MSS 0212. Jones-Black family papers finding aid

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Jones-Black family papers finding aid

Title: Jones-Black family papers
Collection No: MSS.0212
Extent: 0.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1842-1919

Abstract: This collection consists of letters, business documents, and personal papers and belongings owned by Alexander M. Jones, a Confederate soldier, Sarah “Sallie” J. Jones, and their extended families. The Joneses and their extended families lived in the Southern United States pre-, peri-, and post-Civil War.

Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: Jones-Black family papers, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis

Publication date: 2023 August
Biographical Information

Most of the items in this collection belonged to Alexander M. Jones, Sarah “Sallie” J. Jones and their extended family, in the mid to late 1800s and early 1900s. Alexander M. Jones was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, on September 18, 1823, the son of Julius A. Jones (died 1831) and Martha Walker Jones (died 1877). He had three brothers and a sister. The family moved to Poplar Creek in Tennessee where Julius was a farmer. Alexander married Martha E. Montgomery (1825-1859) in 1848 and they had a son, Julius C. In 1860, Alexander married Sarah J. Snodgrass (1829-1906) and they had four children: Ada L., Rush A., Fannie B., and Martha E. Alexander served in the 21st Tennessee Cavalry Regiment (Wilson’s) during the Civil War before being invalided out. In 1881, Jones was elected Highway Commissioner for the 11th Civil District of Madison County, Tennessee, for three years. He farmed 400 acres near Jackson, Tennessee. Alexander died on May 4, 1905.

The Jones extended family included other Joneses, the Blacks, Snodgrasses, Bryants, Stewarts, and Walkers. Members of this family lived in the southern United States including Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Missouri, and Alabama.

Scope and contents

This collection consists of Civil War letters pertaining to Alexander Jones’ Confederate service in the western theatre and his wife’s responses. There are also letters from pre-, peri-, and post-Civil War, as well as papers referring to a migration to Texas. In addition, there are personal papers, business documents, land deeds, receipts, promissory notes, and county surveyor field notes belonging to Alexander M. Jones and various other family members.

The post-Civil War materials contain references to the farming conditions in Texas and Missouri. A Missouri relative of the Joneses comments frequently on national politics between 1890 and 1919. The papers also contain references to domestic relations, parent/child relations, and concerns of everyday life in that time period.

Provenance

Some documents from the collection were given to the Memphis Pink Palace Museum by the donor and the museum supplied Special Collections with photocopies.

Subject terms
Inventory

Box 1

Folder 1
Letters from Milam and Harrison Counties, Texas, on the estate of the late Captain Snodgrass, land taxes, poor crops, drouth. 1851 May 11 – comments on what he wants in a wife; 1851 August 31, Shreveport, Louisiana, – “the farmers on the hills in Caddo will be glad to get three hundred pounds of cotton per acres and it is so in all the western part of Louisiana and Eastern Texas”. River very low, steamboats cannot get down to New Orleans.

Folder 2
1852 April 24, Shreveport, Louisiana – was in a posse, likes West Tennessee and North Mississippi better but can make more money where he is; 1852 July 20, Shreveport, Louisiana – heavy work, lots of rain, cholera, high prices of provisions, trouble with Texas land because “father had never proved up his heddright”, now making application to the Texas legislature about it; 1853 December 6, Shreveport, Louisiana – A. E. Snodgrass dies of cholera, money plentiful, crops good, yellow fever outbreak “It was the Scarryest times I have Ever Seen”.

Folder 3
1864 February 1 – Alex M. Jones hopes to be discharged from Confederate service when his unit gets a surgeon; 1864 February 5 – Jones asks for clothes, tells wife what to do about crops (photocopy); 1864 February 29 – describes fight at Ocaland, “I don’t think Colonel Forrest was among the killed”. “As to getting out of the Army is a bad chance as long as I can get on my horse and ride a mile”. 1864 March 9 – unit has horses valued, high prices (photocopy); 1864 April 16 – Fort Pillow, “…when there was a flag sent in demanding a surrender they refused unless we would treat the negroes as prisoners of war which we refused to do…” (photocopy); 1864 May 16 – note that Alexander Jones had typhoid fever; 1864 May 18 – line of march, horses valued again; 1864 May 20 – hears the cold killed cotton, men complain about rations, “Col Willson has pressed all the Blacksmith shops in ten miles of here to have our horses shod”. “We hear glowing news from Virginia and Georgia but I never know when I hear the truth”; 1864 May 22 – from Mrs. Jones - “Mr. Jones we have been hearing great news that the South was so victorious I began to think that war would soone be over… It is thought that forrest will go to Georgia”.

