BURFORD, DAVID
(1791-1864)
PAPERS
1810-1915

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INTRODUCTION

The David Burford Papers, 1810-1915, are centered around David Burford (1791-1864), army officer, businessman and state legislator from Smith County, Tennessee. The David Burford Papers were placed on deposit by Judge G. W. Allen, Dixon Springs, Tennessee. The collection occupies 1.26 linear feet of shelf space, and numbers approximately 450 items.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the David Burford Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The David Burford Papers, containing 450 items, span the period 1810-1915, although the bulk is largely concentrated in the years 1814-1840. The collection is composed of accounts, correspondence, court records, election records, genealogical data, horse records, land records, legal documents, lists, military records, passes, slave records and several miscellaneous items.

Over one half of the collection consists of correspondence addressed to David Burford while he and Colonel Robert Allen were engaged in a mercantile business in Carthage, Tennessee. Most of these letters were of a business nature and concerned payments on account, acceptance of bank drafts for collection and payment, selling of tobacco through various mercantile firms in New Orleans and other financial transactions. Following the financial panic of 1819 the contents of these business letters reflected the general anxiety in business circles. Several correspondents from New Orleans decried the general state of business including the depressed market for agricultural products, particularly tobacco, the inability to procure United States bank notes to remit for drafts left for collection, business failures in New York City, the dull slave market, and many bank failures in Baltimore.

After the War of 1812 Burford held the rank of Major in the Tennessee State Militia. While serving in this military capacity he kept in contact with correspondence to district Congressmen on such military matters as pension claims, claims for militia soldiers pay, widow's claims, enrollment of volunteers in the state militia and veterans' claims for property lost in the Seminole War.

As a representative of Smith and Sumner Counties in the Tennessee General Assembly during 1829-1835, Burford received letters from constituents seeking appointments to various state government positions, expressions of opinion upon the issue of recharting the United States Bank, the Democratic primary contest between John Eaton and Felix Grundy in 1832, and other political matters.

Probably the single most important letter in the Burford collection is a typed copy of a letter by Andrew Jackson to David Burford, dated July 28, 1831, concerning Jackson's reorganization of his Cabinet and his controversy with John C. Calhoun in regard to Jackson's conduct in Florida during the Seminole War [see Box 2, Folder 4].

Among the military records are annual returns for the 35th Regiment, Tennessee Militia in 1816 and for the 48th Regiment, Tennessee Militia in 1810. Also included are elections of officers in Smith County for the 15th, 16th 41st and 59th Regiments of the Tennessee Militia for the years 1826-1828.

Those interested in slave records will find in the Burford Papers bills of sale for various years in the period 1821-1838. In addition, there are several references to slaves in some of the letters [see Name Index for citings in individual letters].

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David Burford

1791	November 5, born in North Carolina son of the Reverend Daniel and Elizabeth (Hawkins) Burford
Bef . 1799	Removed with parents to Smith County, Tennessee
1812	Commissioned Second Lieutenant in 7th Regiment, United States Army during War of 1812
1814-1815	Commanded the post and was acting Quartermaster at Fort Pickering; after war held rank of major in state militia
1815	Established tanyard at Carthage; associated with Colonel Robert Allen in the mercantile business and with Colonel Robert I. Chester in tobacco trade; moved to his farm at Dixon Springs, Smith County, to devote time to agriculture and raising blooded stock
1825	September 16, married Elizabeth W. Alexander, daughter of Richard and Mary Alexander
1825-1829	Sheriff of Smith County
1829-1835	Represented Smith and Sumner Counties in Tennessee General Assembly; Speaker of Senate in 20th Assembly
1860	Delegate to the Charleston Democratic Convention
1864	May 23, died at his home at Dixon Springs

Source: Dr. John W. Bowen's History of Smith County, Tennessee

CONTAINER LIST

Microfilm Reel #1

Box Number 1

1. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—n.d., 1814, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819
2. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1820-1829
3. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1830-1839
4. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1840-1849
5. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1850-1859; 1860-1861; 1864; 1885; 1915
6. Correspondence—Author unknown
7. Correspondence—Adams-Allen, Moses
8. Correspondence—Atkinson-Burford
9. Correspondence—Cartwright—Craighead

