

BELL (WILLIAM R.) PAPERS
Mss. 2117, 2118
Inventory

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

Reformatted 2003
Revised 2011, 2021

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Use of manuscript materials. If you wish to examine items in the manuscript group, please place a request via the Special Collections Request System. Consult the Container List for location information.

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Proper acknowledgement 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.	78 items and 2 manuscript volumes
Geographic locations.	New Orleans, Louisiana; Detroit, Michigan; California; Knock of Kincardine, Inverness-shire, Scotland
Inclusive dates.	1842-1941
Bulk dates.	1842-1869
Language.	English
Summary.	Collection consists of family correspondence and business papers relating to William R. Bell's stable and mortuary in New Orleans.
Restrictions on access.	No restrictions.
Related collections.	None.
Copyright.	Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
Citation.	William R. Bell Papers, Mss. 2117, 2118, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack locations.	C:6

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

William R. Bell (circa 1814-1874), a native of Scotland, was a mortician and owner of Union Stables on Carondelet Street in New Orleans, Louisiana. He and Jessie Russell Fisher wed in 1869.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of the papers consist of business correspondence and records of Bell's stable and mortuary. Items relative to Bell's Union Stables include orders and statements for rental of horses, carriages, and buggies to Federal soldiers occupying New Orleans. Correspondence from Bell's relatives in Scotland, Canada, Michigan, and California discuss, among other things, economic conditions, family news, the Civil War, and gold mining (1842-1869). Of note is a letter relating the scarcity of food throughout Scotland and Britain resulting from the Irish potato famine (February 26, 1847), as well as a letter from Minnesota discussing a Native American massacre (September 24, 1862). Also included are a biography (1941) of Bell by Isabel Fisher Molony and a photograph of Bell (circa 1870).

Volumes are comprised of a set of bound letters (1860-1867), which contains requests and instructions for exhumation, embalming, and transport of bodies of Federal soldiers to their families in the North, and a letter press copy book (1862-1867).

CROSS REFERENCES

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Banks, Nathaniel Prentiss, 1816-1894.	1863-1864	Abstract of bills against Department of the Gulf directed by William Bell to General Banks, August 26, 1863
Dakota Indians--Wars, 1862-1863.	September 24, 1862	Letter mentioning Native American massacre in Minnesota.
Gold mines and mining--California--History--19th century.	1851, 1854	Letter relating gold mining and arrangements for miner's wife to migrate to Calaveras County, California, March 21, 1851; letter relating gold mining process and proceeds to laborers in the mines, October 25, 1854.
Guerrillas--Confederate States of America.	1863-1864	Two letters relating guerilla warfare along the Mississippi River, December 27, 1863; Union soldiers troubled by rumors of guerillas approaching Brashear City, March 23, 1864.
Late blight of potato--Scotland.	February 26, 1847	Letter relating famine and exorbitant prices of food resulting from failure of potato crop.
New Orleans (La.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Collaborationists.	July-October 1863	Letters from Dr. Thomas Holmes granting William Bell use of his embalming process on condition of Bell's sympathy for the Union.
Plantation overseers--Alabama--Mobile.	February 26, 1847	Letter containing message for Peter Stuart, overseer in the employ of George Field, Esq.
Scotland--Economic conditions--19 th century.	1842-1854, 1863	Thirteen letters to William Bell, New Orleans, from relatives in Scotland, relate social and economic conditions.
Undertakers and undertaking--Louisiana.	1863-1864	Fifty-four letters in bound volume requesting exhumation of bodies of Federal soldiers at New Orleans, with instructions for embalming and transportation of bodies to relatives in Northern states.
Union Stables (New Orleans, La.)	1862-1864	Forty-eight items consisting of orders and statements for rental of horses, cabs, and buggies to Federal soldiers occupying New Orleans.
United States. Army--African American troops.	March 23, 1864	Letter relating defense of Brashear City by African American troops.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
C:6	1	1-4	Papers, 1842-1874, 1941
	--	--	Vol. 1: Bound letters, 1860-1867
	--	--	Vol. 2: Letter press copy book, 1862-1867