Guide to the Meriwether Family Papers
MSS.2217
Finding aid prepared by Martha Bace and Jamie Burke

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit
December 02, 2009
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Summary Information

Repository: W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama

Creator: Coleman, Juliet Bestor
Creator: Meriwether, Alice Coleman
Creator: Meriwether, John Samuel

Title: Meriwether Family Papers

Date [bulk]: Bulk, 1862-1864
Date [inclusive]: 1833-1864

Extent: 0.4 Linear feet

Language: English

Abstract: Family letters written by Juliet Bestor Coleman, her daughter, Alice Coleman Meriwether and her son-in-law, John Samuel Meriwether, between 1833 and 1864. The bulk of the correspondence is between Alice and her husband, John, while he was serving in the 38th and 40th Alabama Infantry Regiments during the Civil War.

Preferred Citation
The Meriwether Family Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.
Biographical/Historical note

Juliet Bestor Coleman was born on 22 March 1809 to Daniel Bestor and Dorcas Terry Hibbard Bestor in Connecticut. In 1833 she married James Cobb Coleman of Eutaw, Alabama and settled there with him. Together they had six children: Bestor Coleman (1837-1891); Alice Coleman Meriwether (1839-1919); John Coleman (1841-); James C. Coleman (1842-1912); Charles Coleman (1845-); and Harvey Coleman (1847-). Juliet died on 19 October 1850 at the young age of 36. She is buried in Eutaw in the Grassdale Cemetery. Alice Coleman Meriwether was born on 11 February 1839, the only daughter of James Cobb Coleman and his second wife, Juliet Bestor Coleman.

John Samuel Meriwether was born 28 January 1830, one of twelve children born to Dr. Willis Meriwether and Judith Pollard Chiles Meriwether of Springfield, Alabama. He attended the University of Alabama and received his medical degree from Charleston (S.C.) Medical College in 1853. On 8 November 1860, Meriwether married Alice Coleman.

Meriwether practiced medicine in Alabama and enlisted in the Confederate Army in the spring of 1862, serving in the 38th Alabama Infantry Regiment, (Col. Ketchum's) and later the 40th Alabama Infantry Regiment. He served at the Battle of Vicksburg and was the Surgeon in charge of the Confederate Hospital at Eufaula, Alabama attaining the rank of Major.

Alice Coleman and John Samuel Meriwether had six children: Juliet Meriwether Pitts (12 August 1861-22 October 1944); Judith Lida Meriwether Ward (7 July 1864-9 May 1950); Mary Hale Meriwether de Graffenreid (15 February 1867-August 1930); John Bestor Meriwether (3 July 1870-7 April 1939); Alice Coleman Meriwether Dunlap (20 May 1873-8 January 1957); and Willis James Meriwether (20 May 1877-4 July 1947).

John Samuel Meriwether died on 26 May 1879 and Alice Coleman Meriwether died on 26 August 1919. They and five of their children are buried at Eutaw, Alabama.

Scope and Contents note

This collection consists of family letters written by Juliet Bestor Coleman, her daughter, Alice Coleman Meriwether and her son-in-law, John Samuel Meriwether, all of Eutaw, Alabama, between 1833 and 1864. The collection also has a very small (3.75" x 2.75") travelogue detailing her three-week journey from Suffield, Connecticut to La Grange, Alabama in 1833. There is also a small collection of letters between the Bestor and Coleman families regarding Juliet's last illness and her death.

The bulk of the collection is the correspondence between Alice Coleman Meriwether and her husband, John Samuel Meriwether, while he was serving in the 38th and 40th Alabama Infantry Regiments during
the Civil War. There is a hand-drawn map of the Battle of Vicksburg showing the movements of the 40th Alabama Infantry Regiment.

There is a photograph of a painting of Daniel P. Bestor, Juliet's older brother, and a print enlargement of a photograph of Alice Coleman Meriwether. Also included are snapshots of Alice's and John C. Coleman's tombstones. The collection also contains 64 envelopes, 31 of which have Confederate States postage stamps attached.

There are several pieces of letters as well as 1778 Continental United States eight and twenty dollar bills, entitling the bearer to eight or twenty Spanish milled dollars. A small "Reward of Merit" certificate stating that "Miss Juliet Bestor has... excelled those of her class in the art of writing and merits my esteem" signed by Amelia Bestor, Instructor, is also included with a small book of poems and a booklet on the flags of the Confederacy.

While Juliet's handwriting is very legible it is incredibly small (her letters to and from her mother and sisters have been transcribed).

Administrative Information

Publication Information

W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama September 2009

Provenance

Gift of John W. Weiss, 2008

Processed by

Martha Bace, 2008
Collection Inventory

Juliet Bestor Coleman

Series Description

Juliet Bestor Coleman's outgoing (1833-1850, arranged chronologically) and incoming (1839-1850, arranged chronologically) correspondence, as well as Bestor/Coleman correspondence (1850-1851, arranged chronologically). The series also includes Juliet's travelogue covering her journey from Suffield, Connecticut to La Grange, Alabama in 1833.

Correspondence

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Alice Coleman Meriwether

Series Description
John Samuel Meriwether

Series Description

John Samuel Meriwether's outgoing correspondence (1862-1864, arranged chronologically) and a hand-drawn map of the Battle of Vicksburg.

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<td>Battle of Vicksburg - Map</td>
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General note

Photograph of a painting of Daniel P. Bestor, Juliet's older brother; a print enlargement of a photograph of Alice Coleman Meriwether; a print enlargement of the house Juliet and James Coleman bought in 1850 in Eutaw, Alabama; snapshots of Alice's and John C. Coleman's tombstones.
Envelopes and Miscellaneous Materials

Series Description

64 envelopes, 31 of which have stamps of the Confederate States on them; 1778 Continental United States eight and twenty dollar bills; a small "Reward of Merit" certificate; a small book of poems and a booklet on the flags of the Confederacy.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Envelopes</th>
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