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**HARDING-JACKSON PAPERS**  
**1819-1911**

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Mary Washington Frazer  
Archival Technical Services

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## **INTRODUCTION**

These are the papers of John Harding (1777-1865), his son, William Giles Harding (1808-1886), and the two brothers, William Hicks Jackson (1835-1903) and Howell Edmunds Jackson (1832-1895), son-in-law of William Giles Harding, all of Belle Meade Plantation, six miles from Nashville, Tennessee. These copies were purchased, January, 1969, from the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Harding-Jackson Papers, consisting of 16 volumes and about 500 items, covering the years 1819-1911, are composed of accounts (principally accounts dealing with the raising of horses and feed, and boarding horses) and both family and business correspondence for three generations at "Belle Meade," a plantation six miles south of Nashville, Tennessee, famous as a thoroughbred horse nursery for many years.

There are sixteen volumes of farm accounts: nine ledgers of John Harding, who was born in Virginia and moved to Tennessee about 1805. He established the plantation of "Belle Meade." Nine volumes are his accounts for the raising, boarding, and feeding of horses for the years, 1819-1830. His son, William Giles Harding, succeeded him as proprietor of the plantation and there are five account books belonging to him: two ledgers of farm accounts, 1838-1842; a bank book, 1846-1847; and a cash account book for 1879. The two remaining volumes are: notebook of Howell E. Jackson, 1880's with a few notes and clippings related to political controversies in Tennessee, especially state finances and the state debt; and a receipt book of J. J. B. Southall, 1840-1851.

The family correspondence consists of letters written in 1862 to William Giles Harding, a political prisoner at Fort Mackinaw, from his wife, Elizabeth (McGavock) Harding, his two daughters, his father, his brother-in-law, his nephew, and his faithful household servant, Susanna. The letters of his wife, in particular, give an excellent picture of the life during that difficult year. She writes of the crops, the stock, and the faithful slaves, of their acquaintances who took the oath, of those imprisoned for not taking it, difficulties with Governor Johnson in attempting to secure permission to visit her husband, etc.

Other correspondence, 1826-1911, includes letters written to William Giles Harding when a cadet at Middleton Military Academy; business correspondence dealing with the price of cotton, the raising of cashmere goats, horses, grain; letters of congratulations when Howell E. Jackson was elected United States Senator from Tennessee, and when he was appointed to the Supreme Court; and letters of sympathy upon his death in 1895; and some correspondence of a political nature, including letters praising Howell E. Jackson's speech on National Aid to Education (the Blair Bill).

Documents include an Internal Revenue license, 1866, permitting William Giles Harding to carry on the business of stallion keeper; two Tennessee Christian Temperance Union cards signed by the Jackson brothers; and an appointment, 1873, for William Hicks Jackson to be one of the commissioners to attend the exposition in Vienna.

Clippings include a biographical sketch of William Giles Harding; an account of the famous horse, Bonnie Scotland, that was brought to "Belle Meade" in 1872; a list of horses by name sold, and prices, at the annual thoroughbred sale at "Belle Meade," about 1879; and a write-up of the sale of the plantation, October 16, 1894.

Papers dealing with Grange matters include the constitution proposed for the Tennessee Farmers State Association (undated) and its resolution urging every farmer to join some agricultural society or grange so as to have his voice heard in public affairs. He must rely on education and organization. There is a circular letter addressed to the Granges of the Cotton States and signed, "A Mississippi Planter," which urges diversification of crops in order to raise the price of cotton and make the southern states self-sustaining.

Other items in the collection include the Resolutions of the Supreme Court of the United States upon the death of Howell E. Jackson, 1895; a speech of William Hicks Jackson to the Patrons of Husbandry at Bell Buckle, Tennessee, undated; and the income tax papers of William Giles Harding for the years 1860-1865.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

### **William Giles Harding**

- 1808 Born, Nashville, Tennessee
- 1826 Attended the University of Nashville
- 1827 Attended Middleton Military Academy, Middleton, Connecticut
- 1828 Married Selene McNairy; had one son, John, they lived at his father's Stone's River farm
- 1839? Moved to "Belle Meade" and raised cashmere goats and race horses
- 1840 Married Elizabeth McGavock; had two daughters, Selene and Mary; served as Brigadier General in the Tennessee Militia
- 1862 Imprisoned at Fort Mackinaw for refusing to take the oath
- 1863(?) Released and returned to "Belle Meade". "Belle Meade" became famous as a thoroughbred horse nursery
- 1886 Died at his home, "Belle Meade"

### **William Hicks Jackson**

- 1835 Born, Jackson, Tennessee, son of Dr. Alexander Jackson and Mary (Hurt) Jackson
- ? Attended West Tennessee College
- 1856 Graduated from the United States Military Academy and served in the United States Army until 1861
- 1861-1865 Served in the Confederate army and became a Brigadier General
- 1865-1868 Managed his father's cotton plantation
- 1868 Married Selene Harding; and managed "Belle Meade" with his father-in-law, William Giles Harding
- 1886 He and his brother, Howell E. Jackson, managed "Belle Meade" after the death of their father-in-law, and continued to raise race horses
- 1903 Died at "Belle Meade"

### **Howell Edmunds Jackson**

- 1832 Born April 8, in Paris, Tennessee (Henry County), son of Dr. Alexander Jackson, a physician, and his wife, Mary Hurt Jackson
- 1840 Moved to Jackson with his parents
- 1849 Graduated from West Tennessee College
- 1854 Graduated from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Virginia
- 1856 Graduated from Law Department of Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee. Commenced practice in Jackson
- 1859 Moved to Memphis where he practiced law. Married Sophia Malloy who died about 1872 or 1873
- 1874 Married Mary E. Harding, daughter of William Giles Harding. Returned to Jackson and served on the court of arbitration for West Tennessee by appointment on two occasions
- 1880 Member of the Tennessee House of Representatives
- 1881-1886 Elected and served as Democrat in the United States Senate
- 1886-1893 Served as Circuit Judge for the sixth Federal Circuit
- 1891 Became first presiding Judge of Circuit Court of Appeals established at Cincinnati
- 1893-1895 Appointed Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court to fill vacancy caused by the death of L. Q. C. Lamar
- 1895 Died August 8 in West Meade, Tennessee. Interment at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Nashville

## CONTAINER LIST

### **Box 1**

#### **Accounts**

1. Ledger of John Harding – 1819
2. Ledger of John Harding – 1820
3. Ledger of John Harding – 1822
4. Ledger of John Harding – 1823
5. Ledger of John Harding – 1825
6. Ledger of John Harding – 1826

### **Box 2**

#### **Accounts**

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5. Ledger of William Giles Harding – 1839
6. Receipt book of J. J. B. Southall – 1840-1851
7. Ledger of William Giles Harding – 1842
8. Cash account of William Giles Harding – 1879
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10. Notebook of Howell E. Jackson – 1880's

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1. Accounts, 1825-1867
2. Act of Congress, 1886
3. Agreements, 1841-1847
4. Biographical sketch, n.d.
5. Circulars, 1865-1884
6. Clippings, 1874-1932
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11. Receipts, 1827-1886
12. Resolutions, 1895
13. Speeches, 1873
14. Supreme Court of U. S. – opinions of Justice Howell E. Jackson, 1892-1894
15. Taxes, 1863-1866
16. United Cashmere Company – papers, 1859-1860

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