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Nashoba research files

Title: Nashoba research files
Collection No: MSS.388
Extent: 1 cubic foot
Inclusive Dates: 1847-1995

Abstract: The collection includes mostly photocopies of maps, newspaper clippings, correspondence, legal documents and drawings, with some publications, photographs and a video tape, made by Shereen Sampson and David Bowman for their respective research projects on Nashoba, Tennessee, and Frances Wright (1795-1852).

Donor: Shereen Sampson and David Bowman, January 1998.
Processed by: James E. Montague, 1999; Gerald Chaudron, 2014, 2019.
Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: Nashoba research files, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: 2019 June

Administrative information

Nashoba Plantation was an experimental colony in east Shelby County, Tennessee, established in the 1820s by Scottish-born Frances Wright (1795-1852) to educate freed slaves. Wright first came to the United States in 1818 and travelled widely. Her *Views of Society and Manners in America* (1821) brought her attention as a critique of the new nation. Wright was arguably the most radical utopian thinker and activist in antebellum America. Wright was an inspiration to Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She was a friend of the Marquis de Lafayette, and with him visited Jefferson and Madison. Wright advocated the freedom and equality of women, African-American slaves, and working white people. Wright went to New Harmony, Indiana, where she spent time at Robert Owen's utopian community. She supported the free-thinkers, publishing the *Free Enquirer* with Owen, calling for birth control, liberalized divorce laws and more. New Harmony inspired her to launch Nashoba as an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the problem of slavery through the education of slaves and the financial compensation of slave owners. After the failure of Nashoba in 1828, Wright freed the commune slaves and helped them move to Haiti. Returning to New Harmony, she helped edit the *New Harmony Gazette* and gave public lectures, considered scandalous in society of the time. In 1831, she married Guillaume Sylvan Casimir Piquetal d'Arusemont (d. 1855), a French educator, with whom she had a daughter Sylva, but they divorced in 1850 after a lengthy separation. In 1852 she published a treatise setting forth a plan for the gradual emancipation of all American slaves.

The collection comprises research materials used by Shereen Sampson for her 1998 master's thesis at Middle Tennessee State University titled "Reclaiming a historic landscape: the interpretation of Frances Wright's Nashoba Plantation in Germantown, Tennessee". Also included are research materials used by David Bowman in preparing the Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit held in Germantown, Tennessee, in September 1995.

Scope and contents

The collection includes mostly photocopies of maps, newspaper clippings, correspondence, legal documents and drawings, with some publications, photographs and a videotape, made by Shereen Sampson and David Bowman for their respective projects on Nashoba and Frances Wright.

Subject terms

Guthrie, Frances Sylva.
Nashoba (Tenn.)
Wright, Frances, 1795-1852.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

1. Working bibliography of Sampson's thesis.
2. Sketches, newspaper articles, and a history of Nashoba (photocopy). (15)
3. Excerpt (photocopy): Weinberg, Arthur and Lila (eds.) *Passport to Utopia: Great Panaceas in American History*. 1968, pp. 19-27.
4. Letter (photocopy): Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Inc. to Bowman, 1995, August 28. Reply to request for name of punch served Lafayette when a guest at Monticello.
5. Maps: Nashoba and Memphis area. (7)
6. Pages from Wright's notebooks (photocopy). Orders for supplies for Nashoba. (7)
7. Nashoba information (photocopy), post 1900. (5)
8. Correspondence pertaining to Wright's divorce settlement (photocopy). (5)
9. Deed to Nashoba land (photocopy). (2)
10. Excerpts from the journal of Isham R. Howze, a tenant of Nashoba (1852-1853) (photocopy); "Excerpts from Isham R. Howze's Book No. 8". Copy of typed transcription covering the period 1852 June 30-1853 September 26. Transcriber unknown. The original journal is in the Howze Family Papers at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.
11. Miscellaneous information on Nashoba and Wright. (17)
12. Wright will; inventory of property, 1852 (photocopy). (5)
13. William Harrison account of Britton Duke's estate. Duke was a neighbor of Wright (photocopy). (2)
14. Drawings and photographs of Wright collected by Bowman and Sampson (photocopy). (14)
15. Theresa Wolfson: Index to her papers at Martin P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University; obituary; biographical article. (5). Wolfson co-authored *Frances Wright, Free Enquirer: The Study of a Temperament* (1939).
16. Explanatory notes pertaining to the nature and objectives of Nashoba (photocopy). From Wolfson Papers, Cornell University. (16)
17. Newspaper articles (photocopy): From *Genius of Universal Emancipation and Baltimore Courier*, 1825-1827, on Wright and Nashoba. (14)
18. Payne-Gaposchkin, Cecilia, "The Nashoba Plan for Removing the Evil of Slavery: Letters of Frances and Camilla Wright, 1820-1829", *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 4, 1975 (photocopy).
19. Correspondence (photocopy): Wright, 1840s. (5)
20. Correspondence (photocopy): Wright, 1850s. (6)
21. Wright divorce petition and related documents (photocopy). (8)
22. "Abstract of account of Charge and Discharge between Mrs. Wright, Cincinnati, United States America and James & John Ogilvie Writers in Dundee, Scotland...", 1851-1852; document giving her husband, Guillaume Philquepel d'Arusmont power of attorney,

