

**CAPELL (ELI J.) FAMILY PAPERS**  
(Merritt M. Shilg Memorial Collection)

(Mss. 674)

Inventory

by

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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections  
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library  
Louisiana State University Libraries  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

(2001)

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Proper acknowledgment of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

**Summary**

**Size.** 1.3 linear ft., 16 v.

**Geographic locations.** Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Montana, Indiana Territory.

**Inclusive dates.** 1840-1932.

**Bulk dates.** 1886-1900.

**Languages.** English, German.

**Summary.** Correspondence, business papers, manuscript volumes.

**Access.** No restrictions.

**Copyright.** Physical rights are retained by the LSU Libraries. Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators of the materials in accordance with U.S. copyright law.

**Citation.** Eli J. Capell Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Stack location.** E:47-48, F:11, OS:C, Microfilm

### **Biographical/Historical Note**

Eli Jackson Capell was a planter of Amite County, Mississippi. His father, Littleton Capell, migrated from South Carolina to the Territory of Mississippi early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1811 Littleton Capell purchased federal land in the southwest corner of Amite County and established himself as a planter. He also held half interest in a general store in Rose Hill, Mississippi. At the time of Littleton's death in the 1830s, Eli J. Capell, owned at least 2,000 acres and 70 slaves. He operated the store at Rose Hill after inheriting his father's half interest, and he also managed the plantation for his mother, Catherine. Eli Capell inherited Pleasant Hill Plantation from his mother along with her slaves. He was considered a progressive agriculturalist who attempted to convince his neighbors to improve their own agricultural methods. An avid reader of farm journals, Eli often corresponded with editors, and several of his letters of inquiry as well as his own scientific observations and experiments were published in agricultural journals.

Eli J. Capell married Margaret Anderson of Centreville, Mississippi. Together they had two daughters, Kate and Ophelia, and two sons, Robert L. and Henry Clay. Robert attended LaGrange Synodical College in LaGrange, Tennessee. During the Civil War he served as a private in Captain Moses Jackson's company, the 33rd Regiment of the Mississippi Volunteers. Robert died while in military service at a private residence in Franklin, Tennessee, in 1865. Henry Clay Capell practiced law in Centerville, Mississippi. Ophelia Capell attended Silliman Female Collegiate Institute in Clinton, Louisiana (ca. 1868-1869). Kate married William Sydney Crawford of Centreville, Miss.; among their children were William Sydney Crawford, Jr., Abram C. Crawford, a division superintendent of the Wrought Iron Range Company, and Harry Crawford, a traveling salesman.

### Scope and Content Note

Papers consist of correspondence and business records of the Capell family and related Crawford family. Letters from cotton factors, principally from the New Orleans firm of Carroll and Pritchard (1840-1860), and invoices for cotton sales comprise the early portion of this collection (1841-1859). Papers of Robert Capell (1860-1864) contain a detailed description of the education available at Erskine College in Due West, South Carolina (Oct. 21, 1860), a reference to the fortification of Columbus, Kentucky (Oct. 21, 1861), and a military furlough (May 9, 1862) giving a physical description of Robert. Post Civil War materials (1865-1879) contain letters written to the Capell daughters concerning news of friends, personal relationships, and social activities. Also among the materials of this time period are accounts for the sale of cotton and general merchandise, a labor contract with freedmen (Jan. 21, 1868), an inventory of goods at the general store in Rose Hill, Miss. (Dec. 29, 1879), and several invoices for the sale of cotton. Documents related to land conveyance are found throughout the collection.

Personal correspondence of Mrs. C. J. Crawford, nee Kate Capell, and her sons Abram and Harry Crawford, and Harry's wife, Jeanne, comprises much of the collection between 1880-1899 and pertains primarily to the activities and travels of Crawford family members. Letters from Abram C. Crawford describe the social, economic, and geographic conditions he found while traveling through Missouri, Texas, Colorado, Utah, and Montana. Correspondence from Harry Crawford offers similar descriptions of towns in Texas. Several letters ca.1890s have missing pages. Other topics mentioned are cotton prices and the affect of weather on farming during this period. Of particular interest is a detailed description of Ruston, La. (April 5, 1900), references to diseases such as pneumonia (Jan. 27, 1894), typhoid and malaria (April 18, 1886, Oct. 24, 1886), yellow fever and scarlet fever (Oct. 1, 1899, Oct. 18, 1899). Additionally, there are letters pertaining to social environment, particularly that of African-Americans (March 19, 1882, Sept. 1, 1892), with references to hangings (Sept. 30, 1884, April 24, 1890); and comments on the absence of prejudice between northerners and southerners in Missouri (March 19, 1886). In a letter to the *Herald*, the writer criticizes the changes in the people of Thickwood caused by the Civil War and the expansion of the railroad (July 23, 1883). Business papers found during this period include orders for merchandise, papers related to Henry Clay Capell's legal practice (1891), statements of accounts, cotton invoices, bills for dry goods, drugs and hardware, price lists and advertisements for iron works equipment. Additionally there are page fragments from the *Southern Herald* (July 23, 1897) and a German calendar (1899).

