

# Inventory of the William Sterrett Papers, 1782-1881

William Sterrett Papers, 1782-1881  
1782-1881

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A Collection in the Manuscripts and Rare Books Department Mss. Acc. 1996.41  
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary  
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## History

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## Title Statement

Inventory of the William Sterrett Papers, 1782-1881

**Subtitle:** Sterrett, William, Papers, 1782-1881

**Collection:** Mss. Acc. 1996.41

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## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

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## Revision Description

**Feb 16, 2004** PUBLIC "-//College of William and Mary::Earl Gregg Swem Library::Special Collections//TEXT (US::ViW::viw00057::Inventory of the William Sterrett Papers)//EN" "viw00057.xml" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).

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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection number**

Mss. Acc. 1996.41

**Language**

English

**Abstract**

Business papers of Sterrett who was a lawyer, real estate agent and county clerk of Mason County, Virginia (now West Virginia).

**Creator**

William Sterrett

**Extent**

1,520 items.

**Repository**

Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary

## Administrative Information

**Restrictions on Access**

Collection is open to all researchers.

**Publication Rights/Restrictions on Use**

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**Acquisition Information**

Purchased, 1966.

**Preferred Citation**

William Sterrett Papers, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

## Biographical/Historical Information

William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Virginia. (now West Virginia), was a lawyer, real estate agent, property manager and county clerk of Mason County. He represented interests in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

## Scope and Content Information

Business papers of Sterrett who was a lawyer, real estate agent and county clerk of Mason County, Virginia (now West Virginia) includes letters, accounts, deeds, promissory notes, legal records, wills and other business records. Most of the letters are from Colin Auld of Alexandria, Va. Note: Correspondents include James Hall of Harrisonburg Va., John A. Marmaduke of Hillsborough and Shepherdstown, West Virginia, George W. Peter, John P. C. Peter, Thomas Peter of Georgetown, D. C., John Roberts of Alexandria, Va. and James Swan and Jonathan Swan of Baltimore, Md., Robert Swan of Cumberland, Md. and Robert Worthington of Charlestown, Va. (now West Virginia.)

Subjects covered by the papers include internal improvements, land speculation, runaway slaves, Board of Public Works, contracts for the construction of log cabins and for the clearing of brush, court case against James White Brackenridge. One document concerns Lawrence Washington.

## Index Terms

**Persons**

Washington, Lawrence, 1791- 1875.

**Subjects**

Slavery--West Virginia-- History.

**Geographical Names**

Mason County (W. Va.)--History--19th century.

**Arrangement**

## Arrangement

### Organization

Collection is arranged chronologically.

### Arrangement

The collection has been divided into series. Series 1 are the letters of William Sterrett, series 2 are business and legal documents and series 3 are maps.

## Components List

### **Correspondence of William Sterrett, 1814-1853.**

**Box-folder** 1:1-40

#### **Subseries 1: Letters of Colin Auld of Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia to his western agent, William Sterrett of Mason County, Virginia [now West Virginia], 1818-1838.**

**Box-folder** 1:1-6

##### **Letters of Colin Auld of Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia, to William Sterrett, his western agent in Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia (now West Virginia), 1818-1825.**

**Box-folder** 1:1

**Extent** 30 items

##### **Scope and Content**

The letters discuss occupants who owe rent, the sale of lands, and money collected by Sterrett, owed to Auld. Mention of James W. Brackenridge of Mason County, Virginia

##### **Letters of Colin Auld of Alexandria, Virginia, to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1826-1828.**

**Box-folder** 1:2

**Extent** 11 items.

##### **Scope and Content**

The letters discuss the division of land plots, back rent payments owed, deeds of sale, and the advantages of advertising in Dutch and English. One letter includes a hand-drawn map of a lot in Graham's Station, Virginia, where Auld owns land. Auld mentions a convention for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which he believes will be built soon. He hopes that the canal, along with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, will increase the value of his property. Financial disagreements with James White Brackenridge and his father, Rev. John Brackenridge, are discussed at length.

