

A Guide to the Joseph Gordon Kent Papers, 1850s-1927

Joseph Gordon Kent Papers 1850s-1927
1850s-1927

A Collection in Special Collections, Kegley Library 1997.7
Special Collections, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College
2011

Author: Cathy Carlson Reynolds

History

Processed by: Cathy Carlson Reynolds

Title Statement

A Guide to the Joseph Gordon Kent Papers, 1850s-1927

Subtitle: Kent, Joseph Gordon, Papers, 1850s-1927

Collection: 1997.7

Author: Cathy Carlson Reynolds

Publication Statement

Date: © 2011 By Wytheville Community College. All rights reserved.

Publisher: Special Collections, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College

[Conditions of Use](#)

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Cathy Carlson Reynolds, 2 December 2011

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

1997.7

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

47 folders.

Repository

Special Collections, Kegley Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Mary B. Kegley in July 1997; additional material donated in 2000.

Preferred Citation

Joseph Gordon Kent Papers, Mss Collection 1997.7, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College, Wytheville, VA

Biographical Information

Gordon Cloyd Kent, the son of Col. Joseph Kent (1765-1843) and Margaret McGavock Kent (1769-1837) was born in Wythe County on 29 June 1806. He married Margaret Cloyd (1812-1833) on 14 March 1832; their child was David Cloyd Kent (1833-1902). He next married Lucinda Cloyd who died in 1843 without bearing children. On 19 April 1850 Kent married Jane L. McKee (1812-1883; they had one son Joseph Gordon Cloyd (1851-1838). Gordon Cloyd Kent died on 18 September 1869 at his home on Reed Creek in Wythe County.

David Cloyd Kent, son of Gordon Cloyd Kent (1806-1869) and Margaret Cloyd, was born on 3 May 1833. He married Judith Elizabeth Ligon (1831-1900) and had the following children: Josephine Cloyd Kent (1855-1877), Margaret A. Kent Langhorne (1857-1931), Eveline P. Kent Mebane (1858-1926), Alice Gordon (1859-1961), Sallie James Kent (1860), Gordon Cloyd Kent (1863-1876), Lizzie Ligon Kent Laughon (b. 1865), James Ligon Kent (1857-1950), David McGavock (1869), unnamed infant (1870), and Lucy Bentley (1873). David Cloyd Kent died in April 1902.

Joseph Gordon Kent, the son of Gordon Cloyd Kent (1863-1876), Lizzie Ligon Kent Laughon (b. 1865), James Ligon Kent (1857-1950), David McGavock (1869), unnamed infant (1870), and Lucy Bentley (1873). David Cloyd Kent died in April 1902.

Joseph Gordon Kent, the son of Gordon Cloyd Kent and this third wife Jane L. McKee, was born in Wythe County on 1 November 1851. He married Mary Carey Randolph, daughter of Edmund Randolph and Tarmesia Meaux, on 31 August 1876. They had six children including Lucy Randolph Kent (1877-1968), Charlotte Kent (1887-1987), Gordon Cloyd Kent (1888-1920), Edmund Randolph Kent (1890-1955), Hugh McElwee Kent (b. 1892), Mary Randolph Kent (1893-1895) and Arthur Meaux Kent (1896-1893).

David Cloyd Kent and his half-brother Joseph Gordon were involved in a bitter lawsuit regarding disposition of the estate of their father Gordon Cloyd Kent. David Cloyd Kent served as administrator of the estate. the net surplus after payment of debts to H. McG. Kent and the estate of James R. Kent was \$20,715.50.

After the death of Gordon Cloyd Kent in 1869, his sons and widow agreed to jointly manage the farm and use its profits to pay debts from his estate. On 28 March 1874, they agreed to a hotchpot statement which divided Kent's estate and on 6 May 1874 signed the statement. In August 1897, however, Joseph Gordon Kent filed suit against David Cloyd Kent, alleging that his brother failed to record settlement of the estate including any assets received and debts he paid. Joseph Kent also desired that any remaining assets be divided as one third to David Cloyd Kent and two thirds to himself, claiming his mother's portion as his. Jane L. McKee Kent died in 1883.

