

Ritchie, Thomas letter to Joseph R. Williams

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July 20, 1835

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16899

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

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Unit Date

July 20, 1835

Mixed Materials [X032762752]

1 (folder)

Language

English

Creator

Ritchie, Thomas, 1778-1854

Extent

0.03 Cubic Feet One letter-sized file folder

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

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Biographical / Historical

Thomas Ritchie (1778-1845) was a publisher of the Richmond Enquirer newspaper who was concerned about the Anti-Slavery activities in Mississippi.

Content Description

This collection contains a printed circular letter and a handwritten letter sent by Thomas Ritchie (1778-1854), the editor of the Richmond Enquirer, to Joseph R. Williams, Esquire. The printed circular letter, dated July 29, 1835, was sent by Ritchie and John L. Cook, publishers of the Richmond Enquirer newspaper, and was a printed questionnaire that discussed the "movements of certain Fanatics [abolitionists] in the North."

Founded in 1833, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) launched a postal campaign in 1835 to send abolitionist newspapers and pamphlets to the South. The circular letter expresses worry that abolitionist ideas have flowed southward, causing "uneasiness among the friends of the Constitution and the Union, in the South." The printed section asks each recipient of the letter six questions regarding the extent and actions of the AASS. A handwritten letter from Ritchie to Joseph R. Williams of New Bedford, Massachusetts, is on the back of the circular.

Ritchie wrote that since they sent the circular letter on July 29, he discovered "they are doing great mischief in the South" and discontent was growing. Ritchie urges respectable citizens to influence the public against the campaign.

Williams was a Harvard College graduate who practiced law in New Bedford, Massachusetts. In the written portion of the letter, dated August 14, 1835, Ritchie expressed that "we [The Richmond Enquirer] have heard of the events in Mississippi, we have learned the abuses of the Public Mail, & the [illegible] of firebrands...the citizens of Charleston have restricted the post office in self-defense. Public Meetings have been held in Richmond..."

Keywords

Slavery--United States -- Virginia

Abolitionists

Cook, John L., 1783-1836

American Anti-Slavery Society