

A Guide to the Lawson Family Papers, 1864

Lawson Family Papers 1864

1864

A Collection in Special Collections, Kegley Library 1995.2
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Author: Cathy Carlson Reynolds

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

1995.2

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

2 items.

Repository

Special Collections, Kegley Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

An anonymous donor gifted the collection in 1995 in honor of Walter W. Palmer, Professor of Psychology and Sociology.

Preferred Citation

Lawson Family Papers, Manuscript Collection 1995.2, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College, Wytheville, VA

Biographical Information

Born on 22 February 1813 at Stanton, Northumberland County, England, Anthony Lawson IV emigrated to the United States with his family in 1817. His father, Anthony Lawson III, established himself as a trader and seller of general merchandise in the bustling port of Alexandria, Virginia. Lured by prospects of greater wealth trading fur, ginseng, and other products on western waters, he moved his family to Logan, West Virginia in 1824. The elder Lawson journeyed frequently to Philadelphia via riverboat and overland stage. Upon returning from such a trade trip in 1846, he succumbed to cholera.

His widow, Ann Bilton Lawson, met an equally tragic fate when she was murdered in December 1847. Family legend says a slave desirous of emancipation killed her with an iron poker.

Anthony Lawson IV married Ann Brooke Robertson, daughter of Edwin and Mary Mennis Robertson. Together they raised two sons, Richard Bilton Lawson and Robert Mennis Lawson, and two daughters, Elizabeth Brooke Lawson Boyd Peirce and Rochsalina Frances Lawson Cooper.

Lawson and his growing family continued to live in Logan, West Virginia. Here he successfully purchased and sold large tracts of coal fields. Lawson also initiated his lifelong charitable activities in Logan by promoting the construction and maintenance of schools.

In 1857 Lawson moved to Burkes Garden in Tazewell County. Adding to his wealth through a wholesale store, Lawson also purchased vast tracts of farm land. A Burkes Garden historian relates that he frequently loaned money to "honest and industrious young men." These shrewd business investments often added to his fortune.

Lawson eventually moved to Wytheville where he formed and ran a grocery store. By the 1860s Lawson was one of the wealthiest men in southwest Virginia. According to the 1860 census, he owned \$110,000 in real estate and \$650,000 in personal property. Although the Civil War reduced his fortune, he still claimed \$94,000 in real estate and \$17,900 in personal property in 1870.

Anthony Lawson died on 13 May 1885 and is buried in East End Cemetery in Wytheville, Virginia.

Scope and Content

The Papers consist of two State of Virginia income tax receipts signed on 30 January 1864 by George Washington Deskins, Collector for the 63rd tax districts. The receipts belonged to Anthony Lawson IV who paid \$3,120 in personal income taxes for 1863. Lawson's firm, Nighkent and Lawson paid \$375 in income taxes for 1863.