

STILES, WILLIAM H. (WILLIAM HENRY), 1809-1865.

William H. Stiles papers, 1749-1892 (bulk 1835-1865)

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Stiles, William H. (William Henry), 1809-1865.
Title: William H. Stiles papers, 1749-1892 (bulk 1835-1865)
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 229
Extent: 5 linear feet (6 boxes, 2 oversized papers boxes and 2 oversized papers folders (OP), and 3 microfilm reels (MF))
Abstract: Papers of Georgia lawyer and politician, William Henry Stiles, consisting of correspondence, diaries, writings, business records, and collected clippings
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access for research use in this department. Loan of microfilm materials in this collection, Series 6: Collected Materials on Microfilm, RESTRICTED as this department does not normally loan reproductions for which it does not hold the original material.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction. Reproduction from Series 6, Collected Materials on Microfilm, RESTRICTED, as this department does not normally reproduce from reproductions for which it does not hold the original material.

Additional Physical Form

Christopher Lee Harwell, "William Henry Stiles: Georgia Gentleman Politician" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1959). NUCMC

Related Materials in Other Repositories

[Mackay-Stiles family papers](#), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Source

Purchase, 1938, with subsequent additions.

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Citation

[after identification of item(s)], William H. Stiles papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Lee Sayrs, September 1986.

Collection Description**Biographical Note**

William Henry Stiles (January 1, 1809-December 20, 1865), son of Joseph Stiles and his wife, Catherine Clay Stiles, was born in Savannah, Georgia. He studied at Yale for three years but returned to Savannah in 1828 without finishing his college degree. He read law and began his practice in Savannah in 1832. On 7 January of that year he married Elizabeth [Eliza] Ann Mackay, the daughter of Robert Mackay and Eliza McQueen. William Henry and Eliza Mackay Stiles had three children: Mary Cowper (d. 1863), William Henry, Jr., and Robert Mackay.

In addition to practicing law, Stiles usually farmed more than one plantation at a time and owned a brick yard in Savannah. Politics occupied a great deal of his time beginning with offices in Savannah city government in the late 1820's. From 1833 to 1836 he served as solicitor general of the eastern judicial district of Georgia. In 1840 the federal government sent him to pay the Cherokee Indians for lands in north Georgia that they had deeded to the government. Impressed by the soil and climate in north Georgia, Stiles bought some of the newly-acquired lands and settled on the banks of the Etowah River in Cass (now Bartow) County. After moving to north Georgia, Stiles divided his time between his Cass County estate, known as Etowah Cliffs, and his business and agricultural interests in the coastal region around Savannah.

Stiles's political activities frequently took him away from Georgia, making it necessary that he leave family members in charge of his business affairs. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives for the 1843-1845 term. On April 19, 1845 President Polk appointed him charge d'affaires to Austria where he served until October 1849. He was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1855 and during that term served as speaker. In 1858 he won a seat in the Georgia Senate. Several times Democrats considered him as a candidate for the gubernatorial nomination, but they never put him on the ticket. Nor was he able to regain a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Throughout his life Stiles took a lively interest in various areas of public debate in Georgia, particularly internal improvements, education, and the increasingly strained relations between the north and the south. A staunch Democrat, he argued for party unity through the 1850's and later for Southern rights and the Confederacy. When war came he organized a unit of five companies into the Fourth Battalion, Georgia Infantry which later became the Sixtieth Georgia Regiment. With the rank of colonel, Stiles led the Sixtieth when it joined the First Brigade of Ewell's Division of the Second Army Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia.

His health failing, Stiles returned to Savannah in 1863. He did not return to the front before his death on December 20, 1865, but spent his time attending to business affairs and organizing home defense troops to guard against Union raids in north Georgia. (Some sources cite December 21, 1865 as his death date.) He is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah.

His wife survived him by less than a year, dying at Etowah Cliffs on December 12, 1866. The village of Stilesboro in Bartow County was named for him. Biographical information drawn from Christopher Lee Harwell, "William Henry Stiles: Georgia Gentleman-Politician" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1959) and from William F. Northen, ed., *Men of Mark in Georgia*, vol. 2 (Atlanta, 1910), pp. 256-8.

Scope and Content Note

The William Henry Stiles papers consist of correspondence, diaries, writings, business records, and collected clippings. The dates range from 1749 to 1892, but most of the papers pertain to the period 1835 to 1865. The collection is arranged in six series, some of which are organized chronologically while others are grouped topically or by type of document. The collection came to the department from separate sources and with an unidentified, prior, artificial arrangement which made any original order difficult to discern.

