Molly Woodman” (Folder 17) and the handwritten monograph “Lane Line of Ellis Baker Usher, Second, from Capt., John Lane” (Folder 30)

I have read all the documents in the collection at least twice: I believe Mr. Usher carefully considered the material as though it were evidence in an adjudicative proceeding and fairly reported his conclusions. See, for example, his comments on the tradition that an early ancestor (Captain John Lane, circa 1717) was born in Limerick, Ireland, found in A Report on the Proceedings at the Celebration of the first Centennial Anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Buxton, Maine, J. M. Marshall (Portland, 1874), pp. 198-205 (hereinafter “Celebration”). Mr. Usher competently critiques that tradition in his monograph, “The Lane Family” (Folder 34).

Isaac Lane was born in Buxton, Maine, in 1765, and died on October 9, 1833. He was the eldest son of Captain Daniel Lane and Molly Woodman. His father and his uncles, Captain John Lane and Captain Jabez Lane, all served with distinction in the Revolutionary War, earning them the sobriquet “the military family of Buxton.” [Celebration 204.] He himself enlisted before he was 14 and served as a fifer in his father’s company, eventually serving more than four years.

He also served in the War of 1812, raising a regiment of 500-600 volunteers, mustered as
the 332 United States Infantry. His brother, Daniel Lane, served as Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment.

In addition to his military duties, Isaac Lane also served as sheriff of York County; as a member of Maine’s governor’s Council; as a presidential elector, voting for Andrew Jackson; and, for 20 years, as Collector of Customs at Belfast, Maine.

During his lifetime, he was a prominent merchant and mill owner. His estate was estimated to be valued from $90,000 to $200,000.

Scope and content:
The collection consists mostly of copies of documents collected by Ellis B. Usher, II, or written by him. Unfortunately, many of the pages are damaged. See, for example, the material in Folder 45. But the collection also contains some original documents, copies of historical documents and public records, as well as a useful list of authorities compiled by Rosalie Fellows Bailey in connection with her genealogical work for a modern descendant of Daniel Lane. See Folder 37, Item 15, “AUTHORITIES”.

The most interesting part of the collection consists of several original documents. See, for example, the pass issued by General John Burgoyne to Captain Daniel Lane (Folder 4). It is notable for stating Burgoyne’s determination to employ Indian auxiliaries as a weapon of war. Ironically, it was the murder by those auxiliaries of the fiancee of a Loyalist officer, Jenny McCrae, serving with the British forces which rallied the faltering Americans to General Gates. The letters of Thomas C. Lane (Folder 39) contain reference to slavery in the antebellum South. The letter of Isaac Lane and his wife to their dying 48 year old daughter (“... it is hard for your Mother & I, beyond the power of language to express...” is compelling (Folder 38). And, finally, one wonders why the family preserved for 185 years a letter advising its recipient that its author had committed fornication with a woman he was interested in marrying: “You need not let her see this till you can see[?] your self whether it be true or not.” (Folder 46)

Series:
I. Military career
II. Family history
III.  Genealogy
IV.  Daughters of the Cincinnati
V.  Correspondence of Isaac Lane
VI.  Correspondence of Thomas C. Lane
VII.  Miscellaneous

Provenance:
Roger and Rosalys Wilson. Roger is a great, great, great grandson of Isaac Lane.

Related collections:
In MHS archives: Papers of Isaac Lane, Coll 108.
In MHS museum: Portrait of Col. Isaac Lane (circa 1764-1833), artist and date unknown, oil on canvas
Inventory

Series I: Military career

Folder 1. Holographic copy of “A Diary of Col. Daniel Lane, during the War of 1812 * * *”, by Daniel Lane, undated. 8 pages. (See also Folder 8.) Daniel Lane was the brother of Isaac Lane and served with him during the War of 1812.

Folder 2. Receipt from 33’rd Regiment for $100 issued to Col. Isaac Lane, December 30, 1814.

Folder 3. Military Record of Col. Isaac Lane.

Folder 4. Letter from Major General John Burgoyne which was sent into the American Lines with Capt. Daniel Lane, dated at Fort Edwards, NY, August 9, 1777.

