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WILLIAMS, KATHERINE ORME (ca. 1908-1970)
PAPERS, 1812-1918

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INTRODUCTION

This collection is centered on the Scott, Singleton, and Cooper families of Bedford and Coffee Counties, Tennessee. The most prominent members of the families are John Scott, farmer and merchant; Robert L. Singleton, a doctor; and Alexander A. Cooper, teacher, trader, and merchant up to the Civil War. During the Civil War, Cooper was a commissary-general and general purchasing agent for the commissary department for the Confederate Army. He was Deputy Clerk of the Bedford County Court for ten years. The Katherine Orme Williams Papers were given to the State Library and Archives by Dr. E.L. Williams of Eagleville, Tennessee, the husband of Katherine Orme Williams.

The materials in this collection measure 1.26 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Katherine Orme Williams Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Katherine Orme Williams Papers, containing approximately 1,200 items, cover the years 1812-1918. The collection is composed of correspondence, accounts, church records, diaries, estate papers, genealogical data, land records, legal documents (bankruptcy, checks, land records, oaths, bills of sale, and receipts), military records (accounts, appointment and duties, and pay vouchers of Alexander A. Cooper, Confederate purchasing agent), newspaper clippings, obituaries, photographs and pictures, politics, schools, and writings. The largest part of the collection is family correspondence of the Scott, Singleton, and Cooper families.

Most of the correspondence centers on the families of John and Sarah (Blythe) Scott, Robert L. and Elizabeth Sarah (Scott) Singleton, and Alexander A. and Mary E. (Singleton) Cooper who lived in Bedford and Coffee Counties, Tennessee. Forty-five letters of John Singleton, son of Robert L. Singleton, compose the largest single part of the collection. Written from California, his letters describe conditions in that state in the 1870s and 1880s, including a description of gold mining in Death Valley.

Also included in the family correspondence are seven letters written by James Singleton, father of Robert L. Singleton, which describe land and financial conditions in the 1830s as well as his impression of the election of 1840. There are twenty-one letters of Elizabeth Scott Singleton; fifteen written by Fannie (Singleton) Martin, daughter of Robert L. Singleton; and seven written by another daughter, Catherine S. (Kate) Singleton. One of Kate Singleton's letters describes a visit by President Hayes to Chattanooga in 1877. Twenty-eight letters are written by Martha (Singleton) Sutphin, sister of Robert L. Singleton. These letters primarily contain family news.

Among other letters in the Williams papers are five written by Alexander A. Cooper; twelve written by Henry F. (Harry), son of Alexander, who was an agent for Wells, Fargo, and Company in Calvert, Texas; seventeen written by Robert S. Cooper, first son of Alexander, who was an Indian trader. His letters are written from southern as well as western states, and describe his business in Indian Territory in addition to family news. Nineteen letters by Alexander Cooper's daughter, Constance Cooper Orme (Katherine Williams' mother), contain primarily family news.

The largest part of the correspondence was written between the 1850s and 1880s. Thus, in addition to family news, several letters contain war news, crop and business conditions of the 1873 depression, the declining cotton market, and yellow fever and cholera epidemics. Ten letters of Thomas White Scott, son of John Scott; four letters of Micajah T. Cooper, father of Alexander Cooper; and fifteen letters of L.P. Cooper, Alexander's brother, and a lawyer in Sardis, Mississippi, best describe business and the depression in Tennessee and Texas. In a letter written to Alexander Cooper dated February 10, 1861, L.P. Cooper voiced ardent Southern sentiment, denouncing the Republican Party and the Crittenden proposals. "I do hope," he declared, "that the Government may never be reconstructed and that we may have a Southern Republic such as our Fathers made instead of the one now existing which resembles the one originally formed hardly as much as a shadow (sic) does the substance."

Sixteen letters written by Robert L. Singleton, Jr. describe conditions as a Confederate soldier in addition to family news. Ten letters of his cousin, James S. Sutphin, a Confederate mustering officer and recruiter, also describe war news.

The remainder of the Williams papers is made up primarily of legal documents dealing with land and other business matters and military records dealing primarily with Alexander A. Cooper who was a Confederate purchasing agent during the War.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Accounts – 1837-1909; undated
2. Accounts – Account books – 1865-1902; undated
3. Accounts – Bills, receipts – 1833-1906; undated
4. Accounts – Bills of sale, Negroes – 1851-1862
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15. Correspondence – Keen, A.G. - Martin, Fannie
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17. Correspondence – Orme, Constance Cooper
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19. Correspondence – Scruggs, C.M.- Singleton, Catherine S.
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7. Correspondence – Singleton, Sarah Isabella - Stone, Janie
8. Correspondence – Sutphin, M.A.
9. Correspondence – Sutphin, James A. - Young Men of Fairfield
10. Agreements
11. Churches – Elk River Association of Primitive Baptists – Minutes – 1870
12. Clippings – Newspaper, advertisements
13. Confederate script – Georgia
14. Diary – Mrs. Elizabeth Scott Cooper, 1895
15. Envelopes
16. Estate papers – James Carlisle, Joshua P. Scott
17. Estate papers – Administrator, accounts – John Scott
18. Estate papers – Land records, legatee distribution and settlement, promissory notes, tax receipt – John Scott
19. Genealogical data – Scott family

20. Grange – Constitution, Guide, and Manual – 1873-74

Box 3

1. Land records – Coffee County, Duck River settlers
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3. Lists and Memorabilia
4. Memoir – Martha E. Cooper, daughter of James Cooper
5. Military records – Accounts – A.A. Cooper, Confederate Purchasing Agent
6. Military records – Appointment and duties – A.A. Cooper, Confederate Purchasing Agent
7. Military records – Pay vouchers – A.A. Cooper, Confederate Purchasing Agent
8. Obituaries – Mrs. Katherine Orme Williams; Mrs. Mary A. Slaughter
9. Photographs and pictures
10. Politics and Government – Election results – Tennessee – Bedford County – 1884
11. Certificate – John Singleton – Indiana – University of Notre Dame
12. Weaving patterns and instructions
13. Writings – Author unknown
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