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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

**Inventory of the Wilkinson and
Keith Family Papers, 1785-1920**

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Descriptive Summary

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Title: | Wilkinson and Keith family papers |
| Date(s) | 1785-1920 |
| Date(s) | (bulk 1820-1890) |
| Creator: | Wilkinson family; Keith family |
| Abstract: | The Wilkinson and Keith family papers consist of correspondence and other documents among the Wilkinson, Keith, Siegling, Haskell, and Marshall families and their friends dating from 1785 to 1920. The bulk of the correspondence dates from 1820 to 1890, a large portion of which chronicles Willis Keith's experiences as a Confederate soldier in 1862-1863. |
| Extent: | 1.25 linear feet (2 document boxes, 1 slim document box) |
| Repository: | Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries 66 George Street Charleston, SC 29424 Phone: (843) 953-8016 Fax: (843) 953-6319 URL: http://archives.library.cofc.edu |
| Call Number: | Mss 0111 |
| Language of Material: | Materials in English |

Biographical Note

The Wilkinson and Keith families merged in 1831 when Rev. Paul Trapier Keith (b. 1801) married Anna Bella Wilkinson (1809-1884). The Trapier (from his mother's side) and Keith families had been living in the Georgetown area since well before the Revolutionary War. The antebellum correspondence in this collection consists mostly of Anna Bella's correspondence with her parents, Eleanora Withers Wilkinson and Dr. Willis Wilkinson (b. ca. 1780), and her brothers and sisters, William, Sarah, Mary Wilkinson Memminger, and Virginia Wilkinson Belin. Later correspondence includes letters from her sons and daughters, Willis Wilkinson Keith (1839-1885), who served in the Confederate Army, Dr. John Alexander Wilkinson (1849-1901), Magdalen Elizabeth Wilkinson ("Maddie," 1845-1919), Mary Pauline Wilkinson ("Mimmie"), and Paul Trapier Keith.

In 1868, Magdalen Elizabeth Keith married Alexander Washington Marshall (1845-1906). Most of the post-Civil War correspondence is between this couple, and some later letters are from their young children.

Collection Overview

The Wilkinson-Keith Family Papers consist of correspondence and other documents among the Wilkinson, Keith, Siegling, Haskell, and Marshall families and their friends dating from 1785 to 1920. The bulk of the correspondence dates from 1820 to 1890, a large portion of which chronicles Willis Keith's experiences as a Confederate soldier in 1862-1863.

Antebellum correspondence discusses Charleston fires, great details of family illnesses and their cures, plantation life (more specifically, destruction/endurance of crops and treatment of slaves), and general details about everyday life. Civil War-era correspondence is largely concerned with battles and rumors of battles, descriptions of military preparations and blockades, the value of Confederate currency, debt, and family illnesses. Willis Keith's correspondence discusses his experiences in specific battles, loss of troops, impressions of the war from his accompanying slave, Paris, and his comrades' slaves, inquiries about life back home, and some political reflections and opinions on the Confederacy.

Post-Civil War correspondence consists mostly of communication between Alexander Marshall and his wife Magdalen Elizabeth Keith. This correspondence discusses many trips up and down the east coast, various problems with traveling, financial matters, and the 1886 Charleston earthquake.

In addition to correspondence, the Wilkinson-Keith Family Papers contain a number of diaries and other miscellaneous documents. There is a notebook (undated) used for "cookery" belonging to Elizabeth M. Marshall, wife of Reverend Alex W. Marshall, an album of colorful storybook pictures likely belonging to Aunt Nan Keith [Marshall] dated 1964, a printed diary of Rev. Isaac Chanler (1700-1749) with additional notes from 1920, Anna B. Wilkinson's diary (1834), two diaries of Magdalen E. Keith (1865-1869 and 1868), and a pamphlet entitled "The Confederate Medical Officer in the Field."

Other miscellaneous documents in the collection include telegraphs, legal documents, and genealogical information with a family tree of the Wilkinson, Keith, Siegling, Haskell, and Marshall families.

Collection Arrangement

Materials arranged at the folder level.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

Copyright Notice

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Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person, family, or organization, by topical subject, by place, and by types of material.

Names

- Wilkinson family
- Keith family
- Marshall family
- Siegling family
- Haskell family

Subjects

Soldiers--South Carolina--Correspondence

Places

South Carolina--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives, Confederate

South Carolina--Genealogy

Types of Material

Correspondence

Diaries

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Wilkinson and Keith family papers, College of Charleston Libraries, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisitions Information

Materials were donated in 2008 by Nancy Alston Siegling Fortiere.

Alternate Form of Materials

Digital reproduction available online in the **Lowcountry Digital Library**.

Processing Information

Processed by John White, October 2010.

Encoded by John White and Martha McTear, November 2010.

EAD updated by Joshua Minor, July 2016.

