

# A Guide to the Alexander Family Papers

Alexander Family Papers 1800-1890

1800-1890

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A Collection in the Special Collections Department 4800  
Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library  
1997

## History

**Processed by:** Special Collections Department Staff

**Date Completed:** 1997

**Encoded by:** Courtney Boissonnault

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Alexander Family Papers

**Subtitle:** Alexander Family.

**Collection:** 4800

**Author:** Processed by Special Collections Dept. staff; machine-readable finding aid created by Courtney Boissonnault.

**Sponsor:** Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

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## Revision Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection Number**

4800

**Language**

English

**Collector**

Lewis Egerton Smoot

**Extent**

2000 items

**Repository**

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
USA

## Administrative Information

**Access Restrictions**

Collection is open to research.

**Use Restrictions**

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

**Acquisition Information**

This collection was a gift of Mr. Lewis Egerton Smoot of "Caledon" in Goby, Virginia. It was presented to the University of Virginia on June 18, 1954.

**Funding Note**

Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

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## Scope and Content

The papers of the Alexander family of King George County, Virginia contain ca. 2000 items (5 Hollinger boxes, ca. 1.75 linear feet), ca. 1800-1890, consist of correspondence, financial, and legal papers. Most of the earlier papers are those of landowner Gustavus B. Alexander, and concern his dealings in wheat, corn, guano fertilizer, slaves, and land, as well as legal matters and business ventures. Later papers are those of his son, Charles G. Alexander, lawyer, justice of the peace, and schoolmaster, and deal with a variety of subjects, including King George County Schools, land surveying, meteorological observations, and slavery. Other subjects of possible interest include medical records and doctors' bills, tax records, and documents concerning St. Paul's Church in King George County.

Correspondence of note includes extensive dealings in wheat and other goods with Alexandria merchants Stephen Shinn and Son. Other business associates include W.H. McDonald and Co., J. Leadbeater and Son, C.G. Howland, and Robinson and Payne. Gustavus B. Alexander and other area landowners dealt in guano with the Alexandria, Virginia company S.S. Masters and Son: 6, 13, 23 Sept 1852; 3 Feb 1853; 16, 17 Sept 1854; 10 Oct 1855; and 24 Sept 1860. Two contracts with overseers of the Alexander family plantation "Caledon" are included in the correspondence: with Henry Ryals (30 Oct 1852) and with John L. Lewisford (9 Jan 1860).

Letters dated 7, 20 Oct; 3, 11 Nov 1834; 29 Mar; 29 Aug 1839; 2 Mar; 10 June 1848; 14 Jan and 9 Feb 1857 pertain to land holdings of the related Stuart family, Chapman family, and Alexander family in Alexandria, Virginia. Other letters concerning property holdings are as follows: a deed to "Strawberry Hill property" bought by Eliza Jackson from G.B. Wallace, dated 4 Sept 1876; R.H. Stuart to Charles G. Alexander concerning land sold to Eliza Hughes and Charles Prior, dated 11 Feb 1890, and an undated note; a list of "Officers of District #3, King George County," which includes Gustavus B. Alexander as chairman, dated 15 May 1852; and correspondence from the U.S. War Department to Charles G. Alexander concerning abandoned lands, dated 25 Jan 1866.

Several letters concern the "Boyd's Hole" property held by the Alexander family. Correspondence from Stephen Shinn to Gustavus B. Alexander concerns negotiations with the Potomac River Steam Boat Company to build a wharf at Boyd's Hole: 30 June; 9 July; 3 Sept; 2, 18, 25, and 29 Oct 1855; 25 June; 9, and 30 Aug 1856. Letters pertaining to a dispute about the construction of a road at Boyd's Hole include correspondence dated 1 June, 5 Oct, and 6 Nov 1856 and a 31 July 1876 "list of hands to work on Public Road." Letters pertaining to the lease and sale of the Boyd's Hole property include: a 3 Nov 1865 agreement of lease between Charles G. Alexander and Thomas C. Daly; a 2 Nov 1874 letter from the Geo. C. Wedderburn Real Estate Company to Charles G. Alexander; and an undated draft of a real estate announcement: "Boyd's

HoleFor Sale!"

Letters dated 20, 25 April 1866; 10 July 1868; and 3 Sept 1869 concern debts and taxes on the estate of Gustavus B. Alexander. Several letters deal with money lent to the Alexander family by Lucy A. Thornton of Port Royal, Virginia: 20 Aug, 28 Sept 1851; 30 Sept 1852; and 27 Sept 1856. Of special note is a letter dated 9 May 1866, in which Lucy Thornton requests that Charles Alexander pay the money owed her so that she may repair her house, "which was very badly shelled (in the Civil War) and is scarcely habitable."

