

A Guide to the Papers of the Thornhill Family and of Thomas S. Bocock 1760-1897

Papers of the Thornhill Family and of Thomas S. Bocock 1760-1897
1760-1897

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

10612

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

This collection consists of ca. 3,000 items (8 Hollinger boxes, ca. 2.6 linear shelf feet).

Repository

Special Collections, University of Virginia Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

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

Acquisition Information

This holding was a gift to the Library from Mrs. Harold E. Thompson of Fairfax, Virginia, on August 8, 1984.

Preferred Citation

Papers of the Thornhill Family and of Thomas S. Bocock, Accession # 10612, Special Collections Dept., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

Scope and Content Information

This collection consists chiefly of correspondence, financial and legal papers, ledgers, and other related material of and pertaining to the Thornhill, Bocock, Christian, Flood, Stephens, Patteson, and Diuguid families of Bent Creek or Diuguidsville, Buckingham County, and Appomattox County, and elsewhere. Other families represented include: Booker, Cobb, Davidson, Ferguson, Freeman, Jennings, Johnson, Horseley, Palmer, Plunkett, Richardson, Stabler, Walker, Webb, and Wright. In addition, there is material of a similar nature concerning Thomas S. Bocock, lawyer, farmer, and politician of Appomattox County.

Topics of interest in the family correspondence include: political campaigns, especially in Buckingham County; slaves and slavery; the Civil War; the American Tract Society; abolition; an outbreak of smallpox in Appomattox County during 1863; the California gold rush; railroads; Whigs; Swedenborgianism (May 21, 1839); impressions of life in Alabama and Missouri from the 1830's to the 1850's; education in nineteenth-century Virginia; and family matters. References to the Civil War include: an 1861 printed report on the status of the Confederate Navy which discusses the *Merrimac*; a February 12, 1862, letter authorizing the seizure of all arms in Appomattox County and their forwarding to Richmond; a letter pertaining to slaves working on military fortifications (December 4, 1864); and a March 2, 1865, letter complaining of the activities of Confederate cavalry in Rope Ferry, Appomattox. References to blacks include: an 1845 inventory of property and slaves owned by William Stephens, the 1836 censuring of a Baptist Church officer for being engaged "in the traffick of human blood," and several references to the selling and hiring of slaves, deaths and births of family servants, and religion.

A few letters contain references to the University of Virginia. In a December 23, 1853, letter, a student requests a West Point appointment; a January 22, 1878, letter from Francis H. Smith to Isaac C. Fowler, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, requests Fowler's aid in getting state funds to support Leander McCormick's gift of a telescope and observatory; and on March 3, 1879, James Lawrence Cabell asks Thomas S. Bocock's help in preventing a reduction in state funds.

There are several items pertaining to various military units: the Virginia Militia, 100th Regiment, regarding courts of enquiry and fines, 1805, 1811-1826, and 1840; an affidavit from a member of the 4th Virginia Regiment, December 29, 1836; a February 5, 1860, letter from a member of the 19th Regiment, Company A, Texas Volunteer Infantry; and a March 17, 1865, letter from a member of the 38th Regiment, Company G, Virginia Infantry, who asks for an appointment to a regiment of blacks. Also of interest in the correspondence are impressions of Perry County, Alabama, November 20, 1845; Marengo County, Alabama, February 20, 1846; and Calloway County, Missouri, 1839-1858; there is also a brief mention of a cholera outbreak in St. Louis and a fire there which destroyed twenty-one steamboats, May 25, 1849. Another letter describes the collapse of a Pacific Railroad Company bridge, November 9, 1855.

Items of special interest include the minute book of the New Hope Baptist Church, Buckingham (later Appomattox) County, Virginia, (also a medical ledger which has a list of the New Hope Sunday School staff and students); a Richmond Letter Sheet Prices Current listing the cost of several commodities in 1858; a list of delinquent taxes for Clover Hill, Appomattox County, 1872; a 1796 land grant to John Horseley signed by Robert Brooke as governor of Virginia; and a report showing tuition paid for poor children of Buckingham County, November 9, 1837.

Prominent correspondents in these papers include Thomas S. Bocock, John Cabell Breckenridge, Daniel P. Woodbury, William Mahone, Joseph Holt, Augustus H. Garland, Henry C. Murphy, Isaac C. Fowler, Francis H. Smith, and Robert Garlick Hill Kean. There are references to Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, Thomas H. Averett, Archibald Dixon, David S. Reid, and George E. Badger.

Financial and legal papers include indentures, promissory notes, receipts, documents regarding the sale of slaves, the administration of estates, and the leather tanning business, and miscellaneous related papers. There are a few ledgers including a physician's from the 1830's, as well as an 1830's diary/journal, listing

births, marriages, deaths, home remedies, events and accounts from 1771, of Lucy Thornhill or William Stephens (?), and the 1832 register of John T. Bocock as the commissioner of the revenue for Buckingham County which contains information on taxes collected and business licenses.