Most of the material in Series 1, Correspondence (1749-1892), relates to Stiles's business and political interests, although there are some family letters included. A few eighteenth century letters concern the colonial and revolutionary affairs of members of the Malbone family who were paternal ancestors of Eliza Mackay Stiles. Many of the more substantive letters came from William Henry Stiles's brother, B.E. [Benjamin Edward] Stiles, who was intimately involved in his brother's business affairs, particularly during the latter's frequent absences from his Etowah Cliffs plantation, from his Savannah brick yard, or from the state during his time in Congress and in Austria. The correspondence contains information about the financial difficulties the Stiles brothers faced in their own affairs as well as in administering their father's estate. Politics is another topic featured in the brothers' correspondence. Also contained in this series but arranged in a separate sequence are twenty-two diplomatic dispatches Stiles made to Secretary of State James Buchanan from Austria.

Series 2, Diaries (1845-1849, 1863), includes four journals written by William Henry Stiles and five journals kept by his wife, Eliza, during their Austrian years, 1845-1849. The series also holds a fragment of an unidentified soldier's Civil War diary.

Series 3, Writings (undated), contains both handwritten and printed items authored by William Henry Stiles concerning a wide range of topics including slavery, north/south relations, education, internal improvements, and European politics. Included in this series are two lengthy reviews of his most substantive work, a two-volume history, *Austria in 1848-1849*, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1852), based on his experiences as charge d'affaires. A few items written by other individuals are located at the end of the series and include a poem by E.A. Stiles (presumably Eliza Mackay Stiles), an unidentified prayer, a Civil war reminiscence, and an account (with copies of correspondence) of Eliza Mackay Stiles's relationship with Robert E. Lee.

Series 4, Business Records (1786-1887), contains accounts, receipts, legal and tax papers, and indentures that relate to William Henry Stiles's complicated financial arrangements. These records reveal that the Stiles family, including William Henry Stiles's father, Joseph, and brother, Benjamin, invested heavily in land in the Savannah area as well as in north Georgia. Litigation frequently played a part in their business affairs. Some of these records pertain to William Henry Stiles, Jr. Also included in the series are a 1825 manuscript census of Savannah, a farm journal and a few slave lists.

Series 5, Collected Material, contains printed material, mostly newspaper articles, concerning a variety of topics that interested Stiles. In this series are a small number of other items collected by the Stiles family that have to do with the Civil War and the family estate.

Series 6, Collected Materials on Microfilm, contains microfilm copies of selected correspondence from the William Henry Stiles Papers, the Mackay-Stiles Papers, and the Orr-Patterson Papers held by the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Selected pages from the Savannah Daily Republican, 1831 May 20-24, are included, as well as copies of Civil War and diplomatic correspondence held by the National Archives. Christopher Lee Harwell, assisted by his Emory dissertation director Professor Bell I. Wiley, obtained these microfilm copies while researching his biography of William Henry Stiles and gave them to the library upon its completion.

Arrangement Note

Organized into six series: (1) Correspondence, (2) Diaries, (3) Writings, (4) Business records, (5) Collected material, and (6) Collected material on microfilm.

Description of Series

[Series 1: Correspondence, 1749-1892](#)

[Series 2: Diaries, 1845-1849](#)

[Series 3: Writings](#)

[Series 4: Business records, 1786-1887](#)

[Series 5: Collected material, 1861-1862](#)

[Series 6: Collected material on microfilm, 1819-1867](#)

Series 1
Correspondence, 1749-1892
Box 1

Scope and Content Note

This series contains both the earliest and latest items in the collection; both items are part of a bound volume containing typescripts of correspondence for which the originals are not in the collection. The series provides information not only about William Henry Stiles's life but also about the affairs of the Stiles family. The earliest correspondence, beginning in 1749, concerns members of the Malbone family who were paternal ancestors of Eliza Mackay Stiles. These letters relate to life in New England and later in Georgia. Some items dated 1776 and 1777 have to do with difficulties the Malbone family experienced during the Revolutionary War. Included among these early letters is an accounting by John Malbone of his handling of Geoffrey Malbone's estate. There are a few other family letters from the 1790's. Following those are three letters from Vienna (ca. 1848) relating to the Stiles's stay there. The final item in the typescript volume is dated 1892 and refers to the originals of the typed letters and discusses family genealogy.

