

A Guide to the Gilliam Family Papers 1802-1932

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1802-1932

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

2608

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

This collection consists of ca. 1500 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

The Gilliam Family Papers were purchased from Miss Jane Davis, P.O. Box 765, Petersburg, Va. on February 12, 1947.

Preferred Citation

Gilliam Family Papers, Accession #2608 , Special Collections Dept., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

Additional Descriptive Data

Related Material

This collection is related to subsequent purchases of the Gilliam Papers in 1949, 1950, and 1952. These collateral collections are: #3164, which contains indentures and miscellaneous correspondence for 1794-1913; #3593, which contains military commissions and miscellaneous correspondence for 1839-1905; #3593-a, which included various correspondence for 1840-1884. #3595-a also contains the speeches of John W. Gilliam against the Mexican War delivered as a delegate for Dinwiddie County.

Scope and Content Information

The Gilliam Family Papers, 1802-1932, consist of ca. 1500 items (ca. 2 shelf feet) primarily pertaining to personal family correspondence, various accounts and bills, and political correspondence. These papers are grouped into the following categories: accounts, receipts; personal and family correspondence; slave trade papers; political correspondence.

The accounts and receipts, including various bills, etc., chronicle the daily financial activities of the family. They include indentures and a series of rent agreements made by Samuel Y. Gilliam during 1896- 1900. During the pre-Civil War period the accounts pertain to the operation of a farm or plantation. The personal and family papers are concentrated in the post 1850 years. The papers relating to slavery cover the years 1828-1865 and include the hiring out of slaves, trading of slaves, purchases, slavery accounts, and general papers revealing the daily involvement with the institution. The political correspondence is concentrated in the 1870-1899 period and centered on the activities of Samuel Gilliam.

Although historically obscure, the Gilliam family had a long and fruitful association with Dinwiddie County. John W. Gilliam was the most prominent member of the family until his death in 1853. He and his wife Mary Eppes Gilliam had four children. Joseph P., John W., and Samuel Y. Gilliam all appear subsequently in the family papers. The papers prior to 1853 are receipts, bills, accounts that indicate Gilliam's activities in running his farm. His name and that of his son Joseph P. Gilliam dominate the slavery papers. John Gilliam also represented Dinwiddie County in the state House of Delegates during 1847-1848 and vigorously criticized the Mexican War (see family papers 3593-a). Upon his death his wife Mary Eppes Gilliam carried on the family affairs and her name appears frequently in the accounts and correspondence during the 1850's and 1860's. There is surprisingly little material concerning the Civil War. But by 1866 the family was "heavily indebted," possibly as a consequence of the ravages of war.

Samuel Y. Gilliam dominates the family papers during 1870-1899. There is important political correspondence contained in the papers of these years. In 1877 he sought to represent Dinwiddie County in the legislature but was defeated. Subsequently, however, he became a leader of the "readjustor" party and by 1896 was described as the "leader of the Republican Party" in the county. In 1899 he was elected county treasurer. His letters are quite interesting, discussing candidly political maneuvering and the need to gain the votes of blacks to control county politics.

The latter portion of the papers, from 1901-1932, contain correspondence and miscellaneous financial records such as tax receipts. They pertain chiefly to Rosa Boisseau, a cousin of the Gilliams, about whom little is known.

Organization

There are four topical groupings within a chronological arrangement. They include: accounts, receipts, bills, etc.; personal and family correspondence, slavery papers (three folders 1828-1861); and political correspondence. The accounts and receipts are arranged chronologically only by year while the other subdivisions are month by month and day by day.

Contents List

Deed 1802-1805

Box 1

Estate listing 1817

Box 1

Gilliam Estate listing, Copy of Will 1823-1827

Box 1

Indentures, Accounts 1828-1829

Box 1

Accounts, Courts and debt papers 1830-1833

Box 1

Accounts, Promises to pay 1834-1837

Box 1

Extent 2 folders

Accounts, Receipts, Indenture 1838-1839

Box 1

Receipts 1840-1842

Box 1

Military Commissions 1842-1843

Box 1

Accounts, Receipts 1843-1844

Box 1

Extent 2 folders

Personal Correspondence 1844

Box 1

Accounts, Receipts 1845-1849

Box 1

Extent 5 folders

Personal and Business letters 1848-1849

Box 1

Accounts, Receipts 1850

Box 2

Business and Family letters 1850

Box 2

Accounts, Receipts 1851

Box 2

Business and Miscellaneous letters 1851

Box 2

Accounts, Receipts 1852

Box 2

Family and Business letters, Sale Bill 1852

Box 2

Accounts, Receipts 1853

Box 2

Family and Business letters 1853

Box 2

Accounts, Receipts 1854

Box 2

Family and Personal letters 1854

Box 2

Business and Family letters 1855

Box 2

Accounts, Bills, Receipts, Promises to pay 1856

Box 2

Family and Personal letters 1856

Box 2

Political Correspondence 1855-1856

Box 2

Accounts, Receipts 1857

Box 2

Personal and Family Correspondence, Court matter 1857

Box 2

Accounts, Receipts, Bills 1858

Box 2

Personal and Family Correspondence 1858

Box 2

Slavery Trade papers 1828-1861

Box 2

Extent 3 folders

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Box 3

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Box 3

Accounts, Receipts, Bills 1860

Box 3

Family and Personal Correspondence 1860

Box 3

Accounts, Receipts, Bills 1861

Box 3

Personal and Family Correspondence 1861

Box 3

Accounts, Receipts, Bills 1862

Box 3

Personal Correspondence and Papers re Confederate Army Forces 1862

Box 3

Accounts, Receipts, Bills 1863

Box 3

Personal Correspondence and Family letters 1863

Box 3

Accounts, Bills, Receipts 1864-1865

Box 3

Personal and Family Correspondence 1864-1865

Box 3

Extent 2 folders

Accounts, Receipts, Bills, Bankruptcy Certificate 1866-1868

Box 3

Personal Correspondence 1866-1868

Box 3

Accounts, Bills, Receipts 1869-1873

Box 4

Personal and Family Correspondence 1869-1873

Box 4

Accounts, Bills, Receipts 1874-1880

Box 4

Personal, Political and Family papers 1874-1880

Box 4

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Box 4

Personal, Political and Family papers 1881-1886

Box 4

Accounts, Receipts, Miscellaneous 1887-1890

Box 4

Personal, Family and Political papers 1887-1890

Box 4

Political papers and Correspondence 1873-1899

Box 4

Accounts, Receipts, Rent Agreements, Miscellaneous 1891-1892

Box 4

Personal Correspondence 1891-1892

Box 4

Accounts, Receipts, Rent Agreements, Miscellaneous 1893-1895

Box 4

Personal and Family Correspondence 1893-1895

Box 4

Rent Agreements, Miscellaneous Accounts, Receipts 1896-1897

Box 5

Personal, Family, Miscellaneous Correspondence 1896-1897

Box 5

Rent Agreements 1898-1900

Box 5

Personal and Family Correspondence 1898-1900

Box 5

Accounts, Deeds, Contracts 1901-1917

Box 5

Personal and Family Correspondence 1901-1917

Box 5

Tax receipts and bank notes 1920-1932

Box 5

Personal Correspondence 1920-1926

Box 5

Miscellaneous n.d.

Box 5

Notebook n.d.

Box 5