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
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folders</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Dates</td>
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</table>

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
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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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Letters to Frank P. and Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart from</td>
<td>1922-1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peyton Abbott Jones, Traver and Frances Gearhart</td>
<td></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>
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**Series II. Business records**

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<th>Folders</th>
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<tr>
<td>7.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements</td>
<td>1874—1883</td>
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<tr>
<td>and other materials: May 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements</td>
<td>1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and other materials: May 22—December 17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements</td>
<td>1884</td>
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<tr>
<td>and other materials:</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements</td>
<td>1888--1892</td>
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<tr>
<td>and other materials: December 24</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements</td>
<td>1892—1894</td>
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<tr>
<td>and other materials: December 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.) Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements</td>
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<td>and other materials:</td>
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<th>Folders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Liberty C. Abbott: Miscellaneous advertisements and solicitations</td>
<td>No Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.) Liberty C. Abbott Life insurance</td>
<td>1873—1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Liberty C. Abbott Day books</td>
<td>1881—1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) Maria T. Abbott: miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials</td>
<td>1894—1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) Birdie Abbott Jones Gearhart: miscellaneous correspondence, receipts, advertisements and other materials</td>
<td>Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) F. Marion Abbott: correspondence, receipts, and other materials</td>
<td>1894—1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) Clifton Plantation, Holmes County, Mississippi: Receipts and other materials</td>
<td>1873—1875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Clifton Plantation receipts and other materials</td>
<td>1876-1898, &amp; ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) Clifton Plantation Tax receipts, Miscellaneous checks,</td>
<td>1894—1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.) Day Books: Ledger material</td>
<td>No Date</td>
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### Box 6:

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<th>Folders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Day Books: Thompson and McClure, Schlater, Mississippi: Ledger materials: Payroll and shipment books</td>
<td>1906</td>
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### Series III. Legal documents:

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<tr>
<th>Folders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.) Clifton Plantation</td>
<td>1874—1875, 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Liberty C. and Maria T. Abbott</td>
<td>1859—1909</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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

May 26, 1883 October 10.
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.
New Orleans Price Current Semi-Weekly Market Report, 1883 March 14,
1883 March 17, 1883 April 14
Cash drawing broadsides, 1883 May 15 and June 15
Invoice, 1883.

OS 2

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.