

HAMBLETON, JAMES PINKNEY, 1830-1897.

James P. Hambleton papers, 1857-1893

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Hambleton, James Pinkney, 1830-1897.
Title: James P. Hambleton papers, 1857-1893
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 29
Extent: .5 linear ft. (1 box) and 1 oversized paper box (OP)
Abstract: Papers of editor, surgeon, and businessman James Pinkney Hambleton. The collection consists mainly of family and political correspondence.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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Source

Source unknown, prior to 1955.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], James P. Hambleton papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by DEW, June 1977.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

James Pinkney Hambleton was born in or near Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in 1830. A physician by profession, he was the son of a physician, O. E. Hambleton, and Mary Hambleton.

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He married Martha Louisa Easley, daughter of Benjamin Easley, a wealthy landowner of Dade County, Georgia, and moved with her to Atlanta sometime during the mid or late 1850's.

On February 15, 1859, Hambleton became the first editor of the *Southern Confederacy*, a newspaper that quickly gained notoriety for its fire-eating and intemperate editorials. At a January 31, 1860 meeting of Atlanta businessmen to consider cutting off trade with northern merchants, Hambleton was elected secretary. A year later, he published a "blacklist" of abolition merchants in the *Southern Confederacy* and urged southerners not to trade with them.

Hambleton left the paper in 1861 to assume duties as a surgeon with the 4th Battalion, Georgia Infantry. He was later transferred to the 35th Georgia Infantry Regiment and assigned to temporary duty in Atlanta, March 19, 1862. Resigning because of illness in December 1862, he traveled north for his health, where he was taken prisoner and held at Fort Warren Prison, Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. Hambleton remained in Atlanta after the war, making an unsuccessful bid for Congress in 1865.

In 1869, Hambleton moved to Washington, D.C., presumably to take part in the political life there and to lobby for certain claims his wife had against the government for cotton confiscated during the war. In 1876, through the influence of M. C. Kerr, Speaker of the House, and James B. Beck, senator-elect of Kentucky, Hambleton was chosen clerk of the House Committee on Ways and Means. Shortly after his appointment, the *New York Tribune* carried a story that Hambleton's deceased son, John Wilkes Hambleton, had been named for John Wilkes Booth. (The child was actually known as "Booth" to friends of the family.) Hambleton denied the charge, but because of the ensuing controversy felt it necessary to resign. Hambleton died in Washington in 1897.

Hambleton was the author of one book, a vehement attack on the Know-Nothing Party, entitled *A History of the Political Campaign in Virginia in 1855; With a Biographical Sketch of Henry A. Wise*. (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1856).

Biographical Source: U.S. Census Records for 1850 and 1860 and in Franklin Garrett's *Atlanta and Environs*.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists mainly of letters written to Dr. James P. Hambleton between 1857 and 1893. A good many of the letters concern issues pertinent to Reconstruction-era Georgia: Negro problems, economic conditions, and, particularly, politics. There is much discussion of candidates and elections, both local and national, and of activities of various political figures. Especially noteworthy are the letters of Alexander Hamilton Stephens and Dudley McIver DuBose, congressmen from Washington, Georgia. Stephens' eleven letters (May 18, 1860-January 7, 1872) discuss, among other topics, the "loss" of Kansas, the presidential election of 1860, and, in a particularly pessimistic letter (May 3, 1867), the "death" of "republican constitutional liberty," against which he sees "no good any Southern man can do." DuBose writes at length (ten letters, August 4, 1872-June 30, 1878) about the political activities of Alexander Stephens, Robert Toombs, Joseph E. Brown, John Brown Gordon, and others; he also expresses opinions on campaigns, Congress, and legislation. Other Georgia congressmen who appear as correspondents include Philip Cook, John Brown Gordon, Joshua Hill, and Pierce Manning Butler Young.

