

JONES, JOSEPH BERTRAM.
Joseph Bertram Jones papers 1793-1910

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Jones, Joseph Bertram.
Title: Joseph Bertram Jones papers 1793-1910
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 134
Extent: .25 linear ft. (1 box)
Abstract: Papers of Joseph Bertram Jones, attorney, legislator, and planter, of Burke County, Georgia, including correspondence, financial records, and legal papers.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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

Source

Gift, 1976.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Joseph Bertram Jones papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by HEA, February 1977.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Joseph Bertram Jones (October 10, 1817-December 29, 1896), attorney, legislator, and planter, was born in Burke County, Georgia. Joseph B. Jones was the fourth child of eight born to Henry Philip Jones (December 27, 1788-October 1, 1853), prosperous planter and large landholder, and his first wife, Sarah Vickers Jones (November 29, 1790-March 18, 1835). Joseph Jones attended Franklin College (now the University of Georgia), where he participated in the Demosthenian Society and Temperance Society. He apparently graduated in 1839.

The next year Jones studied law in New Haven, Connecticut. There he also courted his future wife Sarah Lewis (November 15, 1822-June 1, 1871), daughter of the late Josiah Lewis from Burke County and a student at Miss E. M. Seeley's Boarding School for Young Ladies in New Haven. Joseph Jones married Sarah Lewis in the spring of 1842. They were the parents of twelve children, including two who died in infancy. They resided on a plantation in Birdsville (called Herndon after 185-) in Burke County.

Following his admission to the Georgia bar in 1841, Jones established a practice in Burke County. His cases occasionally took him to other places in the state, particularly Augusta and Macon. In May, 1847 Jones was made an honorary member of two collegiate literary societies: the Few Society of Emory College and the Ciceronian Society of Mercer University.

By 1860 Jones was primarily a planter, raising corn, peanuts, and potatoes on the plantation where he and his family lived near Herndon and cotton on another plantation he owned near Waynesboro. From 1863 to 1866 he represented Burke County in the Georgia General Assembly. He was chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Internal Improvements in 1864. On December 1, 1864 General William Tecumseh Sherman's army made its headquarters in Jones's home, thus saving it from destruction during the march to the sea. Jones missed the Federals by going to Savannah a few days before their arrival, leaving his wife, their four-day old baby, and eight other children. (At that time the two eldest sons, Wesley and Whitfield, were away serving in the "Cadet Corps" of the Confederate Army.) After the Federals' departure, Jones returned home and there spent his remaining years. He died on December 29, 1896 and was buried in the Jones family cemetery on the Birdsville Plantation.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the papers of Joseph B. Jones from 1793-1910. The papers (116 items) consist mainly of correspondence, 1838-1848, and scattered letters, 1850-1878, of Joseph Bertram Jones with various family members and friends. The letters are detailed and well written. Included in the collection are financial and legal papers (1793-1903) and miscellaneous papers (1841-1910).

Correspondence from 1838 through 1843 is primarily between J. B. Jones and his elder brother James V. Jones and between J. B. Jones and Sarah Lewis (Jones). In 1838 and 1839 the brothers discussed various professions and commencement speech proposals for Joseph while he attended Franklin College. From 1840 through 1843 they discussed women, courtship, marriage (including Joseph's in 1842 and James's the next year), politics, social events, family affairs, hard times in Georgia, and establishing a law practice. Included are several of Joseph's courtship letters to Sarah Lewis in 1841 and 1842. Letters to Sarah from a former classmate regarding

social news in New Haven, and letters to Sarah and J. B. Jones from Elizabeth Seeley, her former teacher, regarding her continuing education are filed with this correspondence.

Slavery was a frequently discussed topic. Joseph Jones repeatedly mentioned that his slaves were glad to see him when he visited his plantation. On August 10, 1843 he wrote Sarah that a slave whose baby was nearly the same age as their first son insisted that his child must belong to the little master.

There are also several letters on life at Franklin College and family affairs between 1844 and 1847 from Joseph's younger brother William B. Jones (1827-1886), who became a physician, merchant, and state legislator. Filed with correspondence of this period are May, 1847 notices of Joseph Jones's election to honorary membership in the Few Society of Emory College and Ciceronian Society of Mercer University.

Scattered letters from 1848 to 1854 deal with various business transactions. A March 9, 1854 letter from Alexander Hamilton Stephens (1812-1883) pertains to the settlement of a case arising from the will of Henry P. Jones, father of Joseph Jones. Included among the correspondence are two Civil War letters from "cadet" soldier Wesley Jones (1844-1879) and a conduct report (1863) for W [Wesley or Whitfield] Jones from Georgia Military Institute. There is also a letter (1878) from Methodist missionary Young John Allen (1836-1907) thanking J. B. Jones for his hospitality when Allen visited Jones.

Correspondence between 1894 and 1904 is that of Robert F. Jones (1861-1910), eleventh child of Joseph Jones. Several letters concern activities of the Savannah Rifle Association. A letter from Rufus Ezekiel Lester (1837-1906), U.S. Representative from Burke County, asks for support in the primary election of 1904.

The financial and legal papers deal primarily with land ownership and estate settlement within the Jones family and related families. They include the will (1793) of Samuel Iverson from Burke County; documents regarding the partition (1827) of the estate of Josiah Lewis, father of Sarah Lewis Jones; and records of the sale (1856) of some property from the estate of Henry P. Jones. In addition, there is a detailed agreement made in January, 1866 between Joseph Jones and numerous freedmen allowing them to live on his land as paid laborers.

The miscellaneous papers include a bill for Sarah Lewis's educational and incidental expenses in 1841, an 1866 report card for Wesley Jones from Franklin College, and an unidentified Methodist conference's resolution on the death of J. B. Jones. There is also an unsigned typescript (November 20, 1901) regarding the Jones house at Herndon, newspaper obituaries of Robert F. Jones, and an undated ms. (1 p.) on the history of the Fair Haven Church.

Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

Container List

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Correspondence, 1838-1839
1	2	Correspondence, 1840
1	3	Correspondence, 1841
1	4	Correspondence, 1842-1843
1	5	Correspondence, 1844-1848
1	6	Correspondence, 1850-1865
1	7	Correspondence, 1878-1904, n.d.
1	8	Financial and legal papers, 1793-1903
1	9	Miscellaneous papers, 1841-1910, n.d.
1	10	Genealogical information on Jones family