- 1847 (photocopy). (3)
23. Correspondence and documents related to the settlement of estate of Frances Sylva d'Arusmont, Wright's daughter, 1851-1874. (photocopy). (15)
 24. Letter: Alexis Darusmont, Cincinnati, to Britton Duke, 1855 May 9; receipt, 1853; newspaper advertisement of sale of Nashoba land, circa 1853 (photocopy). (5)
 25. Publications: Egerton, John, *Visions of Utopia: Nashoba, Rugby, Ruskin, and the "New Communities" in Tennessee's Past*, 1977; Carmony, Donald F. and Josephine M. Elliott, *New Harmony, Indiana: Robert Owen's Seedbed for Utopia. Reprint from Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 76, No. 3, 1980, pp 161-261.
 26. Pamphlets and postcards about New Harmony, Indiana. (10)
 27. Publications: Wollstonecraft, Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Norton, New York: 1967; Pitzer, Donald E. and Josephine M. Elliott, *New Harmony's First Utopians, 1814-1824*. Reprint from *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 75, No. 3, 1979, pp 225-300.
 28. Artwork used in Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit (photocopy). (6)
 29. Friends of Frances Wright newsletters by Bowman, 1995; invitations to Frances Wright Exhibit, 1995 September 6. (15)
 30. Bowman's personal notes while researching Nashoba and Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit. (9)
 31. Excerpt (photocopy): Beasley, Maurine H. and Sheila J. Gibbons, *Taking their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*, 1993, pp.51-81.
 32. Documentation of expenses preparing Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit, 1994-1995. (6)
 33. Bowman correspondence related to Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit, 1995. (41)
 34. Newspaper articles on Frances Wright, 1995; description of Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit; Francis Wright selected bibliography. (10)
 35. Article (photocopy): "To All of "Good Will Towards Men" Greeting!"
 36. Newspaper clippings and letters (photocopy): Concerning William Norman Guthrie (Wright's grandson); Frances Sylva Guthrie (Wright's daughter), 1882, 1908, 1933. (12)
 37. Index: William Yates Gholson Collection (Box 6, Frances Wright Papers), Cincinnati Historical Society.
 38. Bowman file on history of Germantown. (5)
 39. Nashoba property maps. (8)
Letters, legal documents, invoices, and other material related primarily to the last decade of Wright's life (photocopy). From Gholson-Kittredge Papers, 1795-1852, Cincinnati Historical Society:
 40. Folders 27-28. (26)
 41. Folders 29-60. (30)
 42. Folders 61-105. (34)
 43. Transcriptions. (112)
 44. Brochure: Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Tenn.
 45. Newspaper clippings; correspondence between Bowman and Celia Morris, a Wright Biographer, 1976, 1995. (7)
 46. Cincinnati Historical Society materials. (9). Re: Bowman research.
 47. Press releases by Bowman regarding Frances Wright Bicentennial, 1995. (4)
 48. Bowman bibliography for Nashoba and Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit. (7)

49. Photographs: Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit, Kirby house, Germantown, Tenn., 1995 September 6.

AV VHS videotape: Frances Wright Bicentennial Exhibit, Kirby house, Germantown, Tenn., 1995 September 6.