David Cloyd Kent responded to the lawsuit by saying that he had paid off all debts and had made "large payments" to his brother and step-mother. He argued that after four years of co-management of the farm, using profits to pay estate debts, that all estate accounts had been settled. Kent further stated that he had kept a detailed account of all transactions even though he had not made a settlement of his administrative accounts. Kent told the court that "the plaintiff is hopelessly insolvent; plaintiff has long known...that your respondent did not owe him anything, and this must be his reason for waiting so long to bring this suit, when he thought he might realize something from a confusion of accounts that might arise from the lapse of time and loss of papers." Kent's son James Ligon Kent handled much of the legal work on this case.

The court appointed M. M. Caldwell as special commissioner to investigate and report on estate records. He presented the court with two separate statements, one for transactions dating from 1869 including all administrative transactions and one based on the hotchpot statement.

The court threw out Statement Number 1 and corrected Statement Number 2 based on the hotchpot agreement of 1874. The court then decided in favor of David Cloyd Kent. Joseph Gordon Kent appealed to the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia but that court affirmed the original decision.

The Meaux and Randolph Families

Tarmesia Meaux Randolph (1824-1908) was the daughter of Dr. Thomas Oliver Meaux (1792-1871) of New Orleans and Eliza Eustis Nash Meaux (b. 1802); he was the son of Richard Meaux and Frances Oliver Meaux.

Dr. Thomas Oliver Meaux had the following children: Dr. Thomas G. Meaux Jr., John Meaux, Eliza Meaux Boyce, and Tarmesia Meaux Randolph.

Tarmesia Meaux married Edmund Randolph on 7 February 1843 in New Orleans. Randolph practiced law in the city for several years but in 1849 journeyed to California where he worked as a lawyer and journalist. Randolph involved himself in California politics, serving in the legislature. The scheme of William Walker, his employer at the newspaper publishing house, embroiled Randolph; he accompanied Walker to Nicaragua to assist with Walker's dream of establishing a slave empire. Though living in California, Randolph remained staunchly in support of slavery and delivered a fiery oration against Lincoln and the North in July 1861. He died of tuberculosis in 1861.

Tarmesia Meaux Randolph and Edmund Randolph had three daughters including Margaret Randolph, Lucy Nelson Randolph, and Mary Carey Randolph Kent. Tarmesia Meaux Randolph eventually settled in Baltimore, Maryland.

Scope and Content

Series I, Correspondence (1869-1927, undated) contains letters to and from Joseph Gordon Kent regarding the lawsuit between him and his half-brother David Cloyd Kent over the settlement of their father's estate. Respondents include David Cloyd Kent, Jane L. McKee Kent, Judith Elizabeth Ligon Kent, Mary Randolph Kent, William I. Carper, and R. I. Gardner. Other letters between Joseph Gordon Kent and Thomas F. Walker during the 1900s pertain to a dispute over mineral rights on the Boyd land on Walker Mountain. Also included are letters between Joseph Gordon Kent, Charlotte Kent, W. Ulman, and A. D. Preston regarding the estate of the Meaux family in New Orleans (Maternal family of Mary Randolph Kent, wife of Joseph Gordon Kent).

Series II, Legal Records (1869-1927, undated), contains documents relating to the lawsuit between David Cloyd Kent and Joseph Gordon Kent over the estate of their father, Gordon Cloyd Kent. Included are reporters (printed copies of case briefs, etc.) and printed appeals, etc., notes, and advertisements for the sale of family land. Also included are documents and notes relating to the case of D. A. Preston vs. Joseph G. Kent.

Series III, Financial records (1850s-1900s), contains statements, receipts, and tax records relating to the case of Joseph Gordon Kent vs. David Cloyd Kent.

Series IV, Photographs (1890, undated), contains two photographs of land in Max Meadows.

Series V, Land Records (1904, undated), contains a map of the Boyd Coal and Iron Lands in Wythe County and handwritten transcripts of deeds between James R. Kent and Gordon Cloyd Kent, E. Thurston and James E. Remington, and James R. Kent and James E. Remington.