The remainder of the correspondence series deals more directly with the Stiles family and includes a few letters having to do with Joseph Stiles's business affairs. Most of the letters, however date from the mid-1830's and relate to the family and business affairs of William Henry Stiles. The series contains a long sequence of letters, ca. 1845-1855, from Stiles's brother, B.E. [Benjamin Edward]. Many of these letters discuss business arrangements and politics in detail. Other correspondents include Eliza Mackay Stiles, William Law, John and William Mackay as well as other members of the Stiles and Mackay families. Several letters written during the Civil War provide information about the wartime experiences of various family members including William Henry Stiles, William Henry Stiles, Jr., John Mackay and various members who remained at home. The correspondence from the 1870's pertains to the business affairs of William Henry Stiles, Jr. [See Series 6, Collected Materials on Microfilm, for related correspondence.]

William Henry Stiles's diplomatic dispatches from Austria address Secretary of State James Buchanan. During the time Stiles held the post of charge' d'affaires to Austria, he wrote frequently and in great detail about his observations and activities there. paid particular attention to the revolutionary events in Europe during 1848 and 1849. [See also Series 2, Diaries, Series 3, Writings, and Series 6, Collected Materials on Microfilm, for material having to do with Stiles's years in Europe.]

The correspondence series is arranged chronologically with some exceptions. The earliest and latest letters are in a bound volume of typed copies located at the beginning of the series. Copyflow copies of Department of Indian Affairs letters regarding Stiles's work with that agency and copies of two letters from William Henry Stiles to his brother, Joe, dated 1857 and 1859 are in an oversized folder. Due to their unique nature, the diplomatic dispatches are separately arranged in chronological order at the end of the series. A statistical report about production in Austria was originally attached to dispatch no. 5 and is now located in an oversized folder.

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Typescript [bound], 1747-1796, 1848, 1892
1	2	Correspondence, 1814-1815, 1818, 1825, 1836-1844
OP1	1	Dept. of Indian Affairs letters, 1836-1837; and family letters 1857, 1859 [copyflow]
1	3	Correspondence, 1845-1848
1	4	Correspondence, 1849-1850-
1	5	Correspondence, 1850-1852
1	6	Correspondence, 1853-1859
1	7	Correspondence, 1860-1869 [includes undated Civil War items]
1	8	Correspondence, 1870-1879 and undated
1	9	Correspondence, Undated
1	10	Correspondence, Fragments
1	11	Correspondence, Envelopes [separated prior to acquisition]
1	12	Austrian dispatches no. 1-4, 1845 May 9-November 8
1	13	Austrian dispatches no. 5, 1845 December 15
OP1	2	Statistical Report on Austria [separated from dispatch no. 5]
1	14	Austrian dispatches no. 6-15, 1846 January 12-1847 May 7
1	15	Austrian dispatches no. 16-22, 1847 June 8-1848 Feb 14
1	16	Letter book, 1841- 1865] [contains correspondence, 1841-1854 correspondence list, 1841-1853, 1864-1865 slave lists, 1863 and undated plantation records, 1863-1865]

Series 2
Diaries, 1845-1849
Box 2

Scope and Content Note

This series contains diaries or copies of diaries that William Henry Stiles and his wife, Eliza, kept during the years they spent in Austria. W. H. Stiles sometimes reported on places he had visited and persons he had seen. He recorded in some detail his observations concerning European politics of the period. He was particularly interested in the revolutionary events of 1848 and 1849. [See also his diplomatic dispatches in Series 1 and Series 6, as well as his articles about Austria in Series 3.]

Eliza Mackay Stiles paid great attention to political and diplomatic events in her diaries. She included items about family members and about the daily activities of her husband and children, but for the most part she focused on less personal affairs. The collection holds an original of only one of the four volumes she kept for the period April 1848 to October 1849; of the others, only typed copies are available.

At the end of the series is a fragment of an unidentified Civil War soldier's wartime diary dated August 1863.

William Henry Stiles diaries

Box	Folder	Content
2	1	"Private Diary," 1845 August 2-1846 January 28
2	2	"Private Diary," 1846 April 1-May 18
2	3	"Private Diary," August 1-1847 September 28
2	4	"Private Diary," 1848 and undated
2	5	Annotation of "Private Diary"

E.A. Stiles [Eliza Mackay Stiles]

2	6	1848 April 11-July 5, typescript [2 copies]
2	7	1848 August 22-1849 January 21
2	8	1848 August 22-1849 January 21[handwritten copy]
2	9	1849 January 22-July 15, typescript [2 copies]
2	10	1849 July 24-October 19, typescript [2 copies]
2	11	Unidentified fragment, 1863 August

Series 3

Writings

Boxes 3 - 4

Scope and Content Note

This series containing a substantial number of Stiles's articles and speeches, provides opportunities to examine the attitudes and beliefs of a member of Georgia's antebellum political and social elite. Although most of the items are not dated, their content indicates possible time frames. It is possible, therefore, to observe how Stiles responded to political and social changes. This is particularly true of the papers concerning the relationship between the north and south during the 1850's.

