Guide to the John Horry Dent Papers, 1840–1891

Title: John Horry Dent Papers

Creator: Dent, John Horry

Creator Dates: 1815–1892

Extent: 0.4 linear feet, 3 ledgers, 18 letters, 4 typescript reports

Inclusive Dates: 1840 – 1891

Collection Number: 0430

Provenance: Gift of Mr. M. B. Wellborn, 1945

Processed by: Martha Bace, 2008

Restrictions: none

Copyright Statement: This collection may be protected under Title 17 of the U.S. Copyright Law.

Preferred Citation: The John Horry Dent Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.

Access Points: Farm Journals; Plantation Records; Early Alabama History; Agriculture; Barbour County, Alabama; Georgia;

Reference Code: USALM0430

Language: English

ABSTRACT: Collection contains three ledgers (a plantation book, a farm journal, and a letter copybook) and a folder of miscellaneous letters written by John Horry Dent of Eufaula, Barbour County, Alabama and Cave Spring, Floyd County, Georgia from January 1840 to November 1891.
The Plantation Book (or Farm Journal v.1) was written by John Horry Dent from January 1840 through December 1842 to record actual expenditures and incomes from his estate and to provide information for his future endeavors. There are also many expositional writings, including letters to his overseer. This volume covers his early years in Barbour County, Alabama.

The Farm Journal (v. 13) was written between April 1882 and February 1884. This journal is less expositional and more factual, giving crop and weather information along with short anecdotes about events at home in Cave Springs, Georgia.

The copybook mainly deals with the workings of his properties in Alabama and Georgia from 1863 to 1875, but includes some expositional writings as well.

The miscellaneous letters, written from 1852 to 1891 by John H. Dent, are mainly to family members. There are four typescript documents in the folder also: (1) Commodore John Herbert Dent, U.S. Navy, 1782–1823; (2) Charles I. Graves in Egypt (1875–1878); (3) Cape Guardafui by Lt. Col. Graves (the proceedings of the meeting of October 1880); and (4) Report of Lt. Col. Graves, 4th July 1878.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE:
Jonah Horry Dent was born on 5 August 1815 in Newport, Rhode Island, the son of John Herbert Dent and Elizabeth Anne Horry Dent. Dent grew up in Charleston, South Carolina and spent summers with his family on a plantation in Colleton County, South Carolina. When he was still a young child, his name was changed from “Jonah” to “John” when an older brother, named John, died, leaving little Jonah as the oldest living son. He was known as John Horry Dent the rest of his life.

Dent married Mary Elizabeth Morrison in 1835 and moved to Barbour County, Alabama in 1836. He purchased 360 acres of land on Cowikke Creek, paying $15 an acre, and named the new plantation “Good Hope.” He and Elizabeth had seven children: Robert Morrison Dent (1836-1837); Emma Julia (Minna) Dent (1838-1919); John Horry Dent, Jr. (1840-1864); Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie) Dent (1842-1870); John Herbert Dent (b. 1845); Anne Horry Dent (1847-1889); Charles Baring Dent (b. 1849); Sarah Lining Dent (1851-1866); Kate Constance Dent (1853-1919).

Dent amassed a good fortune but lost most of it after the Civil War when slavery was abolished and his slaves became freemen. After his wife’s death in 1853, he married Fanny A. Whipple in 1854. Together they had six more children: Fannie Whipple Dent (1856-1892); George Columbus Dent (1858-1879); Lucy Gertrude Dent (b. 1861); Helen Almira Dent (1865-1872); Carrie Mae Dent (1868-1910); and an infant daughter (b. 1875).
In 1866 sold his properties in Barbour County and moved to Cave Springs, Floyd County, Georgia. Following the death of his second wife, Fanny, in 1875, he married Elizabeth Anne Dowd in 1876.

Dent kept detailed records about his crops and properties until very late in life. He died in Cave Springs on 17 May 1892.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS:
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CONTAINER LIST:

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<tbody>
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<td>0430.0001</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Letters, 1852–1891</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>Plantation Book, v. 1, 1840–1842</td>
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SOURCES

(Tuscaloosa, AL : published for the Historic Chattahoochee Commission by the University of Alabama Press, 1979.)
