

**GAINES, JOHN WESLEY & EDMUND PENDLETON
GAINES PAPERS
1793-1926**

Processed by:

James William Campbell
Archives & Manuscripts Unit
Tennessee State Library and Archives

Accession Number 235
Date completed: 8-25-59
Location: I-C-3
Microfilm Accession Number: 1231

MICROFILMED

INTRODUCTION

The papers of John Wesley Gaines (1861-1926) and Edmund Pendleton Gaines (1777-1849) consist primarily of the correspondence of John Wesley Gaines, a prominent Nashville, Tennessee lawyer, and of Edmund Pendleton Gaines, the controversial frontier general. The papers were given to the State Library and Archives by John Wesley Gaines and consist of approximately 100 items occupying .42 linear feet of shelf space. The largest portion of the papers fall within the years 1835-1845 and 1915-1925. The inclusive dates of the papers range from 1793-1926. In addition to correspondence, the papers also include clippings, legal documents, genealogical data, photographs, biographical sketches, and a speech.

Literary rights in the unpublished writings of the Gaines family in these papers are dedicated to the public. Single photocopies may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Gaines Papers include letters of John Wesley Gaines, a Nashville attorney, to John Trotwood Moore of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and letters and documents of Edmund Pendleton Gaines, a distinguished Major General in the U.S. Army during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The papers of Edmund Pendleton Gaines are composed of correspondence written when he was commander of the Western Division of the U.S. Army (1836-1844). These letters are primarily concerned with the defense of the frontier settlements of Arkansas, East Texas, and Missouri against the threat of Mexican and Indian attack. From his headquarters on the Sabine River Gaines repeatedly asked the Western states and the federal government for an army of 7,000 to 19,000 volunteers to protect the rich delta lands of the Mississippi. The documents include speeches and papers containing his ideas on national defense. General Gaines advocated a strong network of military railroads, turnpikes, and canals connecting the frontier to the interior. He also advocated floating batteries as a means of coastal defense.

The letters of John Wesley Gaines include information concerning his kinsman, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, and considerable genealogical material relating to the Henderson, Taylor, and Wair families in Tennessee. John Gaines' letters also contain information relating to Rev. John King (a pioneer North Carolina Methodist preacher), the death of Andrew Jackson, the birthplace of John Bell, the career of Gov. Neill S. Brown, the history of Natchez Trace, and the genealogy of the Gaines family. Included also are articles written by John W. Gaines on the Battle of New Orleans, states' rights to secede, and other subjects.

One 1839 letter by Philip Lindsley declines an invitation to be present at a public dinner honoring General Sam Houston.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Wesley Gaines (1861-1926), an attorney, politician, businessman, and prominent property owner, was educated at the University of Nashville and Vanderbilt University. After graduation in 1882, he continued his study of law and was admitted to the bar in 1884. He was a presidential elector in 1892. He served from 1897-1909 as a Democrat in Congress. Upon retirement from political life he resumed his law practice and wrote articles of political and historical interest for the Nashville *Tennessean*.

Edmund Pendleton Gaines (1777-1849), a distant relative of John Wesley Gaines, was the son of James Gaines (1742-1830), a captain in the Revolutionary War, who established himself as an able officer at the Battle of Guilford Court House. Edmund Pendleton Gaines is the subject of James W. Silver's book, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines, Frontier General*. Gaines became an officer in the army in 1799 and later participated in the arrest of Aaron Burr. During the War of 1812, he obtained the rank of general and established his reputation at the Battle of Fort Erie in August 1814. This was one of the few battles in the War of 1812 in which the British were soundly beaten. In 1835 he participated in the Seminole campaign in Florida and later moved to the western frontier and became the commander of the Western Division of the U.S. Army. Gaines was a strong individualist who refused to bow to superiors considered by him to be inferior in ability and judgment. Thus he was at odds with General Winfield Scott and with the War Department. A bitter quarrel which developed between General Gaines and General Scott during the Seminole War led to an official reprimand for both. During the Mexican War, Gaines deliberately called for volunteers contrary to the orders of the War Department. This led to a reprimand and a court-martial trial, but Gaines successfully defended himself.

Edmund Pendleton Gaines advocated improvements in transportation and harbor defense, which he considered to be indispensable to national defense. He had high respect for the fighting abilities of the Indians and continually sought peace with them. He was married three times. His third wife, Myra Whitney, was for years involved in a civil suit against the city of New Orleans regarding her father's and General Gaines' land claims in that city.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Clippings, 1920-1925
2. Correspondence--Edmund Pendleton Gaines, 1836-1841
3. Correspondence--John Wesley Gaines, 1907-1926
4. Correspondence--John Wesley Gaines, re: Natchez Trace, 1925
5. Documents, Miscellaneous, 1793-1839
 - a. Estate of John Reid vs. James Bosley, 1793
 - b. Andrew Jackson vs. James Campbell, 1797
 - c. Receipt of Wright Williams for judgment, 1798
 - d. Note--Adam Huntsman to Jacob A. Lane, n.d.
6. Genealogical Data--Gaines family
7. Genealogical Data--Henderson and related families
8. Genealogical Data--King, Hunter, Sewell, Taylor, Wair, Warren, and other families
9. Photographs--Ladies' Hermitage Association
10. Printed materials--Letters and a sketch of Edmund Pendleton Gaines, 1830-1839
11. Speech--John Wesley Gaines, re: Andrew Jackson, 1907
12. Letter--Philip Lindsley, 1839
13. Sketch, Biographical--John Bell, by John Wesley Gaines
14. Sketch, Biographical--Edmund Pendleton Gaines, by John B. Brownlow