Folder 5. Enlistment Act of 1814, authorizing enlistment of men from 18 to 50.

Folder 6. Cover of communication from War Department containing “Peace Establishment”, 1815.

Folder 7. Service Record of the 33’rd Regiment U.S. Infantry in the War of 1812, prepared by Ellis B. Usher, II, undated. 5 pages.

Folder 8. Lt. Col. Daniel Lane’s Unfinished “Diary” War of 1812 [and] Civil Services, undated. 5 Pages.

Folder 9. Letter from Joel M. Marshall to * * * Usher, dated at Buxton, Maine, March 31, 1895, concerning Isaac Lane at the Battle of Plattsburg. 5 pages.

Folder 10. Isaac Lane: Revolutionary War Service. 3 pages.

Folder 11. Letter from War Department to Ellis B. Usher, II, dated August 10, 1893, concerning Isaac Lane’s military service. 1 page.

Folder 12. Letter from War Department to Ellis B. Usher, II, dated September 2, 1903, concerning Isaac Lane’s military service. 1 page.

Folder 13. Civil and Military Service of Isaac Lane, undated. 6 pages.

Folder 14. Civil and Military Service of Isaac Lane, undated. 3 pages.

Folder 15. Silhouette of Isaac Lane.

Folder 16. 33’rd U. S. Infantry:

(a) letter from War Department to Ellis B. Usher, II, dated February 28, 1896, regarding services of the 33’rd Regiment in the War of 1812. 2 pages.

(b) letter from the War Department to Ellis B. Usher, II, dated March 6, 1896, reporting on the record of the 33’rd Regiment. 2 pages.

(c) Notes from Vol. Am. State Papers-Military Affairs relating to 33’rd regiment,
Series II.: Family History

Daniel Lane

Folder 17. Pamphlet “Captain Daniel Lane and his wife, Molly Goodwin”, by Ellis B. Usher, II, dated January 1, 1901. 6 pages. Captain Daniel Lane (b.1740-d.1811) was the father of Isaac Lane.

Folder 18. “Journal of Daniel Lane [A private soldier at the siege of Quebec]”, reprinted from the New England Historical General Register, July 1872. 8 pages.
Folder 19. Daniel Lane, Civil and Military Service, undated. 1 page.
Folder 20. Silhouette of Daniel Lane.

Hannah Lane Usher
(Hannah was the daughter of Isaac Lane and his first wife, Ruth Merrill.)

Folder 21. “A Biographical Sketch of Hannah Lane Usher * * * “, Ellis B. Usher, II, 1903. 15 pages.
Folder 22. Genealogy and Historical Information concerning Hannah Lane. The likely author is Ellis B. Usher, II. See, for example, the reference to “[M]y maternal uncle, Cyrus Woodsum. . . “ on page 18. Undated. 10 pages.
Folder 23. Four handwritten narratives of the life of Hannah Lane Usher. Authors unknown. Undated.

John Lane
(b.1734-d.1822, an uncle of Isaac Lane)

Folder 24. Documents relating to John Lane:
(a) biographical sketch. 1 page.
(b) “Captain John Lane”. Portland, Me. Press, August 10, 1897. (2 pages).
(c) certificate of Revolutionary War Service, December 23, 1895. 2 pages.

The Lane Family


Isaac Lane’s third wife, Susan Douglas

Folder 26. A note concerning Isaac Lane’s third wife, Mrs. Susan Douglas. The author is believed to be Ellis B. Usher, II, undated. 3 pages.

Series III: Genealogy

Folder 27. Genealogy of Isaac Lane by Ellis B. Usher, II. (The article is unsigned, but see “. . . my booklet on Hannah Lane Usher. . .”) Undated. 2 pages.

Folder 28. Captain Daniel Lane, compiled by Rosalie Fellows Bailey, genealogist, May 1938. 4 pages.

Folder 29. Notes on the Genealogy of the Lane Family from John Lane [1st] to Captain Daniel Lane  (The printed pages are the work of Ellis B. Usher, II), January 12, 1912. 11 pages.