These papers apparently had been sorted and annotated by an unidentified person who assigned roman numerals and titles to a large number of Stiles's writings. Any original order is not necessarily reflected in the current arrangement nor is Stiles's intent clear. Writings fragments have been sorted separately by topic. Among the printed items are a few articles reporting about Stiles, particularly concerning speeches he had made or political positions he had taken. The most ambitious of Stiles's writings was a two-volume work, *Austria in 1848-1849*, published by Harper and Brothers in New York in 1852. Two contemporary reviews of this work are located in this series. Included in the series and located at the end are a few miscellaneous items authored by others. Among these latter papers is a reminiscence concerning a family experience during the Civil War. There is also an interesting account of a "love affair" between Eliza Mackay Stiles and Robert E. Lee.

Box	Folder	Content
3	1	I, "1853"
3	2	II, "1852 Presidential"
3	3	III, "After LeCompton Constitution, 1857: Injustice of a Hostile North to the South"
3	4	IV, "1856 Campaign"
3	5	V, "1853 Democratic State Convention"
3	6	VI, "1861 To Soldiers of His Regiment Stationed in N. Ga. after Battle of Manassas"
3	7	VII, "1843-1845 [?]"
3	8	VIII, "1860 During Campaign"
3	9	IX, "1860 After Election of Lincoln, to Legislature"
3	10	X, "1853 Gubernatorial"
3	11	XI, "1857 Gubernatorial, chiefly Kansas Question"
3	12	XII, "1855 or 1856 Savannah, Albany and Gulf Railroad"
3	13	XIII, "1855 Denunciation of Know Nothingism"
3	14	XIV, "1861 During Time of Secession Convention"
3	15	XV, "Kansas Question after Walker Has Been Brought into the Limelight"
3	16	XVI, "1855 Before Election of that Year"

- 3 17 XVII, "July 4, 1860 - Denunciation of Douglas and Support for Breckinridge"
- 3 18 XVIII, "July 4, 1860 - Survey of the Presidential Candidates and Issues"
- 3 19 XIX, "1840-1843 Glorification of Internal Improvements and Education"
- 3 20 XX, "1861 To Soldiers , Case of War"
- 3 21 XXI, "1855 Concerning Improvements of River at Savannah"
- 3 22 XXII, "1851 Concerning Opening of RR Extending to Coosa River"
- 3 23 XXIII, "1860 To Military Group Pointing Out Real Strength of South and
Willing to Let Disunion Come"
- 3 24 XXIV, "Address on Hampden"
- 3 25 XXV, "1856 (after this) Opening of Atlantic and Gulf Railroads"
- 3 26 XXVI, "1850 Concerning the--Nashville Convention"
- 3 27 XXVII, "States Rights"
- 3 28 XXVIII, "Address on English History and Hampden"
- 3 29 XXIX, "1865 Appeal for Loyalty to the Confederacy"
- 4 1 Printed articles and speeches, 1849-1856 and undated [includes a few articles
about William Henry Stiles]
- 4 2 Notes/fragments: Slavery
- 4 3 Notes/fragments: North/South relations
- 4 4 Notes/fragments: Submission or resistance to Lincoln's Administration, 1861 [?]
- 4 5 Notes/fragments: Democratic Convention of 1860 [?]
- 4 6 Notes/fragments: Letter to *Savannah Georgian* editor
- 4 7 Notes/fragments: Address to Electoral College, Nov. 1856
- 4 8 Notes/fragments: Education
- 4 9 Notes/fragments: Orations
- 4 10 Book and lecture notes
- 4 11 Notes/fragments: Condition of Europe, 1848
- 4 12 Notes/fragments: Miscellaneous
- 4 13 Review: "Austria in 1848 and 1849" in *Literary World*, no. 253 (6 December
1851)
- 4 14 *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 28, no. 9 (September 1852)
- 4 15 E.A. Stiles [Eliza Mackay Stiles?], poem
- 4 16 Unidentified, prayer
- 4 17 [L.C. Stiles], Civil War reminiscence
- 4 18 Unidentified, account of Eliza Mackay Stile's relationship with Robert E. Lee
[includes copies of correspondence]

