

A Guide to the Folly Farm Papers

Folly Farm Papers 1774-1891

1774-1891

A Collection in the Special Collections Department 9380 and 9380-a
Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library
1997

History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Folly Farm Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

9380 and 9380-a

Language

English

Collector

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph S. Cochran, Jr.

Extent

842 items

Repository

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
USA

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research

Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

Acquisition Information

This collection was loaned to the Library by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph S. Cochran, Jr. of Folly Farm, Staunton, Virginia, on October 22, 1969.

Funding Note

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Preferred Citation

Folly Farm Papers, Accession 9380, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

Scope and Content

This collection of 842 items, 1774-1891, n.d., consists of correspondence, business and legal papers, account books and a survey book belonging to various families. The material relates to the Smith family of Staunton, the Lewis family of Sweet Springs (now West Virginia) and the Cochran family of Charlottesville and Staunton.

Folly Farm was founded by Joseph Smith in 1818 and is located about two miles south of Staunton on Route 11. It has a serpentine wall which was designed by Thomas Jefferson.

Correspondence of the Cochran family is mainly concerned with family relationships. A few letters relate events in the Civil War. An October 17, 1861 letter speaks of an overcoat factory founded by Staunton women. In a letter to Maggie Cochran (July 1, 1862) the victory over McClellan at Frasers Farm is described. A letter to Mittie Cochran (September 2, 1861) mentions an engagement near Fairfax. Joseph S. Cochran attended the University of Virginia and a letter from him (October 7, 1890) mentions his impressions of Professors [Albert Henry] Tuttle and [John William] Mallet.

Letters between John Lewis Cochran and his mother Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran deal chiefly with family matters. The letter of September 7, 1857 mentions the status of their business operations. An interesting letter (June 27, 1848) gives a view of slavery and abolitionists. Nannie Cochran's death and its effects is mentioned in August 20, 1863.

Letters between Howe Peyton Cochran and his mother Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran are about personal affairs and the Civil War. The early letters concern Howe Peyton Cochran's attendance of the Hanover Academy where he was very bored and often homesick except when he traveled to Richmond. Some interesting Civil War letters are July 27, Sept 5, 14, & 20, 1861. Howe Peyton Cochran left the active service when a substitute was bought for him (May 23, 1862). A n.d. letter mentions Monticello hospital being condemned due to Typhoid fever. The letter of August 16, 1863 mentions the deaths of Nannie Cochran and Maggie Cochran.

Letters between Willie Lynn Cochran and his mother Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran were written while Willie Lynn Cochran attended school in Brownsburg and mostly contain pleas for more letters from home.

Letters between Howe Peyton Cochran and his wife Nannie L. (Carrington) Cochran (married December 18, 1860), written during the Civil War, are chiefly personal in nature but many contain a little information about the war. Some of the more important letters are as follows. His letter of January 5, 1861 describes the commanding officers of Howe Peyton Cochran's regiment (1st regiment Virginia Artillery) which included General Magruder, Colonels Sulakowski, Tom Cobb, Howell Cobb, Montagne, Ward, and Major Brown. Letters

of December 8, 11, 13, & 16 detail preparations for an attack that never occurred. Letters of February 24, 25 discuss the problems in the company and an expedition that did not start. The letters of March 1862 also give the problems of the company and preparations for a large battle near Yorktown. The letters of April 1862 contain references to the skirmishes occurring at Yorktown. The letters of May 9 and 14, 1862 gives a sketch of the battle of Williamsburg which Howe Peyton Cochran's regiment did not participate in. Nearly every letter also contains a plan to get out of the service or at least out of his present company and into an office job: Some of the schemes include becoming a teacher at Randolph Macon, becoming a clerk in the war department, or joining his brother James Cochran's unit. A son (Campbell Carrington Cochran, named for Nannie Cochran's brother who died during the war) was born on July 31, 1863, and Nannie Cochran died, apparently as a result of complications from childbirth, on August 11, 1863.

Joseph D. Cochran's application for a University of Missouri chemistry chair mentions his teachers (August 8, 1890) while at the University of Virginia and College of Richmond. The letter of August 21, 1890 states he received references from Professors [John William] Mallet, [Francis Perry] Dunnington, [George Frederick] Holmes, and [Ormond] Stone of the University of Virginia, Professor Puryear of the College of Richmond, and his present congressman [Henry St. George] Tucker.

In Letters to Campbell Carrington Cochran, two stirring accounts of the virtue of Nannie Cochran and her death are given on the first birthday of Campbell Carrington Cochran, July 31, 1864.

In Letters to Henry Cochran family affairs are discussed. An October 11, 1862 letter mentions prices of basic foods and how the state is covered with blood, "Turn whichever way you may nothing meets your eye, but maimed and bleeding soldiers." A January 15, 1863 letter mentions the death of Maggie Cochran from Typhoid Fever and pneumonia. On March 18, 1863, there is a reference to the battle of Culpepper. A March 31, 1863 letter mentions houses and hospitals being destroyed to use the wood for fuel. An April 16, 1863 letter mentions the prices of food.