Items found at the latter part of the collection (1900-1932) are largely of a business nature with some personal correspondence pertaining to family matters. Among the business papers are invoices for cotton and general merchandise, bills, receipts for goods, and shipping records. Printed material during this period contains advertisements and issues of *The Weekly Commercial Appeal* (May 10, 1914) and *The Commercial Appeal* (Feb. 24, 1914).

**ELI J. CAPELL FAMILY PAPERS**  
1840-1932

**Mss. 674**

Manuscript volumes consist primarily of memorandum books (1869-1917) containing accounts for merchandise and cotton sold; volume 13 (1909) also contains philosophical sayings. Other volumes include a laborers' record book (1867-1885); two ledgers (1873-1917) listing customers' store accounts, presumably from the Rose Hill store; and a plantation diary (1869). Additionally, there is a published copy of *The Pocket Lawyer and Family Conveyancer* (1845).

Poems make up the majority of newspaper clippings (n.d.); other topics include a short biography of Geronimo (n.d.), the influenza epidemic at the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (n.d.); a report on the cotton market (fragment, n.d.), and cake recipes (n.d.). Other undated items include a United Confederate Veterans membership certificate for the Centreville troop (n.d.), and sheet music for *Murphy's Head or After Kelly's Party* (n.d.)

**Papers arranged in chronological, except for newspaper clippings; volumes arranged by volume number.**

**Index Terms**

African-Americans--Agricultural laborers--Mississippi.  
African-Americans--Social conditions.  
Carroll and Pritchard.  
Colorado--Description and travel.  
Commission merchants--Louisiana--New Orleans.  
Conveyancing.  
Cotton trade--Mississippi.  
Freedmen--Mississippi.  
General stores--Mississippi.  
Malaria--Texas.  
Merchants--Mississippi.  
Mississippi--Social life and customs.  
Missouri--Description and travel.  
Montana--Description and travel.  
Plantation owners--Mississippi.  
Pleasant Hill Plantation (Miss.).  
Race relations--Mississippi.  
Race relations--Texas.  
Railroads--History--Mississippi.  
Rose Hill (Miss.).  
Ruston (La.)--Description and travel.  
Scarlatina--Texas.  
Texas--Description and travel.  
Typhoid--Texas.  
United Confederate Veterans.  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
Utah--Description and travel.  
Yellow fever--Mississippi.

**Container List**

| <b>Stack location</b>      | <b>Box</b> | <b>Folder</b> | <b>Contents</b>  |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| <b>Papers:</b>             |            |               |  |
| E:47                       | 1          | 1-12          | 1841-1885.   |
| E:47                       | 2          | 1-9           | 1886-1891 (Jan-June).  |
| E:48                       | 3          | 1-7           | 1891 (July-Dec.)-1896.   |
| E:48                       | 4          | 1-9           | 1897-1903.   |
|                            | 5          | 1-9           | 1904-1918.   |
|                            | 6          | 1-4           | Newspapers clippings (1865-1910);<br>undated materials.  |
| <b>Manuscript volumes:</b> |            |               |  |
| F:11                       |            |               | v. 1 Bank book (1907).<br>v. 2 Bank stub book (1883-1886).<br>v. 3 Laborers' record book (1867-1885).<br>v. 4 Ledger (1873-1882).<br>v. 5 Ledger (1916-1917).<br>v. 6 Memorandum book (1869-1876).<br>v. 7 Memorandum book (1878).<br>v. 8 Memorandum book (1885).<br>v. 9 Memorandum book (1887).<br>v. 10 Memorandum book (1896).<br>v. 11 Memorandum book (1898-1903).<br>v. 12 Memorandum book (1898-1908).<br>v. 13 Memorandum book (1903).<br>v. 14 Memorandum book (1917).<br>v. 15 Plantation diary (1869).<br>v. 16 <i>The Pocket Lawyer and Family Conveyancer</i> (1845). |