Series VI, Photocopies (1788-1930, undated) contains photocopies of letters and documents of Joseph Kent (1765-1843). Also included are letters of his son Gordon Cloyd Kent (1806-1869), and his sons David Cloyd Kent (1833-1902), Joseph Gordon Kent (1851-1938). Letters of the Meaux family of New Orleans and the Randolph family of Virginia and California are also included; Dr. Thomas Oliver Meaux (1792-1871, his wife Eliza Eustis Nash Meaux (b. 1802), and his daughter Tarmesia Meaux Randolph (1824-1908). The latter married Edmund Randolph (1819-1861) and had daughters Margaret Randolph, Lucy Nelson Randolph, and Mary Cary Randolph Kent (1855-1922).

Contents List

Series I. Correspondence. 1869-1927.

Extent

2 folders

Folder 1. Correspondence. 1869-1899

Extent

16 items.

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Kenton Depot, Wythe County, Virginia to Jane L. Kent, Max Meadows Depot, Virginia. 27 September 1869.

Folder-item 1:1

Extent

4 p.

Scope and Content

Re: settlement of her affairs after death of husband Gordon Cloyd Kent who "was very much in debtI don't want to see the House of my father go into the hands of strangers."

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Dublin, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 7 May 1881.

Folder-item 1:2

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: payment of debts.

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Dublin, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 19 May 1881.

Folder-item 1:3

Extent

2 P.

Scope and Content

Re: payment of notes.

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Dublin, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 1 April 1882.

Folder-item 1:4

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: lots donated by Gordon Cloyd Kent for New School Presbyterian Church and payment of claim of Nancy Kent.

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Dublin, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 7 March 1884.

Folder-item 1:5

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: debts and his attempts to pay off loans from estate of Gordon Cloyd Kent.

Letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Max Meadows, Virginia to David Cloyd Kent. 3 March 1894.

Folder-item 1:6

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: his "deal with Carper" in hopes to repay debit to David Cloyd Kent.

Letter. William I. Carper, Newbern, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent, Max Meadows, Virginia. 19 August 1896.

Folder-item 1:7

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: collection of debt issued by Pulaski County Court in case Princeton Banking Company vs. J. G. Kent and D. C. Kent. David Cloyd Kent told Carper that debt was that of Joseph Gordon Kent.

Letter. Judith Elizabeth Ligon Kent, Kenton, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 24 August 1896.

Folder-item 1:8

Extent

4 p.

Scope and Content

Re: chastises him for making David Cloyd Kent assume responsibility for his debt to Princeton Bank. "It is bad enough that you have kept him so long out of the money you owe him for his part of his father's farm without his having to deny himself and his family."

Letter. R. L. Gardner, Pulaski, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 18 February 1897.

Folder-item 1:9

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: Princeton Bank Company vs. D. C. and J. G. Kent.

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Dublin, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 5 August 1897.

Folder-item 1:10

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: settlement of estate of Gordon Cloyd Kent. "I was of the opinion that all the estate matter was settled....I am in no condition to undertake such a task as to go over those things again neither mentally nor physically."

Letter. David Cloyd Kent, Dublin, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent 22 November 1897.

Folder-item 1:11

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: willing to compromise.

Letter. James Ligon Kent, Pulaski, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 18 January 1898.

Folder-item 1:12

Extent

1 p.; enclosure.

Scope and Content

re: revised statement of David Cloyd Kent.

Letter. James Ligon Kent, Pulaski, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 22 March 1898.

Folder-item 1:13

Extent

3 p.

Scope and Content

Re: lawsuit between Kent and David Cloyd Kent. "I have nothing to do whatever with any action taken between my father individually and you."

Draft of letter. Joseph Gordon Kent to David Cloyd Kent. 24 September 1898.

Folder-item 1:14

Extent

8 p.

Scope and Content

Note: "Gave brother to read." Re: estate settlement. "I ask you to look back & see who is bearing the greater hardship in paying out money for the other....The injustice to me is that you have never made the effort to inform yourself accurately as to our respective positions on the estate accounts. Now the last remnant of my property is tied up out of my control until these estate accounts are settled and I must hasten a conclusion."