Folder 4
1874 January 22, Corsicana, Texas – urgers Tennessee correspondents to move to Texas; 1877 May 4, Trenton, Missouri – poor farming conditions, doubts if relatives should
move to Texas; 1881 January 23, Whitney, Texas – railroad built between Corsicana and Waco, describes house.

5 Letters: 1890 September 17 – 1895 December 15.
Letters from Texas relatives pertaining to farming and family news; 1892 March 31, Trenton Missouri – mentions that he has not gotten barbed wire fence “to scratch and tear my cow or other people’s stock”; 1894 January 28, Trenton, Missouri – sons farming in Arkansas – hears complaints of hard times, “people who don’t like to work like first-rate to grumble about the existing order of things”; Democratic Party, silver tariff, patronage question; 1895 February 4 – helping to establish children; 1895 March 28 – Lagrippe and smallpox in Texas, “Well Alexander what is you opinion of the future in regard to the pressure, and the probability of disturbance in our country”; 1895 November 10 – views on matrimony, definition of adult male.

1896 January 26 – on religious books; 1896 April 19 – Missouri farming, changes in educational requirements for jobs since the writer was young; 1896 August 9 – political views, he is ‘Gold Bug’ President Cleveland send troops to Chicago, writer has been Unionist since Civil War, William McKinley, drouth; 1896 September 8 – political campaign; 1897 November 22 – views on marriage and breakdown of sister’s long marriage; believes in divorce; 1898 February 23 – farming, Cuban question, does not favor Cuban insurgents; 1898 May 1 – Spanish-American War; 1898 September 16 – farming, end of war.

7 Letters: 1900 May 22 – 1900 December 11.
Letters describing farming in Texas; 1900 August 30 – religious reading of elderly woman, troubles in China; 1900 November 18 – sightseeing in New York City; 1900 November 21 – refers to work at New York Polyclinic, Medical School and Hospital, “This City is ‘foreign as far as the inhabitants are concerned”; 1900 November 5 – quilting in Texas.

1901 August 22 – drought, farming in Missouri; 1902 April 15 – on county elections in Missouri, religious revivals; 1902 August 18 – voting in general elections, changing interest in politics; 1903 January 21 – anti-trust legislation in Congress; 1903 January 23 – two children’s letters to grandmother.

1904 May 15 – aging; 1904 July 12 – presidential convention, St. Louis, he reflects on progress; 1905 August 26 – aging.

10 Business documents and receipts: 1850 December 10 – 189(?)
Texas papers pertaining to land suit – one refers to Madison County, Tennessee and Ellis County, Texas; 1862 July 7 - Confederate States Oath of Allegiance for Alex M. Jones (photocopy); 1865 May 29 – Office of Provost Marshall, Alex M. Jones signed saying he “will not take up arms, nor serve as Military Police or Constabulary force in any Fort, Garrison, or field work, nor as a guard for prisons, depots, or stores, not to discharge any duty usually performed by soldiers, until regularly exchanged, or otherwise released from the obligations of this parole by the authorization of the United States Government”
1881 October – Alex M. Jones elected highway commissioner, Madison County, Tennessee; 1885 May 29 – lien on cotton crop.

11 Letters: undated. Texas land, illness – DeSoto County, Mississippi, writer in Beach Point, Obion County, Tennessee, wants husband to move to Texas, land plat.
Wedding invitation and envelope: Dorothy Roberta Hicks to Joseph Nickle Pettey, 1224 Highland Avenue, Jackson, Tennessee, 1919 June 27 (2).

OS1 Handwritten letter on large envelope: Rush A. Jones to Smith & Derden, Texas, undated. Refers to land in Hillsboro, Texas, owned by Nelson Maxfield and formerly owned by J.G. Snodgrass.

12 Newspaper clippings: 1911 July, 1919 June, and undated.
13 Photographs: possibly Alexander and Sallie Jones, undated.
14 Manuscript volume: Church Book, Pleasant Hill, Jackson Circ., Memphis Con., 1872-1885. List of male and female members with remarks by their names like dropped, died, transferred, or removed by letter.

15 Leather wallet: belonging to “A. M. Jones”.

Separated materials

The following materials have been separated from the collection and disposed of as follows:

Currency: $10 Confederate bills, 1864 (2).
Transferred to Special Collections currency collection.