Letters to Howe Peyton Cochran contain more letters about family affairs. Howe was perusing a teaching job at Randolph Macon and the letters of November 20, & 27, 1861 mention the peculiarity of the trustees who wished for their teachers to be Methodist and in the military. A letter of April 14, 1862 mentions the death of Campbell Carrington (Nannie Cochran's brother) after the battle of Cournifon April 11, 1862.

Letters to Colonel and Mrs. James C. Cochran include correspondence between their sons John L. Cochran, Joseph D. Cochran, and daughter Anne Cochran who went to Gainesville, Florida because of John Cochran's ill health in 1886. The letters give the progression of John Cochran's sickness which did not improve substantially and eventually caused his death in February 1887 after his return to Staunton.

Letters to John Cochran contains an interesting letter (February 17, 1830) on the price and selling of hogs.

Letters to Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran contain letters from her brother Thomas Preston Lewis who served with the War Department in the 1850's. There are two interesting letters: January 5, 1852 which mentions the visit of a Magyar to Congress who apparently impressed everyone, and the concern of the American government over Napoleon Bonaparte who was coming to power in France; and, March 6, 1859 which mentions the factional wars going on in congress and the affect it had on the treasury.

The first few letters to Nannie (Carrington) Cochran are from relations and friends unable to attend her and Howe Peyton Cochran's wedding. The letter of June 10, 1861 is from John Lewis Cochran and contains very interesting Civil War information, including the Union's treatment of prisoners.

The letters to Thomas Preston Lewis have been removed from a letter book containing mostly business letters. There is an index which has been placed at the back of the second folder. Thomas Preston Lewis received the right to practice law in Virginia on September 3, 1847. He received appointments in the census bureau (October 8, 1850 - #48), and later the War Department based on recommendations by Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart (November 15, 1850.) Thomas Preston Lewis' ancestors fought in the battle of Point Pleasant and an attempt had been made to have that battle declared the first of the revolutionary war (August 24, 1858 - #1). A no date letter (#8) contains an inventory of debts Thomas Preston Lewis has at a store and gives prices. Letters of December 29, 1853 (#16 and #20) are introduction letters written by John Buchanan Floyd. October 21, 1851 (#48) is a letter from William Sparrow. March 6, 1866 (#159) states that Thomas Preston Lewis lost all land in the war and is now broke. Letters of February 14, 1866 (#161), January 21, 1867 (#162) concern Thomas Preston Lewis trying to collect on his debts. Thomas Preston Lewis attempted to have his political disability resulting from service with the confederacy removed (February 25, 1869 - #166, January 24, 1870 - #174, January 29, 1870 - #175.) Apparently this attempt was successful because Thomas Preston Lewis received help from John F. Lewis in getting an appointment (October 6, 1869 - #169, March 29, 1870 - #183.) John F. Lewis had assisted Thomas Preston Lewis before getting him appointed as an assistant to the registrar in 1867 (September 28, 1867 - #189.) December 23, 1869 (#168) is from B. F. Ballard and mentions that he will call for a new West Virginia constitution. Three letters concern the sale of land held in Iowa which Thomas Preston Lewis got from his debt collection (July 13, 1869 - #171, May 12, 1868 - #173, and July 25, 1869 - #174.) An item dated April 20, 1871 (#180) is a notice placed by Thomas Preston Lewis to bring all claims for the pensions of veterans of the War of 1812. An August 21, 1871 (#196) letter contains an analysis of Rawley Springs in Rockingham County, Virginia. Letters of December 7, 1870

(#204,) February 4, 1873 (#204,) and December 18, 1874 (#206) refer to Thomas Preston Lewis starting and running a school for boys. The school must not have been too successful because the letters of November 12, 1873 and December 1874 (both #207) mention relatives sending what money they can to Thomas Preston Lewis. On September 10, 1874 (#209) there is an interesting letter on the Florida school system.

Letters to Ann M. Peyton from her sister Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran mention the Cochran family's move from Staunton to Charlottesville (October 24, 1826.) A letter in June 1836 mentions the death of their sister Mary.

Letters to Joseph Smith contain many applications for loans. Joseph Smith served in the General Assembly from December 1, 1817 to February 26, 1818 (December 2, 1817.) There is a letter dated January 26, 1832 from R. S. Brook which concerns the debate in the General Assembly over slavery and the conflict abolition has with personal property and compensation. An item of January 13, 1860 values the land held by Joseph Smith to be \$74,900.

Letters to Joseph Smith from William Widdifield are mainly concerned with the collection of a debt from David Paul Brown. A letter of March 3, 1862 mentions Joseph Smith's brothers Abraham Smith and Silas H. Smith.

Appointments contain some of the appointments and promotions of the families. James Cochran was appointed justice of the peace in Augusta county in 1798. There are Joseph Smith's military promotions while a member of Virginia's 32nd militia. James Cochran was appointed Postmaster of Folly Mills in 1874.