N.B. EBU, II, disputes the Dingwell castle connection. See first page of the attached material (picture of gravestone).

Folder 30. “Lane Line of Ellis Baker Usher, II”, undated. 6 pages.


Folder 32. Lane of King’s Bromley, abstract from “A Genealogical and Heraldic History
of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland”.

Folder 33. Lane Genealogy [the progenitors of Hannah Lane Usher], compiled by Ellis b. Usher, II, undated. 3 pages.

Folder 34. The Lane Family by Ellis B. Usher, II (See reference to “. . . my cousin Almeda Maria Higgins. . . on page 1.), undated. 6 pages. Part of each page is mutilated.

N.B. On page 3 EBU,II, comments on “the Irish tradition”: “I do not take issue with the Irish tradition. I want, here, to emphasize that it is tradition, dependent upon the statements of descendants in the fourth generation, who, directly, quote no earlier ancestor as the authority for their information. . . . “ (Emphasis in original; footnote omitted.)

Folder 35. Letter from Isaac Lane to Mrs. Reed, dated September 9, 1822, which asserts that John Lane emigrated from Limerick, Ireland. 3 pages.

Folder 36. Lane Line to Tristram Coffin. 3 pages.

Series IV: Daughters of the Cincinnati (Folder 37)

This Series consists of sixteen documents relating to the efforts of Mrs. Marshall Slade, identified as a descendant of Isaac Lane, to become a member of the Daughters of Cincinnati. She was assisted by Rosalie Fellows Bailey, a New York genealogist, who assembled a number of documents concerning Daniel Lane.

The Daughters of Cincinnati was incorporated in 1894 by female descendants of officers who served in the Revolutionary War to encourage the study of the history of the Revolution.

George Washington tried to maintain a “discreet distance” from meetings of the original Society of the Cincinnati, a fraternal order created by officers of the Continental Army which defined membership in hereditary terms. See Joseph J. Ellis, His Excellency George Washington (Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 158-160.

Item 1. Letter from RFB to MS, dated November 26, 1937. Typewritten document signed by author (hereinafter “TDS”).

Item 2. Letter from RFB to MS, dated December 9, 1937. TDS.
Item 3. Letter from RFB to MS, dated January 17, 1938. TDS.


Item 5. Letter from Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to RFB, dated December 30, 1937. TDS.

Item 6. Letter from War Department to RFB, dated December 17, 1937. TDS.

Item 7. Letter from War Department to RFB, dated January 5, 1938.


Item 9. Letter from Maine Historical Society to RFB, dated December 9, 1937. TDS. Attached to the letter are two pages of typed notes from the papers of Capt. Daniel Lane. The originals are in the possession of the Maine Historical Society.

Item 10. Letter from Maine Historical Society to RFB, dated January 15, 1938. OTD.

Item 11. Notes from the Records of the Proprietors of Narragansett TW No. 1 by William F. Goodwin, 1871. 1 page.


Item 13. Letter from RFB to MS, dated May 8, 1938. OTD.


Item 15. List of authorities consulted by RFB. May 1938. 1 page.

Item 16. List of eligible nonmembers of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati. 1946. 3 pages.

**Series V. Correspondence of Isaac Lane** (Folder 38)

Item 1. Letter from Benjamin T. Reed to Col. Isaac Lane, dated February 18, 1811. OMWT.

Item 2. Letter from Sara Randall, daughter of Isaac Lane, to her father, dated February 3, 1816. OMWT.

Item 3. Letter from William Hooper to Mr. Ellis B. Usher (salutation to “Rebecca”), dated November 22, 1816. OMWT.
Item 4. Letter from Rebecca Hooper to Ellis B. Usher, dated March 30, 1818. OMWT.

Item 5. Letter from Ellis B. Usher to Col. Isaac Lane, dated February 7, 1821, warning him of his daughter’s Sarah approaching death. OMWT.

Item 6. Letter from Isaac and Sally Lane to their daughter, Sarah, about her approaching death, undated. OMWT.