Box Number 2

1. Dorsey-Duncan
2. Erwin-Guild
3. Hagner-Huntsman
4. Jackson-Lord

Microfilm Reel #2

5. McConnell-Nisbet
6. Patterson-Richardson
7. Saunders-Smith
8. Wilkins-Worley

Box Number 3

1. Court Records—Affidavit—Fletcher Taylor, 1822
2. Court Records—Commission—David Burford, et al vs. Wyatt W. Bailey, et al, 1848
3. Court Records—Decree for sale—Heirs of J.W. Sanders vs. Thos. T. Stribling, 1852
4. Court Records—Receipt money paid witnesses, 1826
5. Election Records—State and national officials—Smith County, Tenn., 1827-1835
6. Genealogical Data—Allen, Burford and Garrison families
7. Horse Records—Certificates of Pedigree, etc.
8. Land Records—Deed—Black, Thos. J. to David Burford, 1833
9. Land Records—Deed—Burford, David to Alexander Allison, 1829
10. Land Records—Deed—Burford, John H. to David Burford, 1834
11. Land Records—Deed—Burnett, Thos. R., et al , to David Burford, 1821
12. Land Records—Deed—Cage, Wilson to David Burford, 1840

13. Land Records—Deed—Cochran, David to David Burford, 1840
14. Land Records—Deed—Goodall, Wm. To David Burford, 1829
15. Land Records—Deed—Hart, Wm. To David Burford, 1829
16. Land Records—Land Warrants, 1848
17. Land Records—Report—Walker's boundary line, 1830
18. Land Records—Surveys—Miscellaneous
19. Legal Documents—Agreements—Burford, David and Nathan Williams, 1818
20. Legal Documents—Agreements—Robert I. Chester and Co. and David Burford, 1818
21. Legal Documents—Agreements—James Overton and David Burford, 1831
22. Legal Documents—Deed of trust—William Payne to David Burford, 1837
23. Legal Documents—Estate Papers—Cosby, Thos. W. 1841
24. Legal Documents—Estate Papers—Gifford, Francis 1816
25. Legal Documents—Estate Papers—Howard, George A., 1900
26. Legal Documents—Petition—Joel Robertson, et al in favor of being considered in State of Kentucky, 1831
27. Legal Documents—Petition—John H. Eaton for U.S. Senate
28. Legal Documents—Petition—Justices of Peace, Smith County, Tennessee, 1831
29. Legal Documents—Power of attorney—David Burford, 1818
30. Legal Documents—Power of attorney—Daniel Morris, 1819
31. Lists—Prices—New Orleans, 1822-1823
32. Lists—Property sold—Thomas Phelps, 1838
33. Memorabilia
34. Military Records—Annual Return—35th Regiment, Tennessee Militia, 1816
35. Military Records—Annual Return—48th Regiment, Tennessee Militia, 1810
36. Military Records—Articles of Agreement—Lt. David Burford, 7th Regiment, and Mr. Joshua Fletcher, 1814
37. Military Records—Certificates of Discharge--lst Regiment, Tennessee Volunteers, 1846
38. Military Records—Correspondence—Re: abandonment of Ft. Pickering; Charles and Francis Jones of 39th Regiment Infantry
39. Military Records—Elections of officers—Smith County, 15th Regiment, 16th Regiment, 41st Regiment, 59th Regiment, Tennessee Militia, 1826-1828
40. Military Records—Muster Roll—Smith a private servant to Lt. David Burford, 7th Regiment Tennessee Infantry, 1814-1815
41. Military Records—Proof of service—Gabriel Gregory, deceased, 1847
42. Minutes—Committee on Banks, n.d.
43. Passes—Travel authorization—David Burford and family, 1860
44. Pension Records—widow—Elizabeth W. Burford, 1878
45. Slavery—Sale of slaves, 1821, 1829, 1833, 1838
46. Miscellaneous—Envelopes, fragments, etc.