Letter. James Ligon Kent, Lynchburg, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent, Max Meadows, Virginia. 2 December 1899

Folder-item 1:15

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: necessity of his conferring with his counsel before responding to memorandum.

Draft of letter. Joseph Gordon Kent to James Ligon Kent. 15 December 1899.

Folder-item 1:16

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: final settlement of the lawsuit.

Folder 2. Correspondence. 1900-1927

Extent

15 items.

Letter. James Ligon Kent, Lynchburg, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent, Max Meadows, Virginia. 8 January 1900.

Folder-item 2:1

Extent

7 p.

Scope and Content

Re: final settlement of judgement. "This request of yours [to reduce amount of judgement] was granted (practically) by my father without a moment's hesitation only on condition that you will deal with your purchaser so that we will be perfectly safe for the remaining balance. It would not seem that he was willing to do you any wrong when he let you have \$2200 and waited nearly five years before taking any step to protect himself and again endorsed for you with the Princeton Banking Company." "

Letter. James Ligon Kent, Lynchburg, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent, Max Meadows, Virginia. 10 January 1900.

Folder-item 2:2

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: his personal offer to buy land. "If you do not succeed in making a private sale please keep this personal offer a secret as it is only intended for your benefit."

Letter. C. B. Thomas, Wytheville, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent. 6 May 1904.

Folder-item 2:3

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: court decree for sale of mountain land.

Letter. C. B. Thomas, Southwestern Virginia Land Agency, Wytheville, Virginia to Mrs. Mary Kent [Mrs. Joseph Gordon Kent]. 6 May 1904.

Folder-item 2:4

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: negotiation with Mr. Blair.

Letter. A. D. Preston, New Orleans, Louisiana to Charlotte Kent, Max Meadows, Virginia. 31 January 1914.

Folder-item 2:5

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: power of attorney form for Mary Randolph Kent.

Letter. [unknown], New Orleans, Louisiana to Charlotte Kent. 16 February 1914.

Folder-item 2:6

Extent

15 February 1914.

Scope and Content

Re: lawsuit involving her mother's relatives, the Meaux family of New Orleans.

Letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Jackson, Mississippi to W. Ulman. 3 April 1914.

Folder-item 2:7

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: settlement of the estate of Mrs. Tarmesia Meaux Randolph, mother of Mary Randolph Kent.

Letter. [unknown] to Lucy [unknown]. 16 July 1914.

Folder-item 2:8

Extent 10 p. Stationery imprint "Stuart Circle Hospital, Richmond, Virginia."

Letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Bluefield, West Virginia to Thomas F. Walker. 26 November 1926.

Folder-item 2:9

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: copy of court order relating to sale of Boyd Mountain land.

Letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Bluefield, West Virginia to John M. Preston. 21 December 1926.

Folder-item 2:10

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: Boyd land and mineral rights.

Letter. Thomas F. Walker, Wytheville, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent, Bluefield, West Virginia. 3 January 1927.

Folder-item 2:11

Extent

4 p.

Scope and Content

Re: lawsuit of Gardner vs. Joseph G. Kent et als and mineral rights in the Boyd land lying on Walker Mountain.

Letter. Thomas F. Walker, Virginia to Joseph Gordon Kent, Bluefield, West Virginia. 4 January 1927.

Folder-item 2:12

Extent

2 p.; fragment.

Scope and Content

Re: lawsuit, Gardner vs. Joseph G. Kent et als and his doubts about the mineral worth of the land.

Draft letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Bluefield, West Virginia to Miss Preston. 24 January 1927.

Folder-item 2:13

Extent

1 p.

Scope and Content

Re: Boyd land and mineral rights.

Letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Pulaski, Virginia to Mary Randolph Kent, Fort Monroe, Virginia. Undated.

Folder-item 2:14

Extent

2 p.; fragment.

Scope and Content

Re: her trip home and daughters Lucy Randolph Kent and Charlotte Kent.

Letter. Joseph Gordon Kent, Pulaski, Virginia to David Cloyd Kent. Undated.

Folder-item 2:15

Extent

2 p.

Scope and Content

Re: consult with accountants regarding estate of father and what he has paid into the estate.

