

Gresham Family Papers

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1825-1943



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1988.096

Unit Date

1825-1943

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains photocopies of papers of the family of John Jones Gresham, a Macon, Georgia attorney, businessman and politician. Materials include correspondence, notes on Confederate memorabilia, legal and financial papers, and biographical materials.

Creator

Gresham family (Burke County, Ga.)

Extent

0.5 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Gresham Family Papers were temporarily lent to the Special Collections in 1988. Photocopies of the papers were made at that time and the original materials returned to the owner. An original letter was donated in 2015.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Gresham Family Papers commenced and was completed in February 2006. An addition was integrated in July 2017.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Gresham Family Papers, 1825-1943, Ms1988-096, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

John Jones Gresham was born in Burke County, Georgia, January 21, 1812, the son of Job and Mary Jones Gresham. He attended school at Waynesboro and Richmond Bath, Georgia before entering the University of Georgia in 1830. After a private study of law, he was admitted to the Georgia bar in 1834 and opened a practice in Waynesboro but soon moved to Macon. In the 1840s, Gresham relinquished his law practice to devote more attention to other matters, including his farm. He was elected mayor of Macon in 1843 and 1847. A Presbyterian, Gresham was made a ruling elder in 1847. In 1850, he established the Macon Manufacturing Company and served as its president.

Following the American Civil War, Gresham briefly practiced law with his son Thomas but soon turned his attention to politics and business. He was elected to the state senate in 1865 and to two terms in the state house of representatives. He was heavily involved in education at the local and state level, serving as treasurer of the Macon Free School, president of the Alexander Free School, member of the Macon County Board of Education, president of the University of Georgia board of trustees, director of the Theological Seminary at Columbia and trustee and treasurer of Oglethorpe University. He also served as director of the Southwestern Railroad and the Central Georgia Bank.

Gresham married Mary E. Baxter (daughter of Thomas W. Baxter of Athens, Georgia) on May 24, 1843. They had five children: Thomas B., Minnie Gresham Machen, LeRoy W., and two sons who died in infancy. Gresham died on October 16, 1891, while visiting his daughter in Baltimore. His wife preceded him in death. They are buried in Macon's Rose Hill Cemetery

Thomas B. Gresham married Tallulah (or Lula) A. Billups on October 15, 1869 in Morgan County, Georgia. By 1891, Gresham was living in Baltimore with his second wife, Bessie Johnston Gresham, and practicing law.

LeRoy Gresham, the son of Thomas B. and Lula Billups Gresham, was reared in Baltimore. He studied law and briefly practiced in Baltimore before entering Union Theological Seminary in Richmond in 1903. He married Mary Jessie Rhett in Baltimore that same year. In 1909, Gresham became pastor of Salem (Virginia) Presbyterian Church, a position he would hold through 1946. He died in 1955.

Scope and Content

This collection contains photocopies of papers of the family of John Jones Gresham, a Macon, Georgia attorney, businessman and politician. The collection includes personal and business correspondence addressed to Gresham, as well as a few letters addressed to his son, Thomas B. Gresham, and grandson, LeRoy Gresham. There is one original letter to John Gresham, dated April 16, 1841.

Also contained in the collection are correspondence and notes of Bessie Johnston Gresham, largely devoted

to various pieces of Confederate memorabilia, including the death mask and uniform buttons of "Stonewall" Jackson, the sword of Joseph Johnston, the last Confederate flag to fly over Fort Sumter, a horseshoe from Turner Ashby's horse, and the origin of the song "Maryland, My Maryland." The correspondence contains several letters from Mary Anna Morrison Jackson, widow of "Stonewall" Jackson.

Apart from personal letters from friends and relatives, the miscellaneous correspondence folder also contains copies of post-American Civil War letters from James Longstreet and Jubal Early and to John S. Mosby. Included here also is a letter from Lt. Elliott Johnston, aide to General Garnett, written from Richmond in July 1862.

The collection also contains biographical materials on John J. Gresham, a few military documents of Capt. Elliott Johnston, newspaper clippings regarding the trial of Jefferson Davis, and family information from a Gresham family Bible.

Keywords

Civil War

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by type, then chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Letters to John J. Gresham

Unit Date 1834-1889

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Letters to Thomas B. Gresham from John J. Gresham

Unit Date 1861-1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Letters to Thomas B. Gresham from Mary Baxter Gresham

Unit Date 1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Letters to Thomas B. Gresham from LeRoy W. Gresham

Unit Date 1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Letters to Thomas B. Gresham from LeRoy W. Gresham

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Letters to Thomas B. Gresham from Minnie Gresham

Unit Date 1863-1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Miscellaneous letters to Thomas B. Gresham

Unit Date 1862-1924, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Bessie Johnston Gresham correspondence

Unit Date 1898-1904

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Bessie Johnston Gresham correspondence

Unit Date 1905-1921, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Letters to LeRoy Gresham

Unit Date 1911-1940

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Miscellaneous correspondence

Unit Date 1862-1897, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Legal and financial records

Unit Date 1825-1943

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

"Testimonials to the Life and Character of John Jones Gresham"

Unit Date 1892

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Handwritten childhood reminiscences of unidentified man (probably John J. Gresham)

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Bessie Johnston Gresham notes on Confederate memorabilia

Unit Date 1897-1921, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Over Yonder: a novelette; translated from the German of E. Marlitt (by Bessie Johnston)

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

General materials

Unit Date 1842-1906, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)