NAME INDEX

This is a name index of correspondence in the David Burford Papers, together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the box and folder in which the material is to be found.

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Alexander, W. S. (3) to D. Burford, 1831, 1833), re: accounting of money received; report that judgement against Hart and others had been lost; family news; house fire; horse races results; recording of mortgages, 1-7

Allen, Jos. W. (2) to David Burford, 1841 and 1845, re: land for sale by Joe Cochran; advice on the Chester debt, 1-7

Allen, Moses and Thos. to David Burford, 1831, re: requesting D.B.'s influence in promoting their nephew's candidacy for the Office of Engrossing Clerk to the Senate, 1-7

Allen, Robert (31) to David Burford, n.d., 1819-1825, re: pension claims; promissory note; claims for militia soldiers pay and powers of attorney; denial of claim for a horse lost in Creek War; payment on account; selling of tobacco; Missouri bill in Congress; loss of the tobacco boat ; money due Samuel Allen for services in the Georgia militia; contest for House Speakership decided; burial of Sen. Trimble of Ohio; affidavit for a claimant; business matters; enclosure of letters; tobacco prices; payment of debts; presidential contest between Jackson and Adams; Lafayette's reception by Congress; second marriage for Allen, 1-8

Allen, Robert to Thos. Owen, 1822, re: authorization for David Burford to receive for Allen any money collected by Owen as agent for the late firm of Allen and Jenkins, 1-8

Allen, Robert to James Tubbs, 1821, re: requesting power of attorney authority in order to collect money due Silas Brook's widow, 1-8

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Baldwin, Joshua to David Burford, 1823, re: record of existing account; tobacco market, 1-9

Bennett, S. Britton (6) to R. Allen and Burford, 1822, re: announcement of a co-partnership firm of Bennett and Laidlaw; payment of notes on demand; business greatly suspended in New Orleans due to scarcity of shipping; slight improvement in tobacco market; unable to procure any U.S. bank notes to remit for the drafts left for collection; unable to sell Negro slave due to sore on leg; acceptance of drafts for collection and payment; stagnation in the tobacco and cotton markets; business almost totally suspended due to the existence of the [yellow] fever; Negro slave hired out has a very lame leg, 1-9

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Cartwright, John to Thomas Banks, 1822, re: apology for not paying debt sooner but assurance that it will be paid, 1-10
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Nisbet, F. H. to Allen and Burford, 1820, re: unable to pay draft as requested, 2-5

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Peyton, Balie (2) to David Burford, 1832, 1833, re: voters prefer Eaton over Grundy; the contested election between L. P. Moore and R. P. Letcher in Kentucky; organized attempt, headed by Clay and Calhoun to break down Jackson's popularity; discussion of the "Deposit" [of federal funds] question in Congress, 2-6

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Porterfield, F. to David Burford, 1830, re: proceeds of discounted note, 2-6

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R. Allen to Burford to Alex Henry, Jr. and Co., 1820, re: unable to make remittance at this time; will make payment as soon as tobacco is sold in New Orleans, 2-6

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Record, James C. to David Burford, 1840, re: apology for not writing earlier; discussion of a military matter, 2-6

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Saunders, Jourdan M. to David Burford, n.d., re: bill of sale for Negro slaves; erection of a monument as a memorial to deceased father and mother, 2-7

Saunders, L. (2) to David Burford, 1840, re: power of attorney to represent him in the "partition of the Negroes at Bledsoesborough;" death of mother; agreement to let Ethelburt [his brother] to have Phillis and her children; preference to have John sent, if he is willing to leave his children; wants to buy " a first rate boy of any age from 12 to 25," 2-7

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Smith, John G. to David Burford, 1840, re: arrangements for impending horse race, 2-7

