

A Guide to the Griffith and Mahoney Family Papers, 1846-ca. 1960s

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A Collection in the Thomas Balch Library M 018

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Author: Stephanie Adams

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

M 018

Language

English

Abstract

Griffith and Mahoney family correspondence, financial records, legal documents, cards and postcards, photographs, and memorabilia.

Collector

Robert Griffith Mahoney,

Extent

.33 cubic feet.

Repository

Thomas Balch Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research.

Use Restrictions

No physical characteristics affect use of this material

Acquisition Information

Robert Griffith Mahoney, CA

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Alternative Form Available

None

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

The Power of Ducks by Robert Griffith Mahoney, 2009 [V REF 921 MAHONEY ROBERT G.]

Bibliography

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Lucas, Townsend M. "Loudoun County, Virginia Lists of Free Negroes: 1851, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859" (transcription of Loudoun County Court records). Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

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Other Finding Aid

None

Biographical Information

The Griffith and Mahoney families were part of a well-established community of free African Americans in the Hillsboro area. Forrest and Henry Griffith, William Mahoney and Ellzey Furr were among the founding members of the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, established in 1864. The early congregation met at Pulpit Rock, located south of Hillsboro, using the white Arnold Grove Methodist Church at night. They built their own church nearby in 1887 on land that included a piece donated by Ellzey and Fanny Furr.

Forrest Griffith was born into slavery in the Hillsboro, VA area around 1790. He was enslaved by James (1749-1804) and Margaret (1760-1837) McIlhane, who were prominent landowners at the time with extensive holdings in Loudoun County. Griffith purchased his freedom and that of his daughter Fanny (ca. 1840) from Margaret McIlhane around 1839. His wife, also named Fanny (ca. 1790), was a free woman, although there is little information about her or how she obtained her freedom. The Griffiths owned 15 acres of land near Hillsboro, which they purchased in 1847. By 1860, Griffith was an established land owner, with property valued at \$500.00. In addition to Fanny, the couple had one son, Henry Griffith, born 27 Apr 1846.

Fanny married Ellzey (Elsey) Furr (ca. 1820), a free African American neighbor, and settled near her parents' home. They had eight children: Robert (ca. 1855), Henry (ca. 1849), Harriett (ca. 1850), Mary (ca. 1856), Forrest (ca. 1858), Permelia (ca. 1859), Frances (ca. 1865), Emma (ca. 1860). Henry Griffith, born 27 Apr 1846, married Ann M. Cartwright (15 May 1843-26 Apr 1923) and had seven children: Ella (ca. 1869, died 24 Mar 1939), Henry (ca. 1880), Annie (ca. 1880), Viola (ca. 1874), Warren Cartwright (12 Apr 1876-10 Feb 1946), Ernest (ca. 1889), Hattie (n.d.). Viola's son, Hugh (12 Nov 1897, died 17 Mar 1939), also lived with the family. The Griffith and Mahoney families were joined with the marriage of Annie to William "Willie" Mahoney, a descendent of Eliza Mahoney.

Less is known about the origins of the Mahoney family. Eliza Mahoney and her children - William, Bushrod, Charles Henry, Richard, Catharine and Wesley - were freed by Charles F. Anderson in 1856. There is no evidence extant about the identity of her husband. William married a woman named Martha (last name unknown) and had seven children: He was also one of the founding members of the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church. William "Willie" Mahoney married Annie Griffith, and they moved to Montclair, Essex County, NJ during the early part of the 20th century. They had one son, Carl Henry Mahoney (12 Feb 1901-17 May 1977). Carl married in 1939 Dorothy Miller and they had two children, Robert Griffith Mahoney and William Mahoney. He moved to California with his family, where his son Robert Griffith Mahoney resides.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of correspondence, financial records, legal documents, cards and postcards, photographs, and memorabilia. Most of the early documents are from the Griffith family, with items from the Mahoney family appearing later. Financial records comprise the largest group of items, consisting largely of receipts. These include poll taxes for various family members, rent payments, medical bills, shop accounts, and expenses for burial plots. Variants on the Griffiths' surname appear variously in census and financial records as Griffey, Griffee, Grifey, and Griffy. The collection also contains two DVD's of family movies from the 1930s to 1960s, and a DVD with a family movie called *Griffith-Mahoney's Loudoun County Roots*, from 1940 (see folders 23 and 24).

Inclusive dates for the collection are 1846-ca.1960s, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1870-1935.

Contents List

Box 1

Folder 1: Correspondence, 1902, 1915, 1923, n.d.

Folder 2: Financial Records, 1846, 1849, 1856, n.d.

Folder 3: Financial Records, 1860-1861, 1866, 1869

- Folder 4: Financial Records, 1870-1873**
- Folder 5: Financial Records, 1875-1879**
- Folder 6: Financial Records, 1882-1885**
- Folder 7: Financial Records, 1886-1889**
- Folder 8: Financial Records, 1890-1895**
- Folder 9: Financial Records, 1896-1899**
- Folder 10: Financial Records, ca. 1900-1903**
- Folder 11: Financial Records, 1905-1908**
- Folder 12: Financial Records, 1911, 1913-1914, 1918-1919**
- Folder 13: Financial Records, 1920-1922**
- Folder 14: Financial Records, 1923-1925, 1928-1929**
- Folder 15: Financial Records, 1934-1935**
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- Folder 20: Photographs -- Griffith Family, n.d.**
- Folder 21: Photographs -- Mahoney Family, n.d.**
- Folder 22: Memorabilia, 1929, n.d.**
- Folder 23: Mahoney-Griffith Family Movies 1930s-1960s**
- Folder 24: Griffith-Mahoney's Loudoun County Roots 1940**