

# A Guide to the Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart Papers 1791-1928

Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart Papers 1791-1928  
1791-1928

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2002

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## Descriptive Summary

**Accession number**

345

**Language**

English

**Physical Characteristics**

This collection consists of ca. 500 items.

**Repository**

Special Collections, University of Virginia Library

# Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Use Restrictions

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

## Acquisition Information

Accession number 345 was deposited in the Library in February 1939 by A. Stuart Robertson of Orange, Virginia. At his death in 1979, the papers were made a gift to the library on January 10, 1980, by Marvyn W. Robertson, his widow, and the following children or grandchildren of Margaret Briscoe Stuart Roberston: George M. Cochran, Margaret C. Hinch, Archibald H. Robertson, Alex F. Robertson, Jr., John S. Beard, and Alexander Robertson Beard.

## Preferred Citation

Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart Papers, Accession #345 , Special Collections Dept., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

# Biographical/Historical Information

Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart, the son of Archibald and Eleanor Stuart, was born in Staunton, Virginia on April 2, 1807. He studied for one year at the College of William and Mary and then studied law and the University of Virginia, graduating in 1828. That same year he was admitted to practice law in Staunton, Virginia. He began his political career as a member of the Young Men's Convention held in support of Henry Clay at Washington in 1832. Afterwards, Stuart held a number of political offices, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates in 1836, 1837, and 1838; a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1841 to 1843; a Presidential elector on the Clay ticket in 1844 and on the Taylor ticket in 1848; Secretary of the Interior under Millard Fillmore from September 12, 1850, to March 3, 1853; delegate in the National Convention of 1856; and as a member of the Virginia Convention in 1861.

Stuart opposed the secession of Virginia at the outbreak of the Civil War but remained loyal to Virginia and held various positions in the Confederate government. At the end of the Civil War, Stuart was one of the leaders of the first movement in the South to re-establish peaceful relations with the federal government, presiding at a mass meeting for that purpose at Staunton, Virginia, on May 8, 1865. In the same year, Stuart was elected to Congress but was excluded by the "iron clad" oath. In December, 1868, Stuart began the "Committee of Nine," which, with the cooperation of President Grant, persuaded Congress to accept a compromise of "universal suffrage and universal amnesty." Virginia would accept Negro suffrage if the disfranchisement and test-oath clauses in the Underwood constitution were removed. Stuart also served as rector of the University of Virginia from 1876 to 1882 and 1884 to 1886, as a member of the Peabody educational fund, and as president of the Virginia Historical Society.

# Scope and Content Information

This accession consists of ca. 500 items, 1791-1928, primarily pertaining to former Secretary of the Interior Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart (1807-1891) of Staunton, Virginia. Correspondence, which comprises most of the collection, regards Stuart's education, law career, and political interests. Included are letters from Stuart to his parents while he was a student at the College of William and Mary and at the University of Virginia. The later correspondence concerns Millard Fillmore, Ulysses S. Grant, and James A. Garfield; Reconstruction in Virginia after the Civil War, including the debt funding controversy; the Whig and Know-Nothing (American) parties; Stuart's role in the fiscal bank vetoes of 1841; and the University of Virginia. Correspondents include Benjamin Johnson Barber, Judah Philip Benjamin, Thomas Hart Benton, Gerard Briscoe, Henry Clay, William Wilson Corcoran, Millard Fillmore, Thomas Walker Gilmer, Horace Greeley, Hugh Blair Grigsby, Rutherford B. Hayes, John H. Latane, Robert E. Lee, Leander J. McCormick, Hugh Holmes McGuire, John W. Mallet, John Barbee Minor, Rosewell Page, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, Alexander River, Alexander F. Robertson, Wyndham Robertson, Conway Robinson, William Starke Rosencrans, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, J.E.B. Stuart, Thomas J. Stuart, John Tyler, Sr., William Henry Vanderbilt, and Robert C. Winthrop.

# Arrangement

Items have been single-folded for the most part (in some instances, one or more letters from the same person have been placed in the same folder) and are arranged chronologically. There is an alphabetical sliplist of all items in the collection.

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