Smith, Sam (2) to David Burford, 1823, 1834, re: tobacco sale and other business matters; legislative business; regret to learn that D.B. has declined a seat in the convention, 2-7

Wilkins, James to David Burford, 1845, re: financial matter, 2-8

Williams, Daniel to David Burford, 1824, re: buying a cloth; describes the power and influence of Darby over the bar and court, 2-8

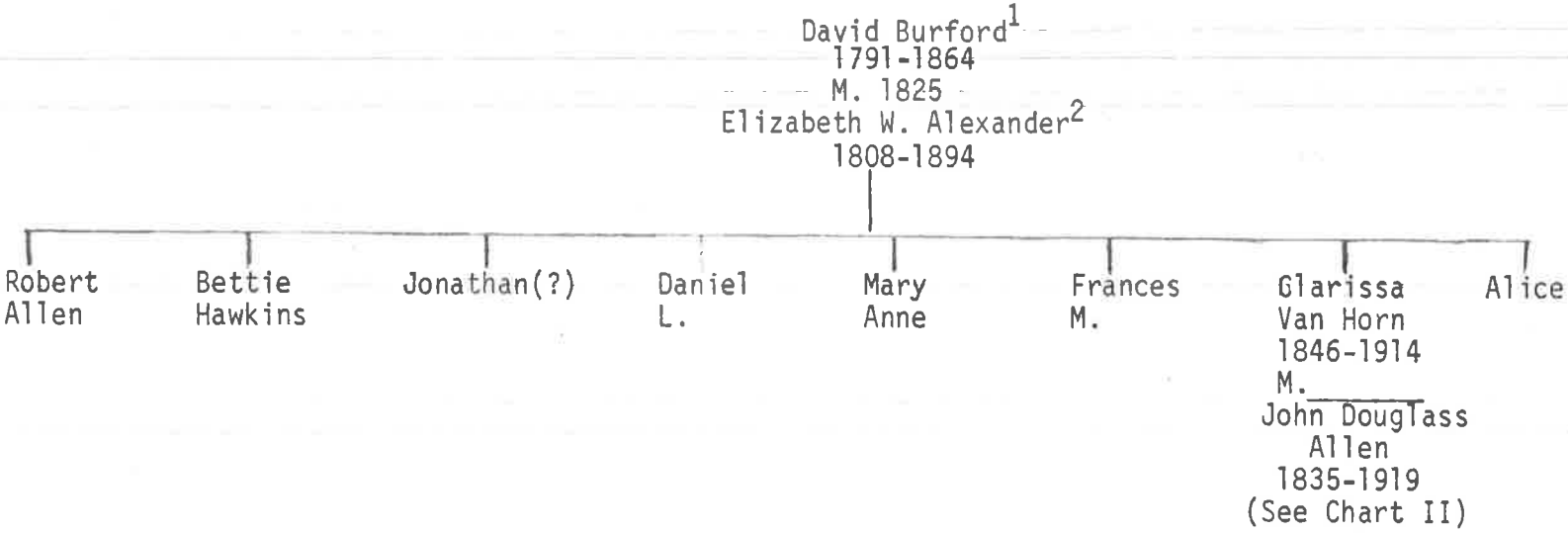
Winbourn, Henry K. (2) to David Burford, 1833, 1834, re: urging D.B. to be a candidate for the convention; happy to learn that he will be, 2-8

Woods, Joseph and Robert Woods (7) to David Burford, n.d. and 1834, re: sinking of Allen's boat unavailable with description of events of same; status of account; bill of lading; notes sent were unacceptable; credit to account, 2-8