Series 4
Business records, 1786-1887
Boxes 5

Scope and Content Note

The business records in this series, including accounts, receipts, legal and tax papers, and indentures dating from the late eighteenth century, show that the Stiles family engaged in a wide variety of financial ventures. Most of this activity centered on the ownership and use of land both in the coastal and inland regions of Georgia. These records and some of the correspondence in Series 1 reveal that William Henry Stiles, his father, Joseph, and his brother, Benjamin, participated in a range of business activities in addition to running rice and cotton plantations.

The papers are sorted by type of document and then arranged chronologically. [See also some agricultural records, in particular a 1863 slave list, in the 1841- [1865] letter book in Series 1, Correspondence.]

Box	Folder	Content
5	1	Accounts, 1836-1875 and undated
5	2	Census, Savannah, 1825 [manuscript]
5	3	Farm journal, 1864-1865
OP3	-	Indentures, 1762-1789 [includes deeds, agreements, bills of sale]
OP2	1	Indentures, 1791-1833
OP2	2	Indentures, 1834-1847
OP4	-	Indentures, 1848-1859
5	4	Indentures, 1823-1837
5	5	Indentures, 1840-1877
5	6	Land grants, 1834-1838
5	7	Land grants, 1843-1847
5	8	Legal papers and judgments, 1840-1877
5	9	Land holdings, lists
5	10	Powers of attorney, 1809-1875
5	11	Promissory notes, 1839-1876
5	12	Receipts, 1786-1887
5	13	Slave lists, 1811 and undated
5	14	Tax papers, 1839-1867

Series 5
Collected material, 1861-1862
Box 6

Scope and Content Note

Stiles clipped articles and reports that interested him and pasted them on papers that were then sewn together with ribbon. Some of these collections of clippings have survived and are located in this series. They show what some of Stiles's interests were and what kind of information attracted him. There are obvious gaps in these groups, so presumably they represent only a portion of what Stiles compiled. The clippings are arranged by topic in much the same order in which they arrived in the department.

Other material in this series includes brief minutes of a meeting to organize Stiles's Civil War regiment, the published Civil War diary of Alexander Means, plans for an unidentified town, and 20th century photographs of the Etowah Cliffs plantation house and of Stilesboro Academy.

National Archives Documents

Box	Folder	Content
MF1	1	RG59, State Department: General Records -Notes from the Austrian Legation, Vol. 1
MF1	2	RG84, State Department: Foreign Service Posts - Notes from the Foreign Office, Vol. 1 (American Legation, Vienna)
MF1	3	RG217, Records of the GAO - Accounts of William H. Stiles (U.S. Charge d'Affaires, Vienna), 1845-1848
MF1	4	War Department Collection of Confederate Records: Selected correspondence, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office
MF1	5	War Department Collection of Confederate Records: Selected correspondence, Office of the Secretary of War

Southern Historical Collection Documents

MF2	1	Savannah Daily Republican, 1831 May 20-24 (incomplete)
MF2	2	William Henry Stiles papers (A-1039) [two separate filmings]
MF3	3	Mackay-Stiles papers [selected letters and vol. 17]
MF3	4	Orr-Patterson papers
William Henry Stiles papers		Manuscript Collection 229

Series 6
Collected material on microfilm, 1819-1867
Microfilm reels 1-3

Scope and Content Note

There are in the collection microfilm copies of family and business correspondence dating from 1819 to 1867. These materials are similar to letters in Series 1 of the collection. The originals are located in the William H. Stiles papers, the Mackay-Stiles papers, and the Orr-Patterson papers held by the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Additionally, Series 6 includes copies of diplomatic notes and correspondence, 1845-1849, relating to Stiles's tenure as charge d'affaires to Austria obtained from the National Archives. Among copies of materials held in the National Archives are letters exchanged by Stiles and officials of the Confederate War Department during the Civil War. There are also microfilm copies of pages from *The Savannah Daily Republican*, May 20-24, 1831, relating to the debate about restrictions on the culture of rice in fields close to the city.

Documents that relate to these microfilm copies can be found in Series 1, Correspondence, Series 2, Diaries, and Series 3, Writings. This collected microfilm material was given to the library by C. Lee Harwell. This department does not normally reproduce from reproductions for which it does not hold the original material.

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