Business Papers contain bills, receipts and promissory notes. One bill of June 15, 1815 is from Joseph Smith to the United States for determining the number of taxable people and taxable items in Augusta county; the total number of taxable people was 589. Joseph Smith was a life member of the Virginia Agricultural Society (October 11, 1854.) Also there are five South Carolina bonds issued after the Civil War, but never cashed in.

Essays and Poetry include a poem lamenting the death of Elizabeth Bataille Smith (November 17, 1810), a poem about an insane hospital in Boston (March 1830), an obituary of Magdalene Crawford (May 21, 1849), and lecture notes to teach Physics (n.d.)

French Spoliation claims represent the attempt to get money for the damages done by the French before 1800. The United States, however, had exonerated the French from having to pay so many felt the Federal government should pay the damages.

Inventories of Debts due Joseph Smith contain detailed lists of everyone and every business which owed Joseph Smith money. The amounts were considerable, some reaching as high as \$134,000.

Legal documents contain mostly deeds and a few court case decisions.

Slave Lists list all the slaves owned by Joseph Smith and are divided into those which are hired out and those which remain at home. A n.d. item lists the amount spent on some of the slaves for Christmas gifts.

Miscellaneous material includes a confirmation certificate of Ann (Price) Smith (June 5, 1811), lottery tickets (1812), report cards of Campbell Carrington Cochran (1872), a survey attempting to promote the new South (1894), and business cards of Joseph Smith and Dr. Henry Cochran.

Container List

Correspondence

Correspondence of the Cochran Family

Unit Date 1830-1899, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters between John Lewis Cochran and his mother Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran

Unit Date 1848-1863, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters between Howe Peyton Cochran and his mother Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran

Unit Date 1852-1872, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters between Willie Lynn Cochran and his mother Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran

Unit Date 1857-1858, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters between Howe Peyton Cochran and his wife Nannie L. (Carrington) Cochran

Unit Date 1861-1863, n.d.

Container Box 1

Extent

(2 folders)

Letters from Joseph D. Cochran concerning the University of Missouri chemistry chair

Unit Date 1890, August

Container Box 1

Letters to Campbell Carrington Cochran

Unit Date 1864-1869, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters to Henry Cochran

Unit Date 1862-1863, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters to Howe Peyton Cochran

Unit Date 1860-1872, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters to Mr. and Mrs. James C. Cochran

Unit Date 1882-1887

Container Box 1

Letters to John Cochran

Unit Date 1836-1866, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters to Margaret Lynn (Lewis) Cochran

Unit Date 1852-1859, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters to Nannie L. (Carrington) Cochran

Unit Date 1860-1862, n.d.

Container Box 1

Letters to Thomas Preston Lewis

Unit Date 1847-1888

Container Box 1

Extent

(2 folders)

Scope and Content

index at back of second folder

Letters to Colonel Garrett Minor

Unit Date 1786-1796, n.d.

Container Box 2

Letters to Ann (Price) Smith

Unit Date 1814-1815, n.d.

Container Box 2

Letters to Joseph Smith

Unit Date 1803-1860

Container Box 2

Letters to Joseph Smith from William Widdifield

Unit Date 1832-1835

Container Box 2

Business and Legal Papers

Appointments

Unit Date 1798-1874

Container Box 2

Business Papers of Joseph Smith and John Cochran

Unit Date 1791-1883, n.d.

Container Box 2

Essays and Poetry

Unit Date 1810-1849, n.d.

Container Box 2

French Spoilation Claims

Unit Date 1826-1858

Container Box 2

Indentures

Unit Date 1774-1846

Container Box 2

Extent

(2 folders) (one oversize folder)

Inventories of Debts due Joseph Smith

Unit Date 1820-1863

Container Box 2

Legal Papers

Unit Date 1817-1894

Container Box 2

Slave Lists

Unit Date 1851-1862, n.d.

Container Box 2

Surveys

Unit Date 1774-1890

Container Box 2

Extent

(2 folders) (one oversize folder)

Tax Lists for Joseph Smith and John Cochran

Unit Date 1852-1863

Container Box 2

Miscellaneous

Unit Date 1811-1894, n.d.

Container Box 2

Bound Volumes

Bank Book of James C. Cochran

Unit Date 1874-1883

Container Box 3

Bank Book of James C. Cochran

Unit Date 1883-1885

Container Box 3

Cash Book of James C. Cochran

Unit Date 1860-1872

Container Box 3

Cash Book of Joseph Smith

Unit Date 1845-1864

Container Box 3

Ledger of James C. Cochran

Unit Date 1851-1896

Container Box 3

Ledger of Joseph Smith

Unit Date 1817-1842

Container Box 4

Business Papers Removed from Bound Volumes

Unit Date 1832-1897, n.d.

Container Box 4

Oversize

Ledger of James C. Cochran

Unit Date 1856-1866

Surveying Book of Joseph Smith

Unit Date 1802

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