

A Guide to the Charles Triplett O'Ferrall Papers, 1870-1893 SC 0086

Charles Triplett O'Ferrall papers
1870-1893



Title Statement

A Guide to the Charles Triplett O'Ferrall Papers, 1870-1893 SC 0086

Author: Don Lambert, Victoria Edwards

Publication Statement

Publisher: James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

820 Madison Drive
MSC 1706
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807
Telephone: (540) 568-3612
library-special@jmu.edu
URL: <https://www.lib.jmu.edu/special/>



September 2009

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-10-08 07:05:18 -0400.

Language Usage: English

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Revision Description

2013-11-21	Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.
September 2009	revised by Victoria M. Edwards
2017	Collection renumbered.
2020-04-01	Minor revisions to finding aid.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0086

Unit ID

Unit Date

1870-1893

Language

English

Abstract

The Charles Triplett O'Ferrall Papers, 1870-1893, consist of 273 items housed within two boxes, of correspondence received by O'Ferrall when he resided in Harrisonburg, Virginia, as well as a small amount of assorted legal, financial, and miscellaneous documents which are apparently unconnected with O'Ferrall or his family, but do illustrate some common financial and legal practices of the day.

Creator

O'Ferrall, Charles T. (Charles Triplett), 1840-1905

source

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society

Extent

0.76 cubic feet 2 boxes

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

Acquisition Information

The bulk of the collection was placed on deposit according to a contract with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society. Three items are the property of Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. These items are housed in folder 8 and are clearly marked as property of Special Collections. Their descriptions and titles are as follows: Editorial - "To the Last Card of Col. Chas. T. O'Ferrall" by William Alexander, Booklet - "Remarks of Hon. Chas. T. O'Ferrall on the Life and Character of Hon. William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, of Virginia, Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 6, 1892," and Booklet - "Address to the Democrats of Virginia. The Record of Hon. Charles T. O' Ferrall, and His Claims Upon the Democratic Gubernatorial Nomination."

Processing Information

In order to streamline the process of applying collection numbers, Special Collections staff completed a large-scale renumbering campaign in the spring of 2017. **This collection was previously cataloged as SC 2015.**

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], [box #, folder #], Charles Triplett O'Ferrall Papers, 1870-1893, SC 0086, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, on deposit from Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton, VA, housed in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Bio/Historical Note

Charles Triplett O'Ferrall (October 21, 1840-September 22, 1905) was born in Frederick County, Virginia, and spent much of his youth residing in Morgan County, Virginia (now West Virginia). After his father's death when O'Ferrall was fifteen, he took over his father's position as clerk pro tempore of the circuit court in Morgan County. Two years later he was elected clerk of the county circuit court there, a position he held until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. O'Ferrall joined the 12th Virginia Cavalry (CSA), Winchester in 1861 as a private. By 1865, he was an acting colonel managing forces in the Shenandoah Valley and saw action at Second Manassas (1862) and Upperville (1863). He sustained eight injuries over the course of service. During

his recuperation in Enterprise, Mississippi, he met Anna E. McLean, and they were married February 8, 1865. After the war, O'Ferrall and his wife briefly ran an inn in Staunton, Virginia. In 1868, O'Ferrall entered Washington College (now Washington and Lee) under Robert E. Lee and graduated with a law degree in August 1869. After moving to Harrisonburg, O'Ferrall was elected as a Democrat to the House of Delegates for two terms, 1871-1873. In 1874, he became judge of the Rockingham County Circuit Court, a position he held until 1880. In 1882, he won the Rockingham County Congressional election, and served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1893, Democratic Congressman O'Ferrall was elected Governor. He ran on a bimetallic currency ticket, one which would later ruin his political career. His first two years in office were notable for his liberal stance against lynching and his favorable economic policies. O'Ferrall's downfall came, however, in 1896, when he refused to endorse the free silver platform of fellow Democrat William Jennings Bryan. O'Ferrall retired to Chesterfield County after two more years in office, where he wrote his book *Forty Years of Active Service* in 1904. Charles O'Ferrall died a year later in Richmond.

