

Exeter Collection

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A Collection in Thomas Balch Library SC0179

Thomas Balch Library

2022

History

Processed by: Colin Morgan

Title Statement

Exeter Collection

Subtitle:

Collection: SC0179

Author: Colin Morgan

Publication Statement

Date: © 2022 By Thomas Balch Library. All rights reserved.

Publisher: Thomas Balch Library

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from print record by Colin Morgan, 2022 February 3

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Collection number

SC0179

Language

English

Abstract

This collection is composed of correspondence and secondary source articles related to the Exeter plantation in Loudoun County, Virginia. Correspondence details the period from 1835 to 1849, while the secondary source articles cover the history of the property from 1793 to 1960.

Collector

Leigh, Lewis Jr.

Physical Characteristics

0.25 cubic ft. .

Repository

Thomas Balch Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open for research.

Use Restrictions

No physical characteristics affect use of this material.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Lewis Leigh, Jr., Leesburg, VA for Thomas Balch Library by Thomas Balch Library Endowment Foundation, 2020.

Processing Information

Processed by Colin Morgan, 3 February 2022

Preferred Citation

Exeter Collection (SC0179), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Accruals

2020.0087

Alternative Form Available

None

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

53-0077, Lewis-Edwards Architectural Surveys (M 011), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Bibliography

Mayr, Otto. "Arson guts old Exeter farmhouse." The Loudoun Times-Mirror. 12 September 1990.

Osburn, Penelope M. "Exeter: Its History and Architecture." The Bulletin of the Loudoun County Historical Society. 1960.

United States Department of Interior. National Park Service. "Form 10-300: National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form." 1973 February 20. https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/253-5019_Exeter_1973_Nomination_delisted.pdf.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. "253-5019 Exeter *Delisted." Last modified 2020 May 8. <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/253-5019/>.

Other Finding Aid

A keyword searchable index is available as a .PDF. See: Exeter Collection (SC 179)

Technical Requirements

None

Historical Information

Dr. William Cary Selden commissioned the construction of the Exeter plantation's main house in 1796. His son, Wilson Cary Selden, Jr. inherited Exeter after his father's death in 1835. His daughter, Eleanor Love Selden, married John Augustine Washington, great-nephew of George Washington, in 1842. Despite living on Washington's Mt. Vernon plantation, both Eleanor Selden and John Washington involved themselves in the plantation's agricultural business. Eleanor Selden Washington inherited Exeter from her father after his death in 1845, selling it to General George C. Rust three years later. In 1856, General Rust sold Exeter to the Trundle family, who sheltered Confederate cavalries on the property during the Civil War. Until at least 1960, the Trundle family maintained residence at Exeter.

A 1958 survey of Exeter notes that the property was "in need of restoration" but Helmi Carr, the then-current owner, intended to restore and preserve the property. The National Park Service listed Exeter in the National Register of Historical Places in 1973, but subsequently delisted it fifteen years later after a fire destroyed the abandoned household in 1980. After the fire, Richmond American Homes of Virginia developed the Exeter

housing development on the land.

Scope and Content

The first five folders of the collection contain correspondence, ranging in date from 1835 to 1849, that was either sent to or from Exeter. Correspondence from Wilson C. Selden, Jr., Eleanor L. Selden, and John A. Washington, provide insight in to their personal lives and the business end of the plantation. Washington's letters in particular discuss the selling of Exeter after Wilson Selden's death. Discussions of the plantation's business side frequently reference the enslaved people on the plantation. Correspondence from William Ball, Exeter's overseer, offers a glimpse of the plantation's business expenses and the production of oats, wheat, and corn on the plantation. Pencil-written annotations from a previous owner of the collection, highlights mentions of enslaved people and clarifies vague handwriting.

The Exeter Collection's secondary source materials, several articles on the plantation written between 1960 and 2001, cover the history of the property after 1849. The collection holds a copy of Penelope M. Osburn's 1960 *The Bulletin of the Loudoun County Historical Society* article, "Exeter: Its History and Architecture." The article provides a detailed overview of Exeter from 1796 to 1867. Newspaper clippings cover an arson attack on the farmhouse in 1990 and a 2001 profile of one of John A. Washington's descendants.

The Exeter Collection's graphic materials showcase the house's exterior a drawing of the front of the house and an undated map highlights the then-present "ruins" of the plantation.

Contents List

SC0179

Box 1

Folder 1: Correspondence to and from Wilson C. Selden, Jr., 1835-1843

Folder 2: Correspondence to and from Eleanor L. Selden, 1840-1845

Folder 3: Correspondence from William Ball, 1843-1845

Folder 4: Correspondence to John A. Washington, 1845-1849

Folder 5: "Exeter: Its History and Architecture" by Penelope M. Osburn, 1960

Folder 6: Newspaper clippings, 1990-2001

Folder 7: Graphic materials, undated