

**Also available on UPA Microfilm
MF 6061, Series B, Part 4, Reel 1**

AUDLEY CLARK BRITTON AND FAMILY PAPERS
Mss. 1403, 1710
Inventory

Compiled by
Luana Henderson

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

Revised 2009
Updated 2020, 2022

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SUMMARY

Size	2.1 linear ft., 14 volumes
Geographic Locations	Mississippi, Louisiana, New York, Germany, England
Inclusive Dates	1830-1929
Bulk Dates	1843-1912
Languages	English, French
Summary	Correspondence, business papers, financial records and family papers reflect banking, plantation operations, plantation life and social life in Natchez, Mississippi.
Access Restrictions	No restrictions
Reproduction Note	Copies must be made from microfilm when available.
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Related Collections	Britton & Koontz Records, Mss. 747 Mary Macrery Britton Connor Scrapbook, Mss. 5320 Nautilus Insurance Company Record Book, Mss. 923
Citation	Audley Clark Britton and Family Papers, Mss. 1403, 1710, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Locations	S:138-140; O:16; OS:B
See also	UPA Microfilm 6061, Series B, Part 4, Reel 1 as A.C. Britton Family Papers (1830-1860 are not filmed)

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Audley Clark Britton was a banker and planter in Natchez, Miss. He and his wife, Eliza Macrery (1824-1907), married in 1851, and together had four daughters, Selah W. (1855-1929), Eliza B. (1857-1926), Mary Macrery (1863-1936) and Ruth A. Britton (died 1929). Audley's brother, William A. Britton, was a partner in W. A. Britton & Co., a Natchez banking house with interests in New Orleans, La.; in addition, as an agent for the Nautilus Insurance Company of New York, he issued life insurance policies on enslaved persons. Audley and William Britton joined with George M. Koontz in 1866 in consolidating their financial interests to organize Britton & Koontz Bank in Natchez, Miss.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Family letters and papers of the Audley Clark Britton and related William A. Britton families of Adams County, Miss., concern family matters, personal and social activities, plantation life, travel, health, cotton production, investments, banking transactions, bank stock, audits, commodity prices, and trade.

LIST OF SERIES

Series I. Family Papers, 1839-1929, undated

Series II. W. A. Britton and Company Papers, 1843-1859, undated

Series III. Printed Items and Graphic Material, 1830-1929, undated

Series IV. Manuscript Volumes, 1830-1884

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Family Papers, 1839-1929, undated

Family papers, mostly correspondence, of the Audley Clark Britton and related William A. Britton family relate to banking, financial matters, plantation life, personal activities, health, travel, and social life. Early papers (1839-1858) include correspondence, along with other receipts, accounts, and court documents relating to Joseph J. West, et al vs. William A. Britton (April 12, 18, 1842). A letter to W. A. Britton advises the destruction of all correspondence related to this case (Saturday morning, circa 1842). One account is for clothing purchased by George F. Britton (Dec. 16, 1843). Other letters relate the spread of cholera in Europe (Aug. 7, 1854), a description of England that includes depictions of Westminster Abby and Westminster Palace, and remarks on art exhibitions and the air pollution produced by mining coal (Aug. 30, 1857).

A group of Civil War letters by James W. Melvin, overseer of Eutaw Plantation, Concordia Parish, La., relate to plantation management. He reports on the scarcity and cost of food and supplies; illnesses affecting enslaved persons, giving symptoms and remedies; hiring of enslaved persons by the Confederate Army (Nov. 20, 1862, undated); and flooding (Jan. 1, Feb. 11, 1863). He describes an infection spreading amongst the livestock that may have also infected to some enslaved persons (Oct. 1862). Other letters reflect civilian life during the Civil War, expressing fear of the Union army and measures taken to protect the plantation (Feb. 11, 17, March 13, 21, April 7, 16, July 8, Dec. 20, 1863). He also writes of the “negroes” leaving the plantation and the attempts to recover them (May 9, 1865). W. A. Britton letters comment on the dangers of traveling by steamer (Dec. 22, 1863, April 15, 1864), the financial market (Aug. 12, 1864), and the cotton market (July 27, 1865, April 16, 1868); and Audley C. Britton writes that life was changed by the Civil War (June 19, 1866).

In later correspondence Albert Wheelock writes of his years in California, commenting on the repaid growth of San Francisco (May 4, 1875); Alfred Thayer writes from Germany, describing the town of Gottingen and student life (Aug. 21, Sept. 19, 1886; Feb. 2, 3, March 28, 1887); and Britton family members describe their stays at hot springs health resorts (Sept. 20, 1886; 1890). Papers contain letters from Ella Wheeler Wilcox inviting the Britton sisters to visit (Sept. 14, 22, 1888), and an autographed copy of her poem, *The Birth of the Opal* (Aug. 16, 1888).

Lemuel P. Conner, Jr.’s early letters (1887-1888) are to Mary Britton prior to their marriage; his later letters concern the presence of yellow fever (Aug. 28, Oct. 21, 1905), and documents from the Mississippi Board of Health certify that the bearer has not been exposed to the disease (Aug. 2, 1899, undated). Other letters by Lemuel P. Conner relate to cotton prices, personal finances, and family matters.