##### **Letters of Colin Auld of Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia, to William Sterrett, Mason County, Virginia, 1829-1835.**

**Box-folder** 1:3

**Extent** 23 items.

##### **Scope and Content**

The letters discuss potential land buyers, land sales and mortgages; includes discourse concerning legal dispute with J.W. Brackenridge, who spends time in jail during 1823. Henry Strider buys land in Mason County, Virginia, and is later suspected to be aligned with J.W. Brackenridge. Auld mentions the possibility of a railroad connection to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Documents include notification of bond penalties between Auld and John Ramsey, notification of a deposition hearing with Henry Strider, and notification that Auld is the overseer of a road in Alexandria, Virginia, and appropriated land in Alexandria.

**Letters of Colin Auld of Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia, to William Sterrett, his western agent in Mason County, Virginia, 1836-1839.**

**Box-folder** 1:4

**Extent** 11 items.

**Scope and Content**

Correspondence focuses on the long-running trial with J.W. Brackenridge; discuss preparing for the court appeal, how much Brackenridge owes, and other details of the case; mention disputes with Henry Strider and John Ramsey. Auld is ill--has been run over by a horse; has eye ailment. Includes letter from Henry Strider in defense of his actions; wishes for reconciliation.

**Letters of Colin Auld of Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia to William Sterrett of Mason County, Virginia, 1839-1863.**

**Box-folder** 1:5

**Extent** 11 items.

**Scope and Content**

Letters discuss in detail the legal dispute with J.W. Brackenridge; court observations, records of financial transactions, contracts, power of attorney, and court receipts in favor of Henry Strider and James W. Brackenridge of Mason County, Virginia against Colin Auld. Last four letters from Auld's estate attorney, William Page.

**Letters of Colin Auld, Alexandria, Fairfax County, Virginia, to William Sterrett, Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1830-1838.**

**Box-folder** 1:6

**Extent** 7 items.

**Physical Location** Medium Oversize File

**Scope and Content**

Discuss legal dispute with J.W. Brackenridge and his father Rev. John Brackenridge, and their attorney. Case is tried in local appeals and upper courts; discussed at length.

**Subseries 2: Letters from John A. Marmaduke of Shepardstown and Hillsborough, Virginia, to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1819-1850, n.d.**

**Box-folder** 1:7

**Extent** 13 items.

**Scope and Content**

Discuss legal dispute over financial transactions with Isaac Larowe of Mason County, Virginia; sale of land and slaves. Seven blacks ran away to Ohio. Marmaduke proposes that the blacks return and buy their freedom: \$100 per male, \$50 per female, or \$500 for the group of seven. If they refused to return he authorized his attorney, Sterrett, to have them ". . . taken and disposed of in any way. . . proper for my use and benefit." Letters discuss clearing land, fence building, house repair, crop planting, and squatters. Marmaduke is ill with rheumatic fever; postpones visit to Mason County, Virginia William Sterrett's father dies

**Subseries 3: Copies of letters of William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, to various recipients 1820-1866.**

**Box-folder** 1:8

**Extent** 19 items.

**Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Colin Auld, Thomas Peter, John A. Marmaduke, John Roberts, Rudolph Roberts, and Auss Buckner. Contains a marriage certificate, complaints about goods and services, rent and debt notices, financial statements and records.

**Subseries 4: Letters to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, from James Hall of Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1826-1829.**

**Box-folder** 1:9

**Extent** 4 items.

**Scope and Content**

Includes financial records, accounts of business transactions, and discussion of planned visit to Mason County, Virginia

**Subseries 5: Letters to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1819-1832.**

**Box-folder** 1:10

**Extent** 16 items.

**Scope and Content**

Includes notification and receipts of payments, discussion of leasing land and collecting rent. Peter suggests that W. Sterrett find a new western agent to replace him in his duties.

**Subseries 6: Letters to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, from the sons of Thomas Peter, George W. Peter and John P.C. Peter of Georgetown, 1833-1838.**

**Box-folder** 1:11

**Extent** 17 items.

**Scope and Content**

Includes notification and receipts of payments made and due. Discuss purchasing and renting land. Increased use of banks for financial transactions.