**Container List (cont.)**

| <b>Stack location</b>     | <b>Box</b> | <b>Folder</b> | <b>Contents</b>  |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| <b>Oversize material:</b> |            |               |  |
| OS:C                      |            | 1             | Business papers (1871-1904), advertisements (1879, <i>Southern Herald</i> (July 23, 1897), deed (1899), calendar (1899), <i>The Weekly Commercial Appeal</i> (May 10, 1914), <i>The Commercial Appeal</i> (Feb. 24, 1914), sheet music (n.d.), |

**Microfilm:** Manuscript volumes were previously combined and known as Eli J. Capell Plantation Diaries and Record Books. Volumes have been renumbered and placed in the Eli J. Capell Family Papers, Mss. 674 and the Capell Family Papers, Mss. 56, 257, 1751, 2501, 2597.

**Eli J. Capell Family Papers**

**Previous microfilm volume number:**

|       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| v. 1  | Bank book (1907).                                       | v. 1  |
| v. 2  | Bank stub book (1883-1886).                             | v. 2  |
| v. 3  | Laborers' record book (1867-1885).                      | v. 8  |
| v. 4  | Ledger (1873-1882).                                     | v. 10 |
| v. 5  | Ledger (1916-1917).                                     | v. 11 |
| v. 6  | Memorandum book (1869-1876).                            | v. 12 |
| v. 7  | Memorandum book (1878).                                 | v. 13 |
| v. 8  | Memorandum book (1885).                                 | v. 14 |
| v. 9  | Memorandum book (1887).                                 | v. 15 |
| v. 10 | Memorandum book, A. C. Crawford (1896).                 | v. 16 |
| v. 11 | Memorandum book (1898-1903).                            | v. 17 |
| v. 12 | Memorandum book (1898-1908).                            | v. 18 |
| v. 13 | Memorandum book (1903).                                 | v. 19 |
| v. 14 | Memorandum book (1917).                                 | v. 20 |
| v. 15 | Plantation diary (1869).                                | v. 44 |
| v. 16 | <i>The Pocket Lawyer and Family Conveyancer</i> (1845). | v. 45 |

**Container List (cont.)**

| <b>Capell Family Papers volume number:</b>                       | <b>Previous microfilm volume number:</b> |
|--|--|
| v. 1 Cotton book, H. C. Capell (1888-1891).                      | v. 3                                     |
| v. 2 Crop book (1840-1849).                                      | v. 4                                     |
| v. 3 Daybook (1840-1849).  | v. 5                                     |
| v. 4 Daybook (1849-1876).  | v. 5a                                    |
| v. 5 Daybook (1880).   | v. 6                                     |
| v. 6 Daybook of sales (1886-1887).                               | v. 7                                     |
| v. 7 Laborers' record book (1881), notebook (n.d.).              | v. 9                                     |
| v. 8 Plantation diary (1842).                                    | v. 21                                    |
| v. 9 Plantation diary (1844).                                    | v. 22                                    |
| v. 10 Plantation diary (1845).                                   | v. 23                                    |
| v. 11 Plantation diary (1846).                                   | v. 24                                    |
| v. 12 Plantation diary (1847).                                   | v. 25                                    |
| v. 13 Plantation diary (1849).                                   | v. 26                                    |
| v. 14 Plantation diary (1850).                                   | v. 27                                    |
| v. 15 Plantation diary records only (1850).                      | v. 28                                    |
| v. 16 Plantation diary (1851).                                   | v. 29                                    |
| v. 17 Plantation diary (Jan.-Sept.1852;<br>Jan.-March 1856).     | v. 30                                    |
| v. 18 Plantation diary (Jan.-May 1852;<br>Sept. 1852-Jan. 1853). | v. 31                                    |
| v. 19 Plantation diary (1853).                                   | v. 32                                    |
| v. 20 Plantation diary (1854).                                   | v. 33                                    |
| v. 21 Plantation diary (1855).                                   | v. 34                                    |
| v. 22 Plantation diary (1856).                                   | v. 35                                    |
| v. 23 Plantation diary (1857).                                   | v. 36                                    |
| v. 24 Plantation diary (1858).                                   | v. 37                                    |
| v. 25 Plantation diary (1859).                                   | v. 38                                    |
| v. 26 Plantation diary (1861).                                   | v. 39                                    |
| v. 27 Plantation diary (1862).                                   | v. 40                                    |
| v. 28 Plantation diary (Jan.-June 1863; 1842).                   | v. 41                                    |
| v. 29 Plantation diary (June1863-April 1866).                    | v. 42                                    |
| v. 30 Plantation diary (1866-1867).                              | v. 43                                    |