Abbott (Liberty C.) family papers

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Guide to the Liberty C. Abbott family papers

Title: Liberty C. Abbott family papers
Accession Number: 1
Creator: Abbott family
Extent: 5.75 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1859 – 1930 (Bulk Dates: 1883-1926)
Abstract: The Liberty C. Abbott family papers include the papers of Liberty C. Abbott (1836-1894), an official and plantation owner of Howard, Mississippi, his wife Maria Abbott (1830-1912), his daughter Birdie Jones Gearhart (1869-1946), and his brother F. Marion Abbott (1844-1908), Mississippi state senator and railroad president. The papers contain correspondence, ledgers and account books, legal documents, diaries, newspaper clippings, photographs, and miscellany.
Provenance: The papers were donated by Frank Abbott Jones in March 1958.
Preferred Citation: Liberty C. Abbott family papers, Special Collections Department, Mississippi State University Libraries.
Access: Open to all researchers.
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Language: English
Liberty Constantine Abbott was born in Busti, Chautauqua County, New York on December 6, 1836. His father was Harry Abbott (1800-1877), a merchant and farmer, and his mother was Louisa Bostwick Abbott (1810-1865). Liberty had four brothers (Alexander Franklin (1829-1905), Rollin Vespasian (1840-1889), Francis Marion (1844-1908), and Eugene Augustus (b. 1855)) and four sisters (Emeline Cecelia (1830-1885), Louisa M. (1832-1862), Charlotte Lucinda (b. 1836), and Emmogene Augusta (1847-1852)). In 1864 he married Maria Traver Reed (1830-1912), who had divorced her first husband, Tembroeck Reed, in 1859 and already had a son Nate A. Reed. Liberty and Maria Abbott had one child, Birdie Traver Abbott Jones Gearhart (1869-1946).

Liberty Abbott clerked in Warren, Pennsylvania, and then went to work in the family hotel. In July, 1861, Abbott enlisted in E Company, Fifth Regiment, New York Volunteer Cavalry as a private and mustered out as a major in August, 1865. Abbott received an appointment to the Internal Revenue service in 1869 and was stationed in Holly Springs, Mississippi. In 1872 he was appointed to the post of superintendent of schools in Marshall County. On July 10, 1874 he was appointed chancery judge for the Ninth District of Mississippi but left that post in 1876. In 1888 he was appointed alderman of the town of Howard. After stepping down as chancery judge in 1876, Abbott went into partnership with his sister Charlotte’s husband, Myron Waters, to run Clifton Plantation in Holmes County, Mississippi. At the time of his death Abbott owned the plantation. Abbott was involved in the Masons, was a Knight Templar of the Twenty-first Degree, and was a member of the Knights of Pythias. Liberty Abbott died in Howard on August 9, 1894.

Francis Marion Abbott was born on January 28, 1844, in New York. He married Gertrude E. Henry (b. 1840) in 1870, and had one child, Mabel H. Abbott (b. 1879?). F. Marion Abbott was educated at Warren Union School in Pennsylvania. Abbott served in the Union Army during the Civil War and was discharged in 1865 as a major. That same year he moved to Aberdeen, Mississippi, and in 1866 he moved onto a plantation in part of Chickasaw, later Clay, County. From 1870 until 1874 Abbott served in the Mississippi legislature as a Republican senator. He founded Abbott, Mississippi, in 1878. He served as president of the Birmingham, Selma and New Orleans Railroad. Abbott bought and reorganized the Selma, Alabama, streetcar line and served as president and general manager until his death in September 1908.

Birdie Traver Abbott Jones Gearhart was born on November 21, 1869 at her father’s Clifton Plantation. She married Peyton Tabb Jones (1854-1901) on April 30, 1896 and had a son, Peyton Abbott “Buddy” Jones (1897-1975). She married her second husband, Frank P. Gearhart (1869-1931) on February 24, 1903 at Clifton Plantation. Frank Gearhart managed a timber firm pioneering in the Quiver River area of Leflore County in the early 1900s. They had two children: Frances Gearhart (b. 1905) and Traver Gearhart (1907-1984). Birdie Gearhart died on May 22, 1946.