Item 7. Obituary of Sarah Lane, age 48, wife, of Isaac Lane.

Item 8. Letter from William Reed to Col. Isaac Lane, dated March 13, 1831, concerning the death of William Hooper.

**Series VI. Correspondence of Thomas C. Lane** (Folder 39)

This Series consists of eight handwritten items, including Mr. Lane’s withdrawal from Bowdoin College as well as letters written in New Orleans prior to the Civil War. Among the letters is one to his sister, dated “New Orleans Feb. 21st”.

The letter contains a reference to Stephen Longfellow: “[H]is wife was a Daughter of the late Stephen Longfellow [I] use to visit in Brunswick where his Brother was Professor there. . . .”

**Series VII. Miscellaneous**

Folder 40. Typescript of a letter from Horatio Woodman to Mrs. Bradley, dated January 21, 1845. Accompanying the letter are: (i) a recipe for a poultice; and (ii) a poem. Ellis B. Usher,II, grouped these items together.

Folder 41. Photographs of the gravestones of Sarah, wife of Isaac Lane; Ruth Lane, wife of Isaac Lane; and Hannah Lane, daughter of Isaac Lane and Ruth Lane.

Folder 42. Silhouette of Isaac Lane and a photograph of his portrait.

Folder 43. “Ghosts at Isaac Lane’s!”, a monograph by Almeda C. Higgins, undated. 4 pages.

Folder 44. Certificate issued by Maine’s Secretary of State, dated September 21, 1903, attesting to Isaac Lane’s service on the Governor’s Council and as a Presidential Elector.

Folder 45. Ten pages of miscellaneous material collected by Ellis B. Usher,II.
Folder 46. Letter from Joseph Woodman to Freeman Dillingham, dated November 5, 1821. The relevance of this letter to the Isaac Lane Collection is not clear. Mr. Lane’s mother’s maiden name, however, was Woodman. The subject matter of the letter is revealed in lines 9-13: “* * * * I have paid my respects to her for better than three years and for two have had to do with her the same as thou she was my wife and when in [M]inot to sleep [?] with her and * * * her the same as you will if ever she is your wife. . . . “

See also Isaac Lane Collection, Folder 17. The “Statement” identifies the descendants of “Captain Lane’s daughter, Mrs. Paul Woodman.” See also “Captain Lane’s Record” in the same document.

Folder 47. This folder contains two documents (OMWT) which relate to the probate of the Estate of Isaac Lane. Mr. Lane and his wife were not living together at the time of his death. [Folder 26]

(a) The first document, dated April 30, 1834, was executed by Susan D. Lane, widow of Isaac Lane, and Ellis B. Usher and Samuel Bradley. In modern probate practice it would be described as a declination to serve as personal representative [administratrix] and a widow’s waiver of her interest in her husband’s estate. The operative provisions limited the widow’s share in the estate to (i) personal property already in her possession, and (ii) the sum of $2,000.00.

(b) The second document, dated June 17, 1834, was executed by the “Creditors and Endorsers of the said Isaac Lane” for the benefit of Susan D. Lane. Although there is no modern probate counterpart for this document, its purpose can readily be discerned. The signers of the document agreed “. . . to repay to the said [Ellis B.] Usher and [Samuel] Bradley the aforesaid sum of two thousand dollars. . . . ” Significantly, the widow agreed to relinquish her dower rights in the estate.

The widow’s waiver of dower rights was noteworthy in view of the probable value of the estate. (See Folder 26, which sets its value from $90,000 to $200,000.) At Common Law a widow had a right to one-third of the land her husband owned in fee. Black’s Law Dictionary (7th ed., 1999). Contemporary Maine law granted a widow “. . . a right to claim dower . . . in all such lands . . . of which the husband was seized, in fee . . . at any time during the marriage. . . . “ Laws of the State of Maine 1821, c. LX, sec. 6. Maine did not abolish dower until 1981.

Folder 48. Note from Doug and Mary [no last name] to “R&R”, dated February 22, 2000, which accompanied donation of the collection. The note contains a reference to Leila Woodman Usher, a sister of Ellis B. Usher, II.