**Subseries 7: Letters of John Roberts of Alexandria, D.C. to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1834-1837.**

**Box-folder** 1:12

**Extent** 12 items.

**Scope and Content**

Discourse begins with W. Sterrett becoming J. Roberts' western agent with power of attorney. Letters include financial transactions and notification and receipts of payments made and due. Discuss the debts and travails of J. Roberts' son, Rudolph Roberts, who lives near Point Pleasant.

**Subseries 8: Letters of E.H. Smith and James Smith of Harrisonburg, Virginia, to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1826-1835.**

**Box-folder** 1:13

**Extent** 3 items.

**Scope and Content**

Includes discussion of land and horse purchases, along with other financial transactions.

**Subseries 9: Letters of James and Jonathan Swan of Baltimore, Maryland, to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1814-1817.**

**Box-folder** 1:14

**Scope and Content**

Sterrett becomes J. Swan's western agent and is granted power of attorney; he can sell and divide land plots in Swan's name. Includes discussion of the sale of Swan's property and horses in Mason County, Virginia; he held nearly 9,000 acres.

**Subseries 10: Letters of Robert Swan of Cumberland, Maryland, to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1818-1834.**

**Box-folder** 1:15

**Extent** 10 items.

**Scope and Content**

Includes detailed financial records, notification of receipts & payments made and due. Some involve trading cattle for property. R. Swan threatens to take legal action against W. Sterrett for late payments.

**Subseries 11: Letters of Robert Worthington of Charlestown, Virginia (relative to Ohio governor, Thomas Worthington) to William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia, 1820-1823.**

**Box-folder** 1:16

**Extent** 10 items.

**Scope and Content**

Discuss debts owed to R. Worthington by his tenants in Mason County, Virginia; mentions taking legal action towards the debtors. Mention receipts of payments and other financial matters. R. Worthington is in the process of closing down his estate in Mason County, Virginia; W. Sterrett is serving as his western land agent.

**Subseries 12: General business correspondence of William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia from various clients, 1821-1828.**

**Box-folder** 1:17

**Scope and Content**

General business correspondence of William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia from various clients. Early letters contain requests for W. Sterrett to serve as a western land agent; his job evolves to the search for tenants, the collection of rent, the forwarding of money, the sale of land, the settlement of debts along with other forms of financial transactions typical of a frontier agent. Documents include a detailed record of money collected from clients ; discussion of dowry property, a poem from the collection of Boyd B. Sterrett entitled "The Home of my Childhood," and a receipt of a court payment made by James W. Brackenridge of Mason County to Augustus L.M. Damarin of Pittsburgh, Pa. Also included are contracts for activities such as the construction of a log cabin and the clearing of brush. The letter from Samuel F. Vinton, Ohio congressman, discusses congressional politics. Mentions the "internal improvement Bill," a survey of the "great and leading channels of communication throughout the United States, with a view to their improvement," along with the "Greek Resolution," a "development of European policy." Also mentions debate over the laws of presidential nomination, explaining that there is a game of "Fast and Loose" on both sides. Also contains receipts and request of legal payment in favor of J.J. and F.J. de Moyne paid by Martin Noniffs by order of the county court of Mason County, Virginia

**Subseries 13: General business correspondence of William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia from various clients, 1831-1852, n.d.**

**Extent** 22 items.

**Scope and Content**

Most letters discuss financial transactions in the form of transfer and forwarding money, settling debts, collecting rent and interest, bonds; and the purchase of land. One letter includes the exact dimensions and price of a barn being built for W. Sterrett. Later letters provide instructions about filling out bank checks. J. Stuart Thornton declares that "the board of Publik [sic] works have [sic] mentioned Point Pleasant as a place that will be of considerable importance," suggesting an increase in value of Sterrett's land holdings.