Sources:
The Liberty C. Abbott Family Papers
SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Liberty C. Abbott family papers contain the records of the Abbott family, including a large amount of correspondence, much of it with family and friends but there are political and business letters also. In addition, there are records of Liberty Abbott’s business activities, including Clifton Plantation, Abbott and Howard, Holmes County, as well as Thompson and McClure of Schlater, Leflore County. There are also some legal documents, diaries, memorabilia, newspaper clippings, advertisements, and photographs.

ARRANGEMENT

The papers are divided into six series: I. Correspondence; II. Business Records; III. Legal Documents; IV Diaries; V. Newspaper clippings; VI. Miscellaneous.

Series I. Correspondence
Boxes 1-4; VMP Box 6

Sub-series 1.1: Letters to Liberty Abbott, 1876-1897
Box 1

Letters to Liberty Abbott with political content from Blanche K. Bruce and James Hill among others.

Sub-series 1.2: Letters to Maria T. Abbott and Birdie Abbott, 1873-1908
Box 1-2

Letters to Maria T. Abbott and Birdie Abbott, mostly from family members, 1873-1908

Sub-series 1.3: Letters to Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart, 1880-1926
Box 2-3

Letters to Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart from her parents, Liberty and Maria Abbott, and her husband, Frank P. Gearheart. There is also correspondence from other family and friends, most notably Peyton Tabb Jones and Dorothy Vinton.
Sub-series 1.4: Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1892-1930  
Box 4

Letters to Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart and her husband Frank Gearheart from members of the Gearheart family; letters to F. Marion Abbott, from Liberty C. and Maria T. Abbott, and other miscellaneous correspondence.

Series II. Business Records  
Boxes 4-6; Small Oversize MSS Box 1; OS MSS Box 2; OS Ledgers Boxes 1-5

Correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials related to the business activities of Liberty Abbott until his death in 1894, and of his wife, daughter and brother thereafter. The series also includes receipts and other materials related to Clifton Plantation, and day books and ledgers from Abbott and Howard. There are eight financial record books from the timber firm of Thompson and McClure, Schlater, Leflore County.

Series III. Legal documents  
Small OS MSS Box 1

Documents related to Liberty and Maria Abbott and Clifton Plantation, including Maria’s divorce decree, Liberty and Maria’s marriage certificate, and Liberty’s will, commission as a cavalry officer and his appointments as judge and alderman. The Clifton Plantation documents include eight deeds of trust.

Series IV. Diaries  
Box 6

Includes the diaries and related materials of Liberty Abbott and his father, Harry Abbott.

Series V. Newspaper Clippings.  
Box 6; OS MSS Box 2

Consists of clippings about Liberty Abbott and his family and friends in Mississippi, Pennsylvania and New York. There are also a number of clippings of poems, unusual events, and advice on farming and domestic activities, including recipes.

Series VI. Miscellaneous.  
Box 6-7, SMO MSS Box 1, OS MSS Box 2, VMP Box 6; Cased photos box 1

Family memorabilia such as cards, programs, announcements and notes. There are also some publications, including a book of poetry, an 1864 ‘phreno-chart’ of Liberty Abbott, and number of souvenir booklets from the 1893 and 1904 World Expositions. In addition, there are Liberty Abbott fraternal organization materials such as death notices and account statements, a railroad timetable and telephone tariff book, and various advertisements and solicitations from mail-order companies. The series contains some photographs of the Abbott family, including an ambrotype that may be an early picture of Liberty Abbott, and a photograph of an Abbott tombstone.
APPRAISAL AND DESTRUCTION INFORMATION

Newspaper clippings were disposed of after being copied on to acid-free paper. Duplicate items, envelopes, unused stationery, folders and a piece of metal chain were disposed of.

RELATED MATERIALS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson:
Z 0974.000. Clifton Plantation Account Book, 1870-1899 and undated. Includes business and personal materials. (Microfilm 36102)
Secretary of State. Register of Commissions, 1865-1869. p.411 (Microfilm 2329)
Secretary of State. Register of Commissions, 1871-1874. p.9, 15 (Microfilm 1542)

SUBJECT TERMS

NAMES:
Abbott, F. Marion, 1844-1908.
Abbott, Gertrude, b. 1840.
Abbott, Harry, 1800-1877.
Abbott, Liberty C., 1836-1894.
Abbott, Maria, 1830-1912.
Bruce, Blanche Kelso, 1841-1898.
Gearhart, Birdie, 1869-1946.
Gearhart, Frank, 1869-1931.
Gearhart, Frances, b. 1905.
Hill, James.
Jones, Peyton Abbott, 1897-1975.
Jones, Peyton Tabb, 1854-1901.
Martin, Tella E.
Reed family.
Traver family.
Vinton, Dorothy.
Waters, Charlotte, b. 1836.
Waters, Myron, b.1817?