Some correspondence of the Grymes family is included in the Alexander family papers. Letters of George Grymes include an undated note to Gustavus B. Alexander concerning plantation crops, and a letter to Thomas Grymes, dated 28 Nov 1844, on the dangers of hard drinking. The correspondence of Fanny Grymes deals with legal matters and property holdings, notably a tract of land called "Eagle's Nest:" 11 May 1870; 6 March 1871; 16 May, 18 Sept 1872; 17, 30 Sept 1873; 31 July 1875; and 19 Oct 1887.

Letters from Charles G. Alexander's period as Justice of the Peace in Yuba County, California (where he settled as a result of his participation in a Washington-based gold rush expedition from 1849 to late 1851) include a goodbye note written to his father and dated simply "1849" and letters dated 21 Jan; 8, 15 Aug; and 11 Nov 1850; 21 Jan; 24 Feb; 28 April; and 15 June 1851. Also included is a 1 April 1857 complaint filed concerning a trial held before Charles G. Alexander in Yuba County, California.

Undated correspondence of note includes an unsigned satirical poem about Charles G. Alexander's early career as an attorney; an open letter to "the Voters of King George County" from C.H. Ashton, concerning his candidacy for the House of Delegates; a fragment of a letter which mentions "the horrible party now in power" and predicts "a revolution beginning in the North;" a memorandum recording the descendants of a "Dr. Bell of Lancaster;" and letters to Judith B. Alexander and Marietta Alexander from Sarah Stuart and "Rose."

Two small notebooks dating from 1862 and 1863 are among the bound volumes in Box 1. These consist of notes taken by Charles G. Alexander during his period as a member of the 15th Regiment of the Virginia Cavalry in the Civil War. Included in these notebooks are lists of prisoners taken and guards appointed, munitions, cavalry companies and their captains, and mess and pay accounts of the soldiers. Also included is a daily record of the movements of the 15th Virginia Cavalry, Company E, under Captain Mark Arnold, and a record of the battles and skirmishes in which it was involved. The 9th Virginia Cavalry is also frequently mentioned.

Two folders include material concerning King George County Schools, such as teachers' certificates, letters of the King George County Textbook Committee, correspondence concerning teaching positions (Box 5), and three bound volumes (Box 1) entitled "Teacher's Pocket Record." These consist of the attendance records and policies of Potomac District Public School #4 from 1876 to 1887 while Charles G. Alexander was schoolmaster.

Medical records and doctors' bills of the Alexander family have been separated into one folder covering the period from 1826 to 1865. Included in these documents are records of medical attention given to slaves of the Alexander family and of the Fitzhugh family. These slaves are often mentioned by name.

Two folders contain the tax records of the Alexander family from 1814 to 1886 with some undated material. These records are also of particular interest because they list the number of slaves held by the family in any given year.

Meteorological surveys and observations were made by Charles G. Alexander for the U.S. War Department in 1874 and 1875. These may be found in a folder along with several weather maps of the United States and correspondence between Charles G. Alexander and the Chief Signal Officer of the War Department.

Material concerning St. Paul's Church in King George County consists of one folder of correspondence and notes, including records of goods and money donated to the church, meetings of the vestry, and an undated list of pew-holders.

Some miscellaneous items have been separated into a single folder. These include business and calling cards, advertisements, poetry of such writers as Alexander Pope and John Stuart Mill, the passport of Charles G. Alexander dated 1849, a school report for Charles G. Alexander at Wood Grove Seminary in the 1842-3 term, and the will of Gustavus B. Alexander, dated 1855. Also included is an 1855 application for a land warrant due Gustavus B. Alexander as a veteran of the War of 1812.

A substantial amount of material concerning slavery has been separated into four folders of "Slave Records," under the subheadings of "Correspondence," "Financial and Legal," and "Financial and Legal --Bonds." The contents of these folders, which collectively cover the period from 1814 to 1873 are listed below:

Slave Records --Correspondence. Items of interest include: 1 March 1824 -- George Johnson to Jacob Stuart, concerning ownership of slave William; 2 April 1830 -- certificate concerning capture of runaway slave Jim, belonging to Gustavus B. Alexander; 10 Sept 1849 -- A.G. Dade to Gustavus B. Alexander, concerning hired slaves who became ill; 7 Dec 1849 -- Dr. Henry Lewis to Gustavus B. Alexander, concerning dower slaves of late Mrs. Stuart; 23 Nov 1852 -- statement by Judith B. Alexander, concerning dower slaves of late Mrs. Sarah Stuart Alexander; 10 June 1854 -- letter of commission, forming a patrol to prevent slaves from assembling or