Series II. Legal Records. 1899-1904, undated

Extent

8 folders.

Folder 1. Publications. May 1899.

Series-folder 2:1

Extent

245 p.; paperbound.

Scope and Content

Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, at Wytheville: Jos. G. Kent vs. D. C. Kent, Admr.: Petition.

Folder 2. Publications. June 1899.

Series-folder 2:2

Extent

2 items.

Scope and Content

In the Supreme Court of Appeals in Virginia, at Wytheville: Session 1899: Jos. G. Kent, Appellant, vs. David C. Kent, Adm'r, Appellee: Note of Argument. 14 June 1899, filed. *In the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, at Wytheville: Session 1899: J. G. Kent vs. D. C. Kent, Adm'r: Note of Argument for Appellee.* 22 June 1899, filed.

Folder 3. Publications. October 1899-1904.

Series-folder 2:3

Extent

4 items.

Scope and Content

National Reporter System, Southeastern Reporter. 17 October 1899; *Kent vs. Kent. In the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, at Richmond: Joseph W. Kent, Appellant, versus David C. Kent, Admr., Appellee, Petition of Appellant for Rehearing, Jos. G. Kent, by Henry & Williams, of Counsel.* 27 October 1899. *In the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, at Wytheville; Session 1899, Jos. G. Kent, Appellant, vs. David C. Kent, Adm'r, Appellee: Brief of M. M. Caldwell and W. B. Kegley, of Counsel for Appellant.* 1899. *Laws Relating to Delinquent Lands*, excerpts from Code of Virginia. 1904.

Folder 4. Documents. Joseph G. Kent vs. David C. Kent. 1895, undated.

Series-folder 2:4

Extent

4 items.

Scope and Content

Includes report of Judge W. H. Bolling regarding the James R. Kent debt and report of Special Commissioner M. M. Caldwell.

Folder 5. Advertisements. Joseph G. Kent vs. David C. Kent. 1901, 1919, undated.

Series-folder 2:5

Extent

4 items.

Scope and Content

Includes circular "Max Meadows Valley, Virginia," flyer "Blue-Grass Farm in Max Meadows Valley, Wythe County, Virginia," and two newspaper clippings.

Folder 6. Notes. Joseph G. Kent vs. David C. Kent. 1879, 1897, undated.

Series-folder 2:6

Extent

13 items.

Folder 7. Documents. D. A. Preston vs. J. G. Kent. 6 May 1901.

Series-folder 2:7

Extent

5 items.

Folder 8. Miscellaneous Notes. Undated.

Series-folder 2:8

Extent

8 items.

Series III. Financial Records 1850s - 1927.

Extent

8 folders.

Scope and Content

Includes receipts, hotchpot statement, and tax records.

Series IV. Photographs. 1890, undated.

Extent

2 items.

Scope and Content

View of Max Meadows, stereographic photograph in 2 parts, 1890; view of Max Meadows with Anchor and Hope plantation in distance, printed by Walter and Noel, Wytheville.

Series V. Land Records. 1904, undated.

Extent

4 items.

Scope and Content

Includes map showing Boyd Coal & Iron Lands; survey for land of E. Thurston conveyed to James E. Remington, later part of the James R. Kent land. Also 1904 transcript of deed between James E. Remington and James R. Kent, 1838.

Series VI. Photocopies. 1788-1930, undated.

Extent

28 folders.

Scope and Content

Series VI, Photocopies (1788-1930, undated) contains photocopies of letters and documents of Joseph Kent (1765-1843). Also included are letters of his son Gordon Cloyd Kent (1806-1869), and his sons David Cloyd Kent (1833-1902), Joseph Gordon Kent (1851-1938). Letters of the Meaux family of New Orleans and the Randolph family of Virginia and California are also included; Dr. Thomas Oliver Meaux (1792-1871, his wife Eliza Eustis Nash Meaux (b. 1802), and his daughter Tarmesia Meaux Randolph (1824-1908). The latter married Edmund Randolph (1819-1861) and had daughters Margaret Randolph, Lucy Nelson Randolph, and Mary Cary Randolph Kent (1855-1922).