Scope and Content

The Charles Triplett O'Ferrall Papers, 1870-1893, consist of 273 items in two boxes, and is arranged in three series: correspondence (1870-1893), legal and financial (1873-1877), and other (1874-1879). The items therein cover O'Ferrall's post-war life and career until the decade leading up to his death.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1870-1893, includes letters and postcards to and from O'Ferrall related to his business matters and personal affairs. Many letters express sympathy for his wife's death in 1879. Also present is correspondence relating to the State Conservative Executive Committee, a group that supported O'Ferrall's bid for the House of Delegates and a group from which O'Ferrall elicited support in his gubernatorial campaign. Other items of note include letters from E. I. Armstrong, J. W. Bassore, Benjamin Milnes, Mrs. Charles O'Ferrall, Secretary of the Commonwealth James McDonald, Gilmore and Company with an enclosed advertisement and from Charles O'Ferrall to Fred W. M. Holliday.

Series 2: Legal and Financial, 1873-1877, includes legal documents related to O'Ferrall's various positions in law and government. Some items of note include bankruptcy notices, deeds, and the undated will of Mary Parrot.

Series 3: Other, 1874-1879, includes miscellaneous documents, newspaper clippings and an oversized broadside. Items of note include the report card of O'Ferrall's son Charles, an announcement about Dr. Moffett, a July 4, 1877 article from the *Staunton Spectator* entitled "The Public Debt-General Mahone's Views" and also one from a Washington D.C. paper discussing the Democratic policy in Virginia with "An Early Convention, Payne and Lee, and an Aggressive Fight." Other documents include "Mr. Alexander's reply to the last card of Col. Chas. T. O'Ferrall", 15 June, 1893 (original encapsulated, with xeroxed copy), "Remarks of Hon. Chas. T. O'Ferrall of Virginia on the life and character of Hon. William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, delivered in the House of Representatives," 6 February 1892, Washington, and an "Address to the Democrats of Virginia: The Record of Hon. Charles T. O'Ferrall, and his claims upon the Democratic Gubernatorial Nomination."

Related Material

Charles Triplett O'Ferrall Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

Virginia. Governor (1894-1898 : O'Ferrall). Executive papers of Governor Charles T. O'Ferrall, 1894-1897. Accession 43210. State government records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

Margaret Reed Collection, 1902-1914, SC 0093, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Keywords

Statesmen -- Virginia -- Biography

Judges -- Virginia

Lawyers -- Virginia

Legislators -- Virginia

Elections -- Virginia

Practice of law -- Virginia

Rockingham County (Va.) -- History

Virginia -- History, Local

Virginia -- Genealogy

Virginia -- Politics and government -- 1865-1950

Virginia -- Social life and customs
United States -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
United States -- Politics and government -- 1865-1900
Letters (correspondence)
Postcards
Legal documents
Financial Records
Newspaper clippings
Virginia. General Assembly. House of Delegates -- Elections
O'Ferrall, Charles T. (Charles Triplett), 1840-1905 -- Correspondence
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society
O'Ferrall, Charles T. (Charles Triplett), 1840-1905

Alternative Form Available

Also available on microfilm, Reel 1489, at Special Collections of James Madison University and at the Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Bibliography

Malone, Dumas, editor. *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934, pp. 633-634. Ref E176.D56
Younger, Edward, editor. *The Governors of Virginia 1860-1978*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1982, pp. 135-141. F225.G77 1982
O'Ferrall, Charles T. *Forty Years of Active Service*. New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1904.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged chronologically within three series:

- Correspondence, 1870-1893
- Legal and Financial, 1873-1877
- Other, 1874-1879

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID 1

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/736

Unit Date 1870-1893

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/739

Unit Date 1870-1878

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/740

Unit Date 1879

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/741

Unit Date 1880-1893

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Postcards

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/742

Unit Date 1876-1881

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/743

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Legal and Financial

Unit ID 2

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/737

Unit Date 1873-1877

Legal Documents

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/744

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Financial Documents

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/745

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Other

Unit ID 3

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/738

Unit Date 1874-1879

Miscellaneous Documents

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/746

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Newspaper Clippings

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/747

Mixed Materials [1000886527] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Oversized

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/748

Unit Date 1874

Mixed Materials [1000898360] OV 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Microfilm reel 1489

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/27233

Microform MR 1489 (box)