

**CHESNUT, JAMES, 1815-1885.**  
**James Chesnut letter book, 1864-1865**

Emory University  
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Chesnut, James, 1815-1885.  
**Title:** James Chesnut letter book, 1864-1865  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 118  
**Extent:** 1 bound volume (BV)  
**Abstract:** Letterbook of James Chesnut, South Carolina lawyer, senator, planter and Commander of the South Carolina Confederate Reserves.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on access**

Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Source**

Unknown, prior to 1955.

**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], James Chesnut letter book, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Processing**

Processed by SS, April 17, 1972

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**Collection Description**

**Biographical Note**

James Chesnut, South Carolina lawyer, senator, planter and Commander of the South Carolina Confederate Reserves, was born January 18, 1815 in Camden, South Carolina He was the

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youngest child of James and Mary Cox Chesnut. After his education at Princeton he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1837. On April 23, 1840, he married Mary Boykin Miller, daughter of Governor Stephen D. Miller. He was a member of the State House of Representatives from 1840-1846 and 1850-1852; the Senate from 1852-1858; and U. S. from 1858 until secession became imminent and he resigned his seat. He was elected to the Secession Convention and was a member of the committee which drafted the Ordinance. During the War he served, first as an aid to General Beauregard, next as chief of the military on the Executive Council of South Carolina, then he was an aid on the staff of President Davis. On April 23, 1864 he was appointed brigadier general in command of the reserve forces in South Carolina. After the war, Chesnut, although disenfranchised, continued active in South Carolina politics. He died February 1, 1885 at his plantation near Camden.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of one bound volume used as a copy book by aides of General Chesnut during the time he served as commander of the reserves in South Carolina. There are copies of 528 letters written by James Chesnut and his aides Edward H. Barnwell and Isaac Hayne between May 26, 1864 and April 25, 1865. These all concern the organization and duties of the reserve forces in South Carolina including the guarding of prisoners. They give clear indications of the lack of men and materials suffered by the Confederacy during the last year of the war. Troop movements and the invasion of South Carolina are given full attention. Some of the people these letters were addressed to are Gen. Albert G. Blanchard, Commander of Reserves; Milledge Luke Bonham., Governor of South Carolina; General Braxton Bragg; General Samuel Cooper, Adjutant. and Inspector General; President Jefferson Davis; General William Joseph Hardee; Colonel F. E. Harrison; General Howell Cobb, Commander of Georgia Reserves; General Joseph E. Johnston; General Samuel Jones; Gen. Mansfield Lovell; Maj. W. W. Perryman, commander of Greenville, South Carolina; Maj. J. T. Trezevant, commander of a Confederate arsenal; and Gen. John H. Winder. The copy book contains its original index.

