

JESSE D. WRIGHT PAPERS

Mss. 99

Inventory

Compiled by
Susan D. Cook
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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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SUMMARY

- Size.** 1.2 linear feet
- Geographic locations.** Cheneyville, Pineville, and Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Inclusive dates.** 1831-1906
- Bulk dates.** 1835-1882
- Languages.** English
- Summary.** Business correspondence, legal papers, and financial papers document the management of businesses and property belonging to the Wright estate by Jesse D. Wright, his widow Sarah R. Wright, and their daughter Mary C. Wright.
- Related collections.** David F. Boyd Family Papers, Mss. 99
Leroy S. Boyd Papers, Mss. 99.
Wright-Boyd Family Papers, Mss. 3362
- Copyright.** Physical rights are retained by the LSU Libraries. Copyright of the original materials is retained by the creators, or their descendants, of the materials in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
- Citation.** Jesse D. Wright Papers, Mss. 99, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Stack location.** OS:W; UU:248-249

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

The Wright family and their relatives managed plantations in Louisiana and served the Confederate States during the Civil War. The Wright family owned property in St. Mary Parish, Rapides Parish, Avoyelles Parish, and St. Landry Parish and undeveloped lands in Louisiana and five counties of Texas. Originally, the family of Jesse and Sarah Wright lived at North Bend Plantation, Rapides Parish, but after Jesse Wright's death, his wife and younger children moved to Greenwood Plantation, Rapides Parish, which Sarah Wright purchased from her son-in-law, Leroy Harvard. After the Civil War, family members remaining at Greenwood (Sarah Wright, Mary Wright, and later Sarah's sister, Ann Foland) divided their time between this plantation and the homes of Esther Wright Boyd in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Auburn, Alabama.

Jesse D. Wright was born in Saybrook, Connecticut on May 15, 1793 and died in Cheneyville, Louisiana on March 25, 1850. He completed his medical studies at Yale University in 1814 and became a practicing physician in Rapides Parish. He also managed several business concerns, including a store and plantations, and was active in civic and church affairs. He was the administrator of the estate of one of his business associates, David Cheney, whose son, Oscar (called "cousin Oscar") married Wright's daughter, Ellen. Jesse Wright helped create the Spring Creek Academy in Pineville, in the summer home of planters from Rapides, to educate local children. He married Sarah Robert Grimball in 1821.

Sarah Robert Grimball was born in South Carolina in 1805 and died in Rapides Parish in 1881. She managed the family property and businesses after her husband's death. Due to Sarah Wright's impaired health, management of the Wright property after about 1870 was carried out by her daughter, Mary Cornelia Wright. After 1870, Greenwood was rented to several lessees, including two of Sarah Wright's grandsons, George Stafford and A. D. Havard. The portion of Greenwood remaining in the Wright family passed, after the death of Mary Wright, to Esther Wright Boyd, who sold it around 1893.

Six of the eleven children of Jesse and Sarah Wright survived into early adulthood. Sarah Catherine, known as "Catherine" (1826-1896), married General Leroy A. Stafford (1822-1864) in 1843. Stafford commanded the Stafford Guards during the Civil War and was fatally wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness, Virginia. Julia Caroline (1828-1898) married Leroy S. Harvard (1828-1895) in 1848. Harvard became a businessman in St. Landry Parish. Ellen Judith (1837-1864) married Oscar Bailey Cheney (1830-1905) on June 26, 1856. Their home was originally Riverside Plantation, but during the Civil War they moved into Greenwood, which Oscar managed for Sarah Wright. Mary Cornelia (1839-1888) remained unmarried and lived with her mother on Greenwood Plantation and later with the family of Esther Wright Boyd. David Paul Augustus Wright, known as "Augustus" (1842-1857), died of typhoid fever while at school in Kentucky. Esther Gertrude (1844-1915) married David French Boyd (1834-1899) in 1865, who spent much of his teaching career at Louisiana State Seminary, later Louisiana State University in Pineville, where he was Superintendent and President.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Correspondence mostly reflects the business concerns of the Wright family. It deals with topics such as land acquisition, property management, division of property, and management of plantation crops. Other letters deal with the topics of settling the estates of Jesse and Sarah Wright and financial and legal business of the Wright family.

Legal papers include certificates and documents of land grants, leases of land, land sales, and transfers and divisions of property. There are documents relating to business partnerships and estate management, including family agreements concerning the management and division of the Wright estate. There are also records of court proceedings, injunctions, and verdicts in cases involving members of the Wright family and several versions of wills written by members of the Wright family. Other papers concerning property include an inventory of Greenwood Plantation and sketches of Wright and Stafford lands taken from township maps.

Financial papers consist of receipts, bills, promissory notes, accounts (including those of North Bend and Greenwood plantations), taxes, and records of payments and debts due from decisions made in court cases.