SUBJECTS:
Abbott and Howard (Holmes County, Miss.)
Advertising.
Business records.
Clifton Plantation.
Coal mines and mining--Alabama.
Education—Mississippi.
Family life—Mississippi.
Farms and plantations.
Freemasonry.
Insurance policies.
Judges.
Lumber industry.
Mississippi State College for Women.
Republican Party—Mississippi.
Thompson and McClure (Schlater, Miss.)
United States--Army--New York Cavalry Regiment, 5th (1861-1865)
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

**GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS:**
Frewsburg (N.Y.)
Holmes County (Miss.)
Howard (Miss.)
Jamestown (N.Y.)
Leflore County (Miss.)
Manchester (Ala.)
Warren (Pa.)

**PHOTOGRAPH SUBJECTS:**

**NAMES:**
Abbott, Liberty C., 1836-1894.
Gearhart, Birdie, 1869-1946.
Traver, Elizabeth.
Traver, Margaret.

**SUBJECTS:**
Coal mines and mining—Alabama.
Sepulchral monuments.
CONTAINER LIST

Series I. Correspondence
Box 1

Folders:      Dates:

Sub-series 1.1: Letters to Liberty C. Abbott

1.) From: Political Letters 1876, 1881, 1882, 1892, & 1897
2.) From: F. Marion Abbott 1879, 1883—1884, & 1893-1894
3.) From: Myron and Charlotte L. Waters. 1879, 1883—1884
4.) From: Miscellaneous Persons 1879, 1883—1891

Sub-series 1.2: Letters to Maria T. Abbott and Birdie Abbott:

5.) From: Liberty C. Abbot 1873—1879
6.) From: Birdie Abbott Jones 1895—1897
7.) From: Birdie Abbott Jones 1898, 1900, 1901, & ND
8.) From: Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart: includes letter from Frank P. Gearhart 1901—1903
9.) From: Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart: July 23 1904—1905
10.) From: Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart: August 23 1905—1909 & ND
11.) From: Frank P. Gearhart 1903—1908

Box 2

Folders:      Dates:

1.) From: Nate A. Reed 1894—1906
2.) From: Myra Reed 1896—1908
3.) From: F. Marion Abbott, December 4 1879, 1894—1895
4.) From: F. Marion Abbott, December 7 1895—1896

5.) From: F. Marion Abbott 1897—1907 & ND

6.) From: Gertrude E. Abbott, July 3 1896—1906

7.) Gertrude E. Abbott, July 22 1906—1910

8.) From: Charlotte L. Waters, 1897—1910

9.) From: Nell? 1894—1902

10.) From: Charles Traver 1895—1899

11.) From: Tella E. Martin, September 21 1895—1903

Box 3

Folders: Dates:

1.) From: Tella E. Martin, October 7—June 19 1903—1906

2.) From: Tella E. Martin, August 18 1906—1907

3.) From: Tella E. Martin 1908—1910

4.) From: James and Bessie Traver 1897—1909

5.) From: Miscellaneous Persons 1881—1910

6.) From: Miscellaneous Persons 1883—1911

7.) From: Miscellaneous Persons 1894—1908

Sub-series 1.3 Letters to Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart:

