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**University of Memphis Libraries  
Special Collections Department**

126 Ned R. McWhorter Library  
Memphis, TN 38152 - 3250  
Phone: (901) 678 - 2210  
E-mail: lib\_sc@memphis.edu

## **Merriam family collection**

**Title:** Merriam family collection  
**Collection No:** MSS.32  
**Extent:** 1 cubic foot  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1862-1996 (Bulk dates: 1862-1925)

**Abstract:** The collection contains a Civil War memory book of Isabelle Vance, genealogical materials related to the A.B. Hill family of Memphis, and a publication of the R.J. Darnell, Inc., lumber company.

**Donor:** George P. and Tom Merriam, 2019, 2021.

**Processed by:** Gerald Chaudron, 2019, 2021.  
**Access:** Open to all researchers.  
**Language:** English  
**Preferred Citation:** Merriam family collection, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

**Publication date:** July 2021

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## Biographical information

Isabelle Rebecca Vance was born in Carroll County, Mississippi, circa 1848, to William Vance (born 1820 in South Carolina) and Martha Lott Vance (born 1827 in South Carolina). William had moved to Carroll County by 1840. By 1860, the family included six children: James, George, Mary Caroline, Isabelle, Robert and John. James and George served in the Civil War; James was killed in 1864 and George was captured at Franklin, Tennessee. Isabelle married Alphonso Bruce Hill of Memphis, Tennessee, in 1872.

Alphonso was born on December 12, 1837, in Tipton County, Tennessee, the oldest of seven children of John Sloan (1808-1863) and Henrietta De Weese Hill (1813-1890). His siblings were: James Marshall (1839-1927), Jonathan Sloan (1842-1907), William Thomas E. (1843-1862), Frontis Washington (1845-1925), Ermina Amelia Casandra (1848-1925) and Everett Wallace (1851-1925). Alphonso served during the Civil War and became captain of Company G of the 51<sup>st</sup> Tennessee Infantry Regiment. He married Harriet E. Thompson in 1865 and Isabelle Vance in 1872. Alphonso and Isabelle had six children: Robbie B. (1873-1889), Helen Elizabeth (1874-1958), Vance Bruce (1877-1959), John Morrie (1878-1917), Allen Baxter (1883-1915) and Alta Floy (1886-1906). Isabelle died on February 17, 1905, and Alphonso died on January 31, 1919. Floy Hill married Charles Henry Eckford (1884-1972) August 17, 1904 and died after childbirth on March 30, 1906. Helen Hill married Thomas Cyrus Merriam (1874-1965) who worked for R.J. Darnell, Inc.

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## Scope and contents

The collection contains the memory book of Isabelle Vance which she began compiling during the Civil War, and includes messages from soldiers in Grenada, Mississippi, and friends in Memphis and other places. The other notable item is a book of photographs published by R.J. Darnell, Inc., of Memphis in 1925 showing the extraction and processing of lumber at its forest and mill in northeast Louisiana. Also included are some postcards from the St. Louis World's Fair and genealogical information on the Alphonso B. Hill family.

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## Subject terms

Lumbering—Louisiana.  
Vance, Isabelle R., 1848-1905.

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## Inventory

### Box 1

## Folder

- 1 Memory book: Belonged to Isabelle Rebecca Vance (circa 1848-1905) and contains poems and messages, 1862-1870. Some of the entries are noted as being written in Grenada, Mississippi, in 1862 and 1863. Names include Edward Goodwin, Leighton, Alabama, Lt. Thomas J. Haile, 3<sup>rd</sup> Kentucky Regiment; J.H. Barbour; J.W. Murray; Belle N. Byrne; T. L. Keefer; L. Velina Mitchell; Polk Davis. Also includes clippings on the Civil War, poetry and other topics.
- 2 Memory book: Loose items: Includes clippings, and a handwritten note entitled "Language of the handkerchief", probably copied from a contemporary leaflet but with additions "by D".
- 3 Memory book: Research materials. Includes copies of census records, marriage and death certificates.
- 4 Memorial resolution adopted by the Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tenn., re: death of Ruling Elder A.B. Hill, 1919.
- 5 Postcards: One card is dated St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904 with a picture of Floy Hill Eckford, probably from the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (World's Fair) held there. Two similar cards are of Laura J. and Juliet Onley.
- 6 Genealogical materials: re: Hill family.
- 7 Clipping: Risher, Wayne, "Last sister may be moving", *Commercial Appeal*, Memphis, 1996 February 1. Re: Martha Foster.

Unfolded Publication: Published by R.J. Darnell, Inc., Memphis, Tenn., in 1925, the book contains photographs of the extraction of lumber from the company's forest in northeast Louisiana and of the mill town of Darnell. Thomas C. Merriam is pictured as secretary and auditor of the company. Rowland Jones Darnell (1854-1916) established his company in 1896 that operated a hardwood mill in Memphis and he became one of the most prominent lumbermen in Memphis. After the mill burned down in 1913, he built another in Batesville, Mississippi, to serve his forest at Crowder. The mill closed and the company bought 75,000 acres at Floyd's Crossing near Pioneer, Louisiana, opening a mill in Darnell in 1923.

### **Addition, 2021**

- 8 Photograph: Frank A. Conkling, American Photo News, circa 1940; Clippings: re: Obituaries, Frank and Mary Conkling, 1978 and undated; Clipping: National Exporters' Association banquet photograph, undated. Conkling moved from Ohio to Memphis to found his lumber manufacturing company in 1920.
- 9 Clipping: "Hardwood Manufacture: Enterprise and Expansion Exemplified at Two Southern Mill Centers", *American Lumberman*, 1910 January 29, pp. 75-78. Re: Darnell lumber companies.