

**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

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SUMMARY

Size	1760 items, 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.
Copyright	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries.
Related Collections	Britton and Koontz Records, Mss. 747 W. A. Britton Account 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:141-143; 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 of 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 slaves. Audley and William Britton joined with George M. Koontz in 1866 in consolidating their financial interests to organized 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 AND SUBSERIES

Series I. Family papers, 1839-1929, undated

Series II. W. A. Britton and Company papers, 1844-1845, undated

- Subseries 1. W. A. Britton business papers, 1844-1845, undated**
- Subseries 2. Daniel H. Downer papers, 1843-1845, undated**
- Subseries 3. William McAlister papers, 1843-1845**
- Subseries 4. Negotiable instruments, 1843-1858**

Series III. Printed items and graphic material, circa 1830-1935, undated

- Subseries 1. Photographs, undated**
- Subseries 2. Newspaper clippings, 1894, 1907, 1925, undated**
- Subseries 3. Illustrations, circa 1830, undated**
- Subseries 4. Miscellaneous, 1895, 1897, undated**

Series IV. Manuscript volumes, 1830-1884

- Subseries 1. Autograph books, 1879-1884**
- Subseries 2. Catalogue of books, undated**
- Subseries 3. Diary and memorandum books, 1844-1845, 1857**
- Subseries 4. Index books, 1830-1845, undated**
- Subseries 5. Record books and ledger, 1830-1845, undated**

SERIES AND SUBSERIES 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. B. 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 slaves, giving symptoms and remedies; hiring of slaves by the Confederate Army (Nov. 20, 1862, undated); flooding (Jan. 1, Feb. 11, 1863). He describes an infection spreading amongst the livestock that may have also infected to some slaves (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) and 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 consists 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 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, R. I. (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 consists mostly of family correspondence, but include a list of New Orleans businesses with notes on their investment risks, a pass verifying that Selah Britton and family member were not exposed to yellow fever, and two notes to Eliza Britton from Varina Davis discussing her health and an invitation to visit (undated). Printed material in this series consists of a St. Valentine's Day card sent to Mary Macrery Britton (Feb. 20, 1882), bulletin for West End Institute announcing the academic term beginning Sept. 28, 1882 (undated), 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, 1844-1845, undated

Subseries 1. W. A. Britton business papers, 1844-1845, undated

Business correspondence of W. A. Britton relate 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.

Subseries 2. Daniel H. Downer papers, 1843-1845, undated

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 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).

Subseries 3. William McAlister papers, 1843-1845

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

Subseries 4. Negotiable instruments, 1843-1858

Bank drafts issued mostly by W. A. Britton & Co. (1843-1858) and cancelled checks drawn on City Bank of New Orleans, La. and Mechanics' and Traders' Bank of Natchez (1844) comprise these negotiable instruments.

Series III. Printed items and graphic material, circa 1830-1935, undated

Subseries 1. Photographs, undated

Photographs of Dr. J. B. Stratton (undated) and Magnolia Hall, which was the Britton family home in Natchez, Miss. (undated).

Subseries 2. Newspaper clippings, 1894, 1907, 1925, undated

A movie review of *The Awakening*, obituaries for Audley C. Britton, Eliza Britton and Selah Britton and a clipping on the marriage of Andrew Macrery to Letitia Hagan.

Subseries 3. Illustrations, circa 1830, undated

Illustrations include sketches of the Britton family mausoleum (undated), floral drawings hand painted by Mary Macrery (circa 1830), three playing cards, and type specimens for bank notes (undated).

Subseries 4. Miscellaneous, 1895, 1897, undated

Miscellaneous printed items consists of a broadside announcing an auction for property held by Britton and Kootnz 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 entitled (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

Subseries 1. Autograph books, 1879-1884

- v. 1 1879-1880 Autograph books of Mary M Britton containing personal notes with signatures of friends and family.
- v. 2 1880-1884 Autograph books of Mary M Britton containing notes, poetry and illustrations along with the signatures of friends and family.

Subseries 2. Catalogue of books, undated

- v. 3 undated A catalog of books compiled by Audley C. Britton listing novels, books of historical, biographical and epistolary nature, and books of poetry and hymns.

Subseries 3. Diary and memorandum books, 1844-1845, 1857

- v. 5 1857 Diary, almanac and memorandum book kept by A. C. Britton contains brief notations of his arrivals and departures from New York, Boston and Philadelphia and his personal activities at the time (1857). The last few pages list individual cash accounts
- v. 10 1844-1845 Memorandum book 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-Feb. 1845

Subseries 4. Index books, 1830-1845, undated

- v. 6 1830-1831 Index for journal chiefly maintained by W. A. Britton Britton & Co. lists individuals and businesses accounts, includes seven loose sheets for John Henderson's account.
- v. 7 1831-1833 Index for journal chiefly maintained by W. A. Britton Britton & Co. lists individuals and businesses accounts, includes eight loose various accounts.
- v. 8 undated Alphabetical list of individuals.

Subseries 5. Record books and ledger, 1830-1845, undated

- v. 9 1842-1845 Account ledger of William McAlister includes an account for W. A. Britton & Co.
- v. 11 1830-1832 Record book containing bank notes offered for discount, Vicksburg, Miss.
- v. 12 undated Record book maintained by W. A. Britton & Co. giving a numerical list of discounted bank drafts.
- v. 13 undated Record book of checks drawn on the account of W. A. Britton & Co.

Subseries 5. Record books and ledger, 1830-1845, undated (cont.)

- v. 14 undated Record book of checks drawn on the account of James Sands of Mobile, Ala.; also lists accounts in New York, Philadelphia and Boston.
- v. 4 1843-1846 Book of check stubs for Mechanics' and Traders' Bank.

INDEX TERMS

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found in the series and subseries indicated, as represented by their numbers.

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OS:B	--	1	Family papers (oversize): Selah Britton passport, June 23, 1903
Microfilm 6061	--	--	Series B, Part 4, Reel 1 as A.C. Britton Family Papers (1830-1860 are not filmed)