8.) From: Liberty C. and Maria T. Abbott 1880—1884

9.) From: Libba 1904—1926

10.) From: Peyton Tabb Jones 1895 & 1900

11.) From: Frank P. Gearhart 1906—1918
12.) From: Dorothy Vinton 1892, 1902—1909

13.) From: Miscellaneous Persons 1885—1915

14.) From: Miscellaneous Persons 1894—1926

**Sub-series 1.4: Miscellaneous correspondence**

**Box 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folders:</th>
<th>Dates:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Letters to Frank P. and Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart from Peyton Abbott Jones, Traver and Frances Gearhart</td>
<td>1922-1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Letters to Frank P. Gearhart from miscellaneous persons</td>
<td>1908-1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Letters to F. Marion Abbott from Liberty C. and Maria T. Abbott</td>
<td>1892—1899, &amp; ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) Letters to Peyton Abbott Jones from miscellaneous persons</td>
<td>1897-1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) Letters to Myron Waters from Liberty C. Abbott</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) Miscellaneous letters</td>
<td>1874-1927, &amp; ND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Series II. Business records**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folders:</th>
<th>Dates:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials: May 15</td>
<td>1874—1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials: May 22—December 17</td>
<td>1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials:</td>
<td>1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials: December 24</td>
<td>1888—1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials: December 27</td>
<td>1892—1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials:</td>
<td>No Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 5

Folders:                                      Dates:

1.) Liberty C. Abbott: Miscellaneous advertisements and solicitations  No Date

2.) Liberty C. Abbott Life insurance  1873—1894

3.) Liberty C. Abbott Day books  1881—1895

4.) Maria T. Abbott: miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials  1894—1912

5.) Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart: miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials  1895—1931

6.) F. Marion Abbott: correspondence, receipts, and other materials  1894—1900

7.) Clifton Plantation, Holmes County, Mississippi: Receipts and other materials  1873—1875

8.) Clifton Plantation receipts and other materials  1876-1898, & ND

9.) Clifton Plantation Tax receipts, Miscellaneous checks,  1894—1912

10.) Day Books: Ledger material  1889—1901

No Date

Box 6:

Folders:                                      Dates:

1.) Day Books: Thompson and McClure, Schlater, Mississippi: Ledger materials: Payroll and shipment books  1906

Series III. Legal documents:

2.) Clifton Plantation  1874—1875, 1891

3.) Liberty C. and Maria T. Abbott  1859—1909
Series IV. Diaries:

4.) Harry Abbott 1874—1875
5.) Liberty C. Abbott 1867
6.) Liberty C. Abbott, Diary materials 1867 & 1883

Series V. Newspaper clippings:

7.) Abbott Family 1869—1910
8.) Abbott Family 1874—1908, & No Date
9.) Miscellaneous 1876—1900, & No Date

Series VI. Miscellaneous

10.) Abbott Family No Date
11.) Books 1864—1865
12.) World's Exposition 1893 & 1904

Box 7: Miscellaneous

Folders: Dates:

1.) Fraternal organizations: Liberty C. Abbott materials 1880—1893
2.) General 1895, 1910, 1919, & ND
3.) Solicitations and Advertisements No Date
4.) Solicitations and Advertisements 1894 & No Date
5.) Photographs: Photocopies of unidentified photographs No Date

VMCP 1 Unidentified ambrotype (Liberty C. Abbott?), undated.
VMP 6 Liberty C. Abbott, undated; unidentified woman (Maria T. Abbott?), undated.
Postcard, Frank P. Gearhart (?) and unidentified man on small pony cart, 1916. Elizabeth Traver; Margaret Traver with unidentified friend, circa 1923. Coal mine in Manchester, Ala. (Saragossa Mining Company), 1922. Abbott family and related, undated.

SMO 1  
Deed of trust, 1892.  
Insurance policy, 1888.  
Accounts, 1876-1893.  
Cavalry officer commission, 1863  
Judgeship appointment, 1874  
Alderman appointment, 1888.  
Deeds of trust, 1875 (7), 1885.  
Solicitation, 1894.  
Cash drawing broadsides, 1883 May 15 and June 15  
Invoice, 1883.

OS 2  
‘Life of Napoleon Bonaparte’, *Century Magazine*, 1895.  
Insurance policy, 1889.  
“Chancellor Abbott”, 1875.  
"Impeachment Trial of Adelbert Ames.... (continued)"*, 1876 March 23.  
Gearhart house floor plan, 1918.

OSL 1  
Abbott and Howard, Holmes County, Mississippi, Day books: 1882-1887.

OSL 2  
Ledger, 1887-1892.  
Ledger, 1882-1892.

OSL 3  
Invoice book, 1905-1907.  
Ledgers: 1902-1903.

OSL 4  
1904.  
1905-1906.  
Record book, 1903-1904.  
Time book, 1903-1907.

OSL 5  
Ledger, 1905-1907.