**Subseries 14: Business correspondence of William Sterrett of Point Pleasant, Mason County, Virginia from various clients, 1816-1853, n.d.**

**Box-folder** 1:19

**Scope and Content**

These letters contain financial records in list or long hand form; include receipts of payments, requests for payment, promissory notes, transfer of money, and the mention of the Bank of Virginia at Richmond. A declaration of bond of William Trotter of Mason County, Virginia, to Henry C. Dade of Fauquier County, Virginia

**Subseries 15: Legal correspondence of William Sterrett of Mason County, Virginia, 1827-1833.**

**Extent** 4 items.

**Scope and Content**

Sterrett was a lawyer and county clerk besides being a land agent, and he received requests and advice about legal documents. The Executive Department of Mason County, Virginia requested a certificate of summons. The Auditor's Office (probably of the State of Virginia) advised W. Sterrett about issuing

executions against the estate of a convict. The Executive Department of Richmond, Virginia rejected the recommendations of Mason County, Virginia justices for information of request. Folder also contains a letter closing out the estate of Edward H. Donough of Mason County, Virginia, addressed to Sterrett, his legal administer of state.

## **Business and Legal Documents, 1782-1881 and n.d.**

**Box-folder** 1:21-2:1-43

### **Subseries 1: Business and legal documents, 1782-1798.**

**Box-folder** 1:21

**Extent** 20 items.

### **Subseries 2: Business and legal documents, 1799-1801.**

**Box-folder** 1:22

**Extent** 20 items.

### **Subseries 3: Business and legal documents, 1802-1803.**

**Box-folder** 1:23

**Extent** 24 items.

### **Subseries 4: Business and legal documents. 1804.**

**Extent** 1:24

### **Subseries 5: Business and legal documents, 1805.**

**Box-folder** 1:25

**Extent** 14 items.

### **Subseries 6: Business and legal documents, 1806.**

**Box-folder** 1:26

**Extent** 22 items.

### **Subseries 7: Business and legal documents, 1807.**

**Box-folder** 1:27

### **Subseries 8: Business and legal documents, 1808.**

**Box-folder** 1:28

**Extent** 21 items.

### **Subseries 9: Business and legal documents, 1809.**

**Box-folder** 1:29

**Extent** 13 items.

### **Subseries 10: Business and legal documents, 1810.**

**Box-folder** 1:30

### **Subseries 11: Business and legal documents, 1811.**

**Box-folder** 1:31

**Extent** 14 items.

### **Subseries 12: Business and legal documents, 1812.**

**Box-folder** 1:32

**Extent** 17 items.

**Subseries 13: Business and legal documents, 1812.**

**Box-folder** 1:33

**Extent** 11 items.

**Subseries 14: Business and legal documents, 1814.**

**Box-folder** 1:34

**Extent** 17 items.

**Subseries 15: Business and legal documents, 1815.**

**Box-folder** 1:35

**Extent** 24 items.

**Subseries 16: Business and legal documents, 1816.**

**Box-folder** 1:36

**Extent** 23 items.

**Scope and Content**

Includes request from Lawrence Washington.