Worley, T. to Allen and Burford, 1820, re: sending money by the bearer, 2-8

Chart I - Burford

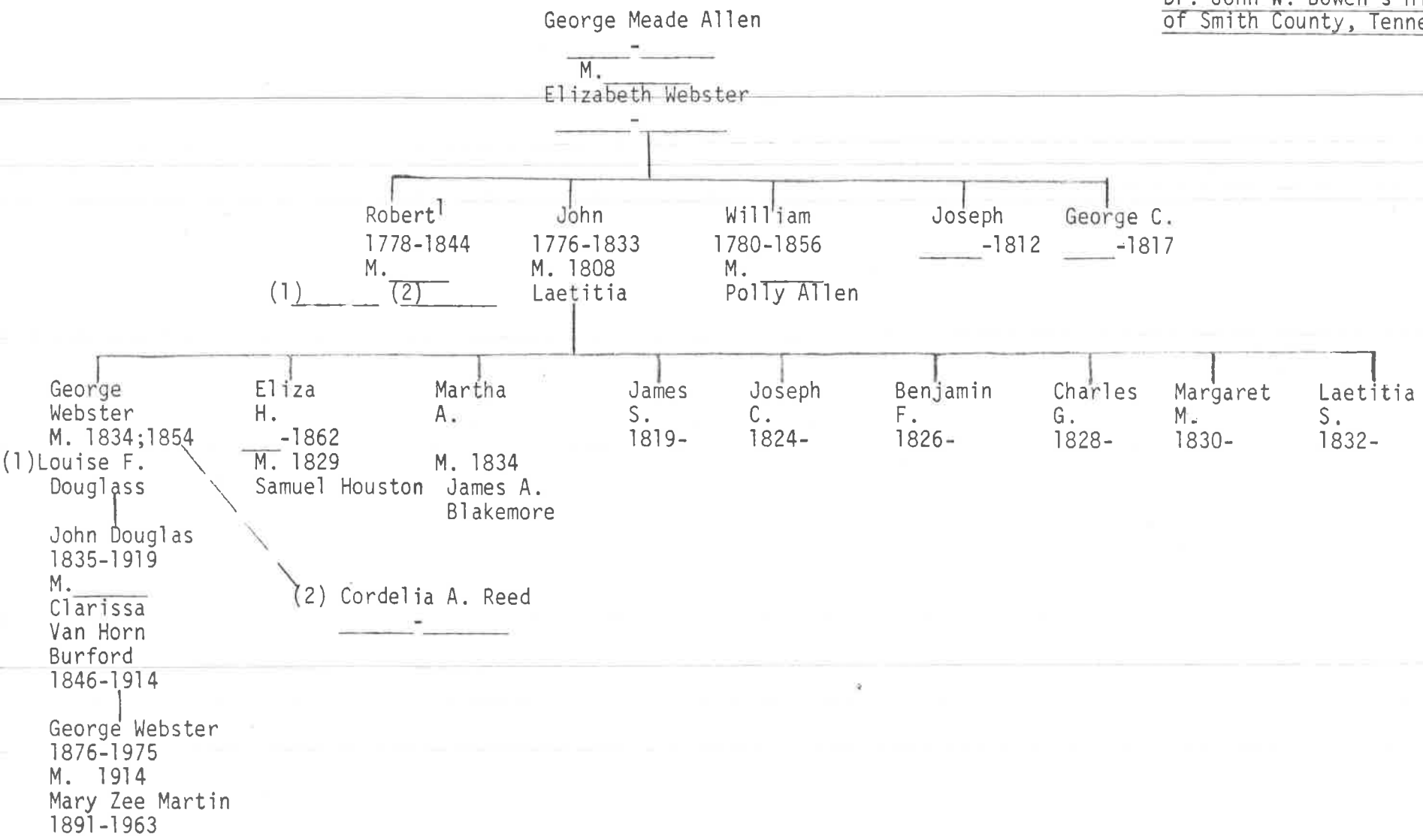
Source: Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly, Volume I



1. Son of Reverend Daniel and Elizabeth (Hawkins) Burford
2. Daughter of Richard and Nancy Alexander

Chart II - Allen

Source: John Allen, Nashville, Tennessee
David Burford Papers
Dr. John W. Bowen's History of Smith County, Tennessee



1. Associated with David Burford in mercantile business in Carthage, Tennessee; U.S. Congressman, 1817-1825; home was "Greenwood."