

Collection #
SC 3205

**JACOB HUTSON
LETTERS, 1850–1863**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder (10 letters)

COLLECTION
DATES: 1850-1863

PROVENANCE: State Historical Society of Iowa

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NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Agency, Wapello County, Iowa was established in 1843 at the site of an Indian agency, which operated from 1838–1843. The town was originally known as Agency City and is referred to as such within this collection. In 1850, many emigrants from the Midwest passed through Agency City on their way to California and Oregon, likely due to the California Gold Rush. The city was incorporated on 6 January 1859, and Ottumwa, the Wapello County seat, became a stop on the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad in 1857.

Seth Eaton Griggs (1778–1857) was born in Cheshire County, New Hampshire. He married Margaret "Peggy" Miller Griggs (1780–1863) on 16 November 1801 in Seneca, New York. By 1830, they lived in Jackson, Ripley County, Indiana, and had seven children: John Miller Griggs (1802–1877), Anna Griggs Hutson (1804–1873), Valencourt Griggs (1806–1873), Seth Eaton Griggs (1810–1859), David Hutson Griggs (1812–1865), William Paul M. Griggs (1815–1891), and Horatio Nelson Griggs (1819–1899).

By 1850, the entire Griggs family with the exception of Anna Griggs Hutson and her husband, Joseph Jacob Hutson (1791–1859), lived in Agency City, Iowa. There, Seth and Peggy Griggs lived with both David and William before buying a house of their own and operating a grocery. They lived there until the end of their lives.

All of the Griggs brothers are mentioned in the collection, but only two wrote letters to Anna and Jacob. William Paul M. Griggs married Mary Showers (1817–1887) in Otter Village, Ripley County, Indiana on 24 December 1835. They had five children together. In Agency City, William worked as a mason and brick-maker and co-owned a dry goods store with his brother, David. He died in Agency City in 1891.

Horatio Nelson Griggs married Margaret Williams (1821–1886) in Otter Village, Ripley County, Indiana on 6 December 1838. Together they had nine children. Horatio worked as a farmer and wagon-maker in Agency City. Eventually he moved away from Iowa and died in Mound City, Kansas, in 1899.

Anna Griggs Hutson married Joseph Jacob Hutson in Ripley, Indiana on 19 January 1824. They had twelve children together. Jacob Hutson was born in either Virginia or Kentucky in 1791 and served in the War of 1812 from September 1814 to March 1815, for which he received 80 acres of bounty land in Jennings County, Indiana. By 1850, the Hutsons resided in Vernon, Jennings County, Indiana. Jacob's occupation there is unknown. Both Hutsons died in Holton, Ripley County, Indiana, Anna in 1873 and Jacob in 1859.

Sources:

Ancestry, Library Edition, Accessed 17 January 2017.

"Introducing the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad 1849-1970." Burlington Route Historical Society, n.d. Accessed 18 January 2017.

<http://www.burlingtonroute.org/Qrailroad/index.php>.

Savage, Tom. *Dictionary of Iowa Place Names*. University of Iowa Press, 2007: pp. 20-21.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains ten typed transcripts of letters from the Griggs family of Agency City, Iowa, to the Jacob Hutson family of Vernon, Indiana, dating from 1850–1863. No originals of the letters are present. Although most of the letters are from husband-and-wife pairs, all have been written by the respective husbands (Seth Griggs, William Griggs, and Horatio Griggs). Similarly, while the letters are addressed to both Jacob and Anna Hutson, they were probably written for Anna, the only daughter of the Griggs family. Organized chronologically, the letters are:

1. 10 February 1850—from Seth and Peggy Griggs, Agency City, IA, to Jacob and Anna Hutson and William and Minerva Burton, Vernon, IN, providing family updates and expressing sadness that the Hutsons returned to Indiana. The Griggs feel as though the Hutsons would have stayed in Agency City if they had seen it. The Burtons are noted as friends of the Griggs family.
2. 13 May 1850—from W.P.M. [William Paul M.] and Nancy [Mary?] Griggs, Agency City, IA, to "Brother and Sister" [Jacob and Anna Hutson], Vernon, IN, providing more family updates and mentioning a wave of settlers and immigrants on their way to California. Griggs estimates that three to five thousand people passed through Agency City that spring. The transcript also names Griggs' wife as Nancy; later letters and genealogical records identify her as Mary.
3. 18 May [1850]—from Seth and Peggy Griggs to "Children" [Jacob and Anna Hutson], providing the standard family updates along with another mention of emigrants to California and Oregon coming through Agency City. Here Seth Griggs entreats a quick reply, as he is 73 years old and "may not live to read another letter from you."
4. 20 June [1850]—from Seth and Peggy Griggs to Jacob Hutson, writing that Seth is running a grocery and making good money thanks to the wagons passing through. Seth also writes that he thinks the Hutsons' adult children would do better here in Iowa than "on that hard flinty, and poor nobby soil of Otterneck or Brush Creek" in Indiana.
5. 5 August 1850—from W.P.M. and Mary Griggs to "Brothers and Sisters" [Jacob and Anna Hutson and unnamed others], providing a few lines of familial updates.
6. 3 November 1850— from Horatio and Margaret Griggs, Agency City, IA, to "Brother and Sister" [Jacob and Anna Hutson], Vernon, IN, mentioning the rapid growth of Agency City and the continuing wagon train.
7. 3 November 1850—from W.P.M. Griggs and Mary Griggs to Jacob and Anna Hutson, predicting that their parents (Seth and Peggy Griggs) will die soon while also mentioning the rapid growth of Agency City.

8. 30 January 1853—from W.P.M. Griggs to unaddressed (presumably Jacob and Anna Hutson), writing about the winter weather and the likelihood that Agency City will become a railroad stop.
9. 10 July 1853—Seth and Peggy Griggs to "Children" [Jacob and Anna Hutson], a very melancholy letter informing the Hutsons of their bad health and of how much the Griggs miss their only daughter, whom they believe lives in Indiana only because her husband wished to remain there.
10. 3 October 1863—Horatio Griggs to Anna Hutson, informing Anna of her parents' deaths and commenting on the Civil War. He writes, "Our country I fear must fall yet to the iron yoke of despotism." There is no indication to which side Griggs is referring. Additionally, the transcription misidentifies his name as both H.P Griggs and H.V. Griggs in this letter, when his full name according to genealogical sources is Horatio Nelson Griggs.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Letters, 1850–1863

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1