**Subseries 17: Business and legal documents, January 1817-June 1817.**

**Box-folder** 1:37

**Extent** 17 items.

**Subseries 18: Business and legal documents, August 1817-December 1817.**

**Box-folder** 1:38

**Extent** 13 items.

**Subseries 19: Business and legal documents, January 1818-May 1818.**

**Box-folder** 1:39

**Extent** 15 items.

**Subseries 20: Business and legal documents, June 1818-December 1818.**

**Box-folder** 1:40

**Extent** 12 items.

**Subseries 21: Business and legal documents, January 1819-June 1819.**

**Box-folder** 2:1

**Extent** 20 items.

**Subseries 22: Business and legal documents, July 1819-December 1819.**

**Box-folder** 2:2

**Extent** 14 items.

**Subseries 23: Business and legal documents, January 1820-May 1820.**

**Box-folder** 2:3

**Subseries 24: Business and legal documents, June 1820-December 1820.**

**Box-folder** 2:4

**Extent** 22 items.

**Subseries 25: Business and legal documents, January 1821-April 1821.**

**Box-folder** 2:5

**Extent** 15 items.

**Subseries 26: Business and legal documents, May 1821-December 1821.**

**Box-folder** 2:6

**Extent** 14 items.

**Subseries 27: Business and legal documents, January 1822-March 1822.**

**Box-folder** 2:7

**Extent** 24 items.

**Subseries 28: Business and legal documents, April 1822-December 1822.**

**Box-folder** 2:8

**Extent** 18 items.

**Subseries 29: Business and legal documents, January 1823-May 1823.**

**Box-folder** 2:9

**Extent** 25 items.

**Subseries 30: Business and legal documents, June 1823-December 1823.**

**Box-folder** 2:10

**Extent** 15 items.

**Subseries 31: Business and legal documents, 1824.**

**Box-folder** 2:11

**Extent** 26 items.

**Subseries 32: Business and legal documents, 1825.**

**Box-folder** 2:12

**Extent** 31 items.

**Subseries 33: Business and legal documents, January 1826-May 1826.**

**Box-folder** 2:13

**Extent** 23 items.

**Subseries 34: Business and legal documents, June 1826-December 1826.**

**Box-folder** 2:14

**Extent** 26 items.

**Subseries 35: Business and legal documents, January 1827-April 1827.**

**Box-folder** 2:15

**Extent** 18 items.

**Subseries 36: Business and legal documents, May 1827-December 1827.**

**Box-folder** 2:16

**Subseries 37: Business and legal documents, January 1828-June 1828.**

**Box-folder** 2:17

**Extent** 31 items.

**Subseries 38: Business and legal documents, August 1828-December 1828.**

**Box-folder** 2:18

**Extent** 24 items.

**Subseries 39: Business and legal documents, January 1829-April 1829.**

**Box-folder** 2:19

**Extent** 23 items.

**Subseries 40: Business and legal documents, May 1829-December 1829.**

**Box-folder** 2:20

**Subseries 41: Business and legal documents, January 1830-May 1830.**

**Box-folder** 2:21

**Extent** 16 items.

**Subseries 42: Business and legal documents, July 1830-December 1830.**

**Box-folder** 2:22

**Extent** 16 items

**Subseries 43: Business and legal documents, January 1831-May 1831.**

**Box-folder** 2:23

**Extent** 14 items.

**Subseries 44: Business and legal documents,**

**Box-folder** 2:24

**Extent** 15 items

**Subseries 45: Business and legal documents, 1832.**

**Box-folder** 2:25

**Extent** 18 items

**Subseries 46: Business and legal documents, January 1833-March 1833.**

**Box-folder** 2:26

**Extent** 19 items.

**Subseries 47: Business and legal documents, April 1833-December 1833.**

**Box-folder** 2:27

**Extent** 15 items.

**Subseries 48: Business and legal documents, January 1834-May 1834.**

**Box-folder** 2:28

**Extent** 17 items.

**Subseries 49: Business and legal documents, July 1834-December 1834.**

**Box-folder** 2:29

**Extent** 12 items.

**Subseries 50: Business and legal documents, 1835.**

**Box-folder** 2:30

**Extent** 25 items.

**Subseries 51: Business and legal documents, 1836.**

**Box-folder** 2:31

**Extent** 22 items

**Subseries 52: Business and legal documents, 1837.**

**Box-folder** 2:32

**Extent** 12 items

**Subseries 53: Business and legal documents, 1838-1839.**

**Box-folder** 2:33

**Extent** 17 items

**Subseries 54: Business and legal documents, 1840-1841.**

**Box-folder** 2:34

**Extent** 24 items

**Subseries 55: Business and legal documents, 1842-1843.**

**Box-folder** 2:35

**Extent** 30 items

**Subseries 56: Business and legal documents 1844-1845.**

**Box-folder** 2:36

**Extent** 20 items.

**Subseries 57: Business and legal documents, 1846-1847.**

**Box-folder** 2:37

**Extent** 20 items.

**Subseries 58: Business and legal documents, 1848-1849.**

**Box-folder** 2:38

**Subseries 59: Business and legal documents, 1850-1855.**

**Box-folder** 2:39

**Subseries 60: Business and legal documents, 1856-1859.**

**Box-folder** 2:40

**Extent** 15 items.

**Subseries 61: Business and legal documents, 1860-1881.**

**Box-folder** 2:41

**Extent** 13 items

**Subseries 62: Business and legal documents No date.**

**Box-folder** 2:42

**Subseries 63: Business and legal documents, No date.**

**Box-folder** 2:43

**Extent** 57 items.

**Maps. 1839-No date.**

**Box-folder** 2:44

**Extent** 6 items.