communicating between households; 11 Nov 1856 -- W.T. Swannto Gustavus B. Alexander, concerning slaves of the Alexander family, some of whom ("the children of Christy") have petitioned for their freedom; 1 July 1858 -- William McGuireto Judith B. Alexander, concerning shipping of slave girl Mary; 27 Nov 1860 --note authorizing slave Westto recieve payment for his carpentry services; 19 Nov 1861 -- William McGuireto Charles G. Alexander, writing to urge the prevention of the escape of slaves at " Caledon" by hiring them out further south or by burning any boats available to them; 27 Nov 1867 --[ Charles G. Alexander] to George H. Robinsonconcerning shipments of corn made by freedmen; 2 March 1871 -- Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Landsto Fanny Grymes, concerning the surviving relatives of Henry Brooks, son of her former slaves and private in the 23rd US Colored Troopsduring the Civil War; 7 Oct 1873 --draft of an editorial concerning ex-slaves and some problems of the Reconstruction; n.d. -- C.T. Stuartto L.W. Stuartconcerning slave William.

Slave Records --Financial and Legal. Items of interest include: 1825 --authorization of ownership of dower slaves of Sarah K. Stuart; 1825-1862 --bills and receipts concerning slaves; 1830-1832 --indentures, including lists of slaves held by Gustavus B. Alexander; 1848, n.d. --lists of slaves' names, ages and prices or values; 1844-1858 --bills of sale of slaves; 1848 --division of dower slaves of Sarah K. Stuart; n.d. --division of dower slaves of Mrs. G. Stuart.

Slave Records --Financial and Legal: Bonds. These records are contained in two folders and date from 1814 to 1862 with some undated material. They consist entirely of bonds made concerning the hire of slaves belonging to the following families:

Alexander family, Lanford family, Ashton family, Lewis family, Berry family, Miffleton family, Brockenborough family, Potts family, Bryan family, Quisenberry family, Coakley family, Scott family, Dade family, Selden family, Davies family, Smith family, Fitzhugh family, Stuart family, Grymes family, Thornton family, Harrison family, Washington family

These bonds may be particularly useful as the first names of the slaves involved are frequently mentioned.

## Organization

The Alexander familypapers have been arranged alphabetically according to type of material. Bound Volumes (Box 1), Correspondence (Box 1), and Financial and Legal Papers (Boxes 2-5) are arranged chronologically. All additional topics are arranged chronologically within their respective folders in Box 5.

## Container List

### BOUND VOLUMES

#### Civil War Records

**Unit Date** 1862-1863

**Container** Box 1

**Extent** Bound Volumes

#### Farm Records

**Unit Date** 1853-1861

**Container** Box 1

**Extent** Bound Volumes

#### King George County Schools

**Unit Date** 1876-1887

**Container** Box 1

**Extent** Bound Volumes

#### Miscellaneous Notes

**Unit Date** 1866-1889

**Container** Box 1

**Extent**

Bound Volumes  
(2 folders)

## **Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1819-1890, n.d.

**Container** Box 1

**Extent**

(11 folders)

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL RECORDS**

### **Financial and Legal Records**

**Unit Date** 1801-1836

**Container** Box 2

**Extent**

(11 folders)

### **Financial and Legal Records**

**Unit Date** 1837-1853

**Container** Box 3

**Extent**

(11 folders)

### **Financial and Legal Records**

**Unit Date** 1854-1889, n.d.

**Container** Box 4

**Extent**

(9 folders)

### **Financial and Legal Records -- Accounts with C.G. Howland, Merchant/Postmaster**

**Unit Date** 1838-1843

**Container** Box 5

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **King George County Schools**

**Unit Date** 1884-1885

**Container** Box 5

### **Land Surveys and Dimensions**

**Unit Date** 1872-1890, n.d.

**Container** Box 5

### **Medical Records and Doctors' Bills**

**Unit Date** 1826-1865

**Container** Box 5

### **Meteorological Surveys and Observations**

**Unit Date** 1874-1875

**Container** Box 5

### **Miscellaneous Items**

**Unit Date** 1842-1888, n.d.

**Container** Box 5

### **Newspaper Clippings**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**Container** Box 5

## **SLAVE RECORDS**

### **Slave Records -- Correspondence**

**Unit Date** 1824-1873, n.d.

**Container** Box 5

### **Slave Records -- Financial and Legal**

**Unit Date** 1825-1848

**Container** Box 5

### **Slave Records -- Financial and Legal: Bonds**

**Unit Date** 1814-1862, n.d.

**Container** Box 5

**Extent**

(2 folders)

### **St. Paul's Church, King George County**

**Unit Date** 1831-1860, n.d.

**Container** Box 5

### **Tax Records**

**Unit Date** 1814-1886, n.d.

**Container** Box 5

**Extent**

(2 folders)

## **OVERSIZE ITEMS**

### **Real Estate Sale Notice (broadside) for "Somerset" on the Potomac River and the "Mt. Chene Tract" belonging to the late Thomas Grymes**

**Unit Date** 1872 July 1