The collection also includes correspondence from political figures outside of Georgia. Most of this correspondence is congressional gossip concerning political alignments, races for Speaker of the House and clerkship of committees, and politics in various states. Correspondents include: James Burnie Beck, Joseph Clay Styles Blackburn, Jeremiah Vardaman Cockrell, Jubal Anderson Early, Charles Augustus Eldridge, Charles Ewing (1835-1883), Charles Stebbins Fairchild, John Goode, Michael Crawford Kerr, La Vega George Kinne, William Gates Le Duc, Osborne Augustus Lochrane, William Adams Richardson, Henry Smith (1838-1916), John Randolph Tucker, Washington Curran Whitthorne, and John Sergeant Wise. Also includes a letter from Horace Greeley (August 30, 1866) to Hambleton regarding Jefferson Davis' release, and Hambleton's letter of resignation from the clerkship of the House Ways and Means Committee (February 8, 1876).

A number of the letters relate to southern claims against the government for cotton confiscated by federal troops during the Civil War. In addition to handling his wife's claim, Hambleton was apparently representing a number of other persons with similar claims. There are several documents delegating power of attorney to Hambleton for this purpose, as well as letters concerning the various cases. Among the letters relating to Mrs. Hambleton's claim is an angry exchange (August-October, 1871) concerning an agreement Hambleton had made with Gen. Stephen Gano Burbridge in 1868. A photocopy of Miscellaneous House Document No. 194, 2nd Congress, 2nd Session "Papers . . . relative to the claim of Martha L. Hambleton" has been placed with the collection.

Family correspondence comprises about half of the papers after 1876. His sons Oliver and Poindexter wrote a number of letters to Hambleton while they were away at school. Letters from Hambleton to Poindexter during this period contain fatherly advice and admonitions. Hambleton's son Benjamin writes to his father from his post in Arizona as Deputy Collector of Customs. While there, Benjamin apparently got into some kind of legal trouble, and a number of letters concern his trial. Benjamin also writes his brother Poindexter about life in the southwest, and in one eight-page letter (February 9, 1889), describes a visit to Mexico.

Two letters of particular interest were written to Hambleton from newly settled areas of the United States. One from Boise City, Idaho (September 21, 1877) gives a glowing report of climate, vegetation, and a society "most democratic in its tastes," where "saloons are gorgeous and a national bank loans its money at 2 percent per month." The writer seems especially concerned with railroads and trade routes, and has visions of Idaho becoming a "new Georgia." The other, a lively letter from Huntington, Indiana (April 27, 1882), describes the rough society, where "the men are addicted to whiskey and tobacco," "strong-minded women yell for their rights," and "one half the population are as good whistlers as ever twisted a lip." Discussed also are local foods, amusements, and attitudes toward African Americans.

The collection also contains a small group of clippings relating to politics, the Lincoln government, Jefferson Davis, and other miscellaneous topics. One article, written by Hambleton, is entitled "A Christmas Ride: The Steeple-chase which John Randolph led W. H. Crawford: A Reminiscence of Virginia Hospitality in 1810: The Georgia Senator's Christmas Dinner and How He Earned It: An Interesting Sketch." Included also is a clipping from the *National Republican*, which refers to the controversy over Hambleton's appointment as clerk of the Ways and Means Committee.

Arrangement Note

Arranged in chronological order.

Container List

Correspondence

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	February 14, 1857-November 17, 1865
1	2	January 29, 1866-October 4, 1871
OP1	1	August 26, 1871
1	3	January 7, 1872-November 8, 1873
1	4	January 28, 1874-December 30, 1874
1	5	January 21, 1875-September 20, 1876
1	6	March 16, 1877-November 30, 1877
1	7	January 1, 1878-November 21, 1882
1	8	August 14, 1883-May 17, 1887
1	9	August 4, 1887-December 20, 1888
1	10	January 1, 1889-December 17, 1889; 188?
1	11	January 11, 1890-December 23, 1891
1	12	March 4, 1892-April 29, 1893 and undated

Other

1	13	Clippings
1	14	House of Representatives: Misc. Document No. 194: Claim of Martha L. Hambleton, April 15, 1872 [photocopy]