The majority of the papers after 1898 are those of Selah Britton and Eliza Britton. They consist mostly of personal correspondence, but also contain invoices and receipts for

goods and services, letters concerning business transactions, a picture postcard of Stanton College, Natchez, Miss. (June 6, 1909), invitations, Selah Britton's oversize passport (June 6, 1903), and miscellaneous items related to the Newport Historical Society (1910-1915). A letter to Eliza gives a short history of the Britton family and property the family once owned in Newport, Rhode Island (Dec. 6, 1905). Additionally, papers include a document (192-) containing inventories of livestock, equipment, and timber at Black Hawk, Ashland, and Panola plantations that were acquired by A. B. Learned, as well as descriptions, locations, and value of his other properties. Among these properties are plantations and timberland located in Concordia and Tensas parishes, La.; Jefferson and Claiborne counties, Miss.; Polk County, Florida; a sawmill and lumber business; and residences in Natchez, Miss. The inventory of the Black Hawk Plantation contains remarks on the plantation's ownership by Britton & Koontz and by the firm's partner, George W. Koontz.

Undated papers can be found throughout and consist mostly of family correspondence. Included is a list of New Orleans businesses with notes on their investment risks; a pass verifying that Selah Britton and family members were not exposed to yellow fever; and two notes to Eliza Britton from Varina Davis discussing her health and an invitation to visit.

Ephemera in the family papers series consists of a St. Valentine's Day card sent to Mary Macrery Britton (Feb. 20, 1882), a bulletin for West End Institute announcing the academic term beginning Sept. 28, 1882 (undated), a wedding announcement (Oct. 17, 1908), an invitation to the Natchez High School commencement exercises (1908), an invitation the Daughters of the American Revolution, Natchez Chapter, to commemorate the unfurling of the first U. S. flag on Mississippi soil, and a program for the exercises of the Jefferson Military College, Washington, Miss.

Series II. W. A. Britton and Company Papers, 1843-1858, undated

Business correspondence of W. A. Britton relates to W. A. Britton & Co. and banking transactions, bank stock, audits, commodity prices, and trade. Correspondence also contains letters pertaining to a civil suit against W. A. Britton & Co., disputing the value of currency issued.

Correspondence of Daniel H. Downer, an associate of W. A. Britton & Co., concerns some business matters but relates primarily to personal activities and social events. Mention is made of the growing political strength of the Native American Party and the weakening of the Whig Party (April 10, 1844), and the rising value of domestic dry goods (Jan. 28, 30, 1844).

Papers of associate William McAlister consist of a promissory note payable at W. A. Britton & Co. (Oct. 17, 1845) and accounts for farming equipment and clothing.

Negotiable instruments are signed documents (such as drafts or notes) that order or promise the payment of a fixed amount. In the Britton Papers, bank drafts issued mostly by W. A. Britton & Co. and canceled checks drawn on City Bank of New Orleans, La. and Mechanics' and Traders' Bank of Natchez comprise these negotiable instruments.

Series III. Printed Items and Graphic Material, circa 1830-1925, undated

Two portraits of Dr. J. B. Stratton (undated) and an 1880 photograph of Magnolia Hall, which was the Britton family home in Natchez, Miss. are included in this series.

Clippings include obituaries for Audley C. Britton, Eliza Britton, and Selah Britton, and a notice of the marriage of Andrew Macrery to Letitia Hagan.

Illustrations include sketches of the Britton family mausoleum (undated), floral drawings hand painted by Mary Macrery (1830-1832), and oversize type specimens for bank notes (undated).

Miscellaneous printed items consist of a broadside announcing an auction for property held by Britton & Koontz National Bank in Natchez, Miss. (undated); a broadside distributed by the Committee of Law and Order in Adams County, Miss., reporting the murder of Paul Johnson, a planter, by Ed Carter, an African-American tenant farmer (undated); business cards; a printed copy of the poem *The Marseilles Hymn* [in French] by Joseph Claude Rouget de l'Isle (undated); time tables for the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad (1895, 1897); advertisements for books, including *The Gustine Compendium*, and sightseeing tours in New York by the American Sight-seeing Coach Co. (undated).

Series IV. Manuscript Volumes, 1830-1884

Autograph Books, 1879-1884:

Two autograph books of Mary M Britton containing personal notes, poetry, and illustrations along with signatures of friends and family.

Catalog, undated:

Volume three is entitled "Catalogue of Books" and was a catalog compiled by Audley C. Britton that lists novels, books of historical, biographical, and epistolary nature, and books of poetry and hymns.

Diary and Memorandum Books, 1844-1857:

Volume five is a diary/almanac/memorandum book kept by A. C. Britton containing brief notations of his arrivals and departures from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia as well as his personal activities at the time (1857). The last few pages list individual cash accounts. Volume ten is a memorandum book that indicates letters written and received by George F. Britton of New York; it also shows an account with W. A. Britton & Co. for the period of Dec. 1844 to Feb. 1845.

Index books, 1830-1833, undated:

Volumes six and seven are comprised of indexes for journals chiefly maintained by W. A. Britton of Britton & Co. from 1830-1833 and list individuals and business accounts. One index includes seven loose sheets for John Henderson's account and the other one includes eight loose pages for various accounts. The last index (volume 8) features an undated alphabetical list of individuals.

Record books and Ledger, 1830-1845, undated:

The ledger in this subseries is that of William McAlister and includes an account for W. A. Britton & Co. from 1842-1845. There are four volumes of record books. Volume 11 is from Vicksburg, Miss., and contains a list of banknotes offered for a discount. Volumes 12 and 13 are from W.A. Britton & Co. and give a numerical list of discounted bank drafts and a list of checks drawn on the company's account, respectively. Volume 14 is a record book of checks drawn on the account of James Sands of Mobile, Ala. It also lists accounts in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The final record book (volume 4) is a book of check stubs from Mechanics and Traders' Bank of Natchez and covers the dates 1843-1846.

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- OS:B** -- OS 1 Oversize papers, 1907 and undated
- Microfilm** -- -- Series B, Part 4, Reel 1 as A.C. Britton Family Papers (1830-
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