Prominent family members in these papers include John T. Bocock, George C. Christian, Dr. William Christian (1808-1880), Lucy Diuguid, William diuguid, William Stephens (ca. 1799-1845), Albert Thornhill (1819- 1886), Jesse Thornhill (1822-1857), and Thomas T. Thornhill (1785-1847).

Nearly half of the collection consists of the papers of Thomas S. Bocock (1815-1891). He was a son of John Thomas (a member of the Virginia General Assembly 1818-1820 and 1828-1830) and Mary (Flood) Bocock, and was born in Buckingham County (later Appomattox County). After having been educated by private tutors under the direction of his brother, Willis P. Bocock (1807-1887), who eventually became attorney general of Virginia, he graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in 1838. He then studied law and began his practice at Buckingham Court House. He was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 1842 to 1845, and was the commonwealth's attorney for Appomattox County in 1845 and 1846. Bocock married Sarah P. Flood in 1846; after her death he married Annie Faulkner, the daughter of Charles James Faulkner, minister to France under President James Buchanan. [Faulkner's papers are largely in the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; many of his son's--Annie's brother--are held by this Library.] Elected as a Democrat to Congress, he served from 1847 to 1861, and was chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs for ten years; Bocock was the Democratic candidate for Speaker of the House in 1859 and 1860.

He was a Virginia delegate to the Provisional Confederate Congress from 1861 to 1862 and was Speaker of the Confederate House of Representatives from 1862 to 1865; he also acted as a liaison officer between the government and the Army of Northern Virginia. After the war he resumed his law practice and was a delegate to the Democratic National Conventions of 1868, 1876, and 1880. He again served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1877 to 1878. During the 1880's he was an attorney for railroad companies including the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio, and the Richmond and Allegheny. He was also a member of the board of Hampden- Sydney College and the Board of Visitors, Blacksburg Agricultural and Mechanical College. Bocock died on August 5, 1891, in Appomattox County at his estate, "Wildway," and was buried in Old Bocock Cemetery. Further information about his life and career may be found in *The Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961*, *The Dictionary of American Biography*, *Biographical Directory of the Confederacy*, *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, and *The Biographical Register of the Confederate Congress*.

Bocock's papers, 1840-1887, contain correspondence, financial and legal papers, speeches and addresses, miscellaneous political and related papers, and his memoranda book of personal finances. Topics of interest in his correspondence include: his contested 1847 election with Henry P. Irving; pension claims; postal matters; the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; the effect of the gold rush on Lynchburg, Virginia (December 16, 1848); the admission of California and the Compromise of 1850; the Nashville Convention of 1850 (March 19, 1849); Henry Clay; requests for service academy appointments; slavery; abolitionists; the antebellum South; James K. Polk; Zachary Taylor; the Whig and Democrat parties; Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun, presidential candidates of 1852; politics in Appomattox County; Texas; Louis Kossuth; politics in Patrick County (March 12, 1856); James Buchanan; railroads; bounty land claims; the Virginia election of 1880; Daniel S. Dickinson; Rutherford B. Hayes; and family matters.

Prominent correspondents include: Thomas H. Averett, Ausburn Birdsall, Francis P. Blair, Montgomery Blair, George W. Booker, John Minor Botts, James W. Bouldin, Charles W. Button, James Lawrence Cabell, Joseph "Repton Joe" Cabell, Thomas J. Campbell, Charles M. Conrad, William P. DuVal, Jubal A. Early, Charles James Faulkner, Graham Newell Fitch [unsigned form letter], John B. Floyd, John Wein Forney, Isaac C. Fowler, Augustus H. Garland, James Garland, Robert H. Gray, Joseph Holt, Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., Horatio King, William Mahone, Lucian Minor, Alexander Mosely, Henry C. Murphy, Abner W.C. Nowlin, William B. Payne, John S. Pendleton, Henry Mower Rice, Origen Sotrrs Seymour, John Mix Stanley [unsigned form letter], Jacob Thompson, Henry Alexander Wise, Daniel P. Woodbury, and William M. Woodworth.

There are also refernces to prominent individuals fo the period such as George E. Gadger, John S. Barbour, Luke Pryor Blackburn, John Cabell Breckenridge, William O. Butler, William L. Cabell, Jefferson Davis, Archibald Dixon, James Cochran Dobbin, Stephen Douglas, Millard Fillmore, Ulysses S. Grant, Samuel Houston, Robert Lawson, John Letcher, Uriah Phillips Levy, Stephen R. Mallory, Armistead Thomson Mason, Fayette McMullen, Robert Carter Nicholas, Samuel Jackson Randall, George W. Randolph, David S. Reid, Thomas Jefferson Rusk, William Smith, Samuel J. Tilden, and Abel P. Upshur.