Inventory

- Box 1 Folder 1 Miscellaneous correspondence of unidentified persons
- Box 1 Folder 2 Letter to Paul Trapier from Sam Baldwin extolling the virtues of Trapier's granddaughter, 1785
- Box 1 Folder 3 Wilkinson family correspondence, either to or from Anna Wilkinson, describing everyday activities, a fire in Charleston and the destruction of the Methodist Church (1828 May 12), 1820-1830
- Box 1 Folder 4 Wilkinson family correspondence, describes the hiring of a nurse, destruction of crops by a "gale," a cholera epidemic, and the fact that "Uncle Jessy" now commands the United States Frigate New York, used for commercial purposes, 1831-1840
- Box 1 Folder 5 Wilkinson family correspondence, tells about escaped slaves due to ill treatment by an overseer (1845 February 4), everyday activities, the effects of laudanum, deaths of friends, 1841-1851
- Box 1 Folder 6 Wilkinson family correspondence, about everyday activities, childbirth, letter from Emma describes a child's sickness in great detail, undated
- Box 1 Folder 7 Keith family correspondence, description of leeching a child, a trip to the mountains, everyday activities, 1830-1850
- Box 1 Folder 8 Keith family correspondence, trip to Georgetown, Sept. 29, 1862 mentions apprehension of Yankees, rumors of an early attack, descriptions of boats readying, blockades, Aug. 18, 1864 discusses the value of Confederate currency, debts, necessary items around the house, Numerous family sicknesses, 1851-1884
- Box 1 Folder 9 Keith family correspondence, miscellaneous, undated
- Box 1 Folder 10 Willis Keith Civil War correspondence, description of Jackson's Campaigns in Virginia, James Island, shelling in camp, difficulty of getting food, 1862, undated
- Box 1 Folder 11 Willis Keith Civil War correspondence, shelling at Fredericksburg, marching to Pennsylvania, aftermath of Gettysburg, numerous mentions of the effects of the march on his slave, Paris. Political thoughts on the Confederacy, 1863
- Box 1 Folder 12 Willis Keith Civil War correspondence, everyday activities and appeals for letters from "the girls," undated
- Box 1 Folder 13 Johnnie Keith Civil War correspondence, recounts fishing at Fort Pemberton and the filling of Stones River with torpedoes, undated
- Box 1 Folder 14 Telegram to Trapier Keith, Willis not injured in battle, 1863 July 7
- Box 2 Folder 1 Alex Marshall and wife Magdalen Elizabeth Keith, description of several train trips, payment of pews in church, descriptions of problems in the banking industry, etc., 1870-1880
- Box 2 Folder 2 Magdalen Keith and Alexander Marshall correspondence, trip up North to New York, Connecticut, Chicago, down to Atlanta, Birmingham, problems with seasickness while traveling, quick mention of a baseball game in Charleston, children's letters, 1881-1897

- Box 2 Folder 3 Marshall family correspondence, humorous letter about the difficulties of traveling by stage coach, and the intrusion of a dog into a hotel room, others about financial matters, the earthquake in Charleston in 1886, 1861-1886
- Box 2 Folder 4 Marshall family correspondence, miscellaneous, problems with the children, undated
- Box 2 Folder 5 Reverend Alex W. Marshall notebook, labeled at Yale College, but used for "cooking" by his wife, Elizabeth M. Marshall, undated
- Box 2 Folder 6 Album, probably belonged to Aunt Nan Keith [Marshall], full of colorful storybook pictures, 1864
- Box 3 Folder 1 Haskell family miscellaneous, includes license of Edward C. Haskell to practice law in the State of Alabama, 1890, a typed essay labeled "My First Deer" by J.C.H., research on "The Name and Family of Haskell," and a handwritten chronicle of the military service of E.R.C. Haskell, a Representative of South Carolina, 1890
- Box 3 Folder 2 Gerald Siegling, Western Union Telegraph Company about military organization from Hugh S. Thompson, 1879
- Box 3 Folder 3 Diary of Rev. Isaac Chanler (1700-1749), printed, handwritten notes from 1920, 1920
- Box 3 Folder 4 Anna B. Wilkinson diary, 1834
- Box 3 Folder 5 Woman's diary, Keith family, by P.J. Keith?, 1862
- Box 3 Folder 6 Diary of Magdalen E. Keith, poor condition, 1865-1869
- Box 3 Folder 7 Diary of Magdalen E. Keith, 1868
- Box 3 Folder 8 Various invitations/announcements, includes St. Cecilia Society, various events at St. Michael's Church in Charleston, 1860-1870
- Box 3 Folder 9 Loose envelopes, 1862, 1883, undated
- Box 3 Folder 10 Keith family miscellaneous, includes handmade paper dolls, "West End Club" promissory note of young ladies arranging a meeting five years from the date to celebrate friendship (1867), journal entry with pressed flower of Magdalen Keith, age 11, 1862, undated
- Box 3 Folder 11 Miscellaneous, includes family tree, military record of Capt. J. C. Haskell, who served under General E. Porter, with a short description of his time in a balloon used for reconnaissance over Richmond during the Civil War, pamphlet "The Confederate Medical Officer in the Field," 1929, 1944, undated
- Box 3 Folder 12 Miscellaneous, various newspaper articles about Hurricane Hugo, comparing to other historic disasters in Charleston, a paper fan from Cuba, business cards, notes, and other ephemera, 1956, 1989, undated