Other items of interest include Bocock's law license, 1847, and his certificate of membership in the American Legal Association, 1856; election results in Pittsylvania County; bill proposals regarding naval personnel and the appointment of midshipmen; an item entitled "The Metallic Boat"; a copy of the regulations for admission to West Point, 1848; and papers from his legal practice, 1841-1879. Also present are drafts of his speeches and addresses regarding the tariff of 1842, the Wilmot Proviso, the Know-Nothing Party, dueling, temperance, foreign affairs, William Wilson Corcoran's efforts on behalf of the University of Virginia, slavery, and other miscellaneous subjects. Of particular interest is his memoranda book, 1861-1866, which contains entries regarding salaries paid to him, debts regarding his plantation, a cork leg for William Browning (April 23,

1861), hiring of slaves, money sent to and received from relatives, crop prices, payment of a debt owed to Claude Henry, a freeman and blacksmith (December 31, 1861), and similar items.

Arrangement

This collection is divided into three series: I) Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers, II) Financial and Legal Papers, and III) Thomas S. Bocock Papers. Items are arranged chronologically. Family papers in series I and II are arranged alphabetically by name, bound volumes are numbered and filed chronologically at the end of the latter series with the exception of Bocock's memoranda book, which is filed with his papers.

Contents List

Series I: Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers

Bocock Family Letters 1829, 1856, 1869, 1871, 1874, 1890

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Box 1

Stephens Family Letters 1833-1836, 1841

Box 1

Thornhill Family Letters 1830-1879

Box 1

Extent 2 folders

Miscellaneous [1844?] and 1854

Box 1

1814, 1840-1881 1814, 1840-1881

Box 1

Virginia Militia, 100th Regiment 1805, 1811-1826, 1840

Box 1

Civil War 1863, 1867, n.d.

Box 1

Series II: Financial and Legal Papers

Bocock Family Financial and Legal Papers 1823-1874

Box 1

Christian Family Financial and Legal Papers 1800-1878

Box 1

Diuguid Family Financial and Legal Papers 1783, 1794-1825, 1840

Box 2

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Box 2

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Box 2

Stephens Family Financial and Legal Papers 1797-1847, 1858

Box 2

Thornhill Family Financial and Legal Papers 1760, 1770, 1801-1827

Box 2

Extent 3 folders

Thornhill Family Financial and Legal Papers 1828-1879

Box 3

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Miscellaneous Financial and Legal Papers 1793, 1800-1829

Box 3

Miscellaneous Financial and Legal Papers 1830-1879, 1897, n.d.

Box 4

Extent 4 folders

Land Transactions 1840-1868, 1879, 1881, 1891, n.d.

Box 4

Diary/ Journal of [Lucy Thornhill] 1771, 1789-1840

Box 4

Scope and Content

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Ledger of William Stephens 1789-1790

Box 4

Scope and Content

Vol. 2

Ledger 1799-1803, 1836-1839

Scope and Content

Vol. 3

Ledger (converted to a scrapbook) 1824-1826

Box 5

Scope and Content

Vol. 4

Ledger 1827-1832

Box 5

Scope and Content

Vol. 5

Minute Book, New Hope Baptist Church, Buckingham (later Appomattox) County, Virginia 1830-1868

Box 5

Scope and Content

Vol. 6

Medical Ledger of [Dr. Phelps or William D. Christian] 1831-1837, 1863, 1868

Scope and Content

Vol. 7; with lists of officers, teachers, and scholars of the New Hope Baptist Church Sunday School

**Register of John Thomas Bocock, Commissioner of the Revenue,
Buckingham County, Virginia 1832**

Box 5

Scope and Content

Vol. 8

Ledger of William D. Christian 1832-1839

Scope and Content

Vol. 9

Ledger 1833-1837, 1841

Box 6

Scope and Content

Vol. 10

Series III: Thomas S. Bocock Papers

Letters to Thomas S. Bocock 1840-May, 1852

Box 6

Extent 3 folders

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Extent 5 folders

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Box 8

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Box 8

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Box 8

Thomas S. Bocock Financial and Legal Papers 1842-1885

Box 8

Speeches and Addresses of Thomas S. Bocock 1842-1883, n.d.

Box 8

**Thomas S. Bocock: Miscellaneous Political Papers 1847-1849, 1851, 1857,
n.d.**

Box 8

Naval Committee Papers 1854-1861

Box 8

Memoranda Book of Thomas S. Bocock January 2, 1861-December 24, 1866

Box 8

Scope and Content

Vol. 11

Glenwood [General Store] Daybook from Papers of Christian and Thornhill Families 1862

Box 8

Extent

Note: This volume has been badly damaged.
Only the 88 pages of entries for April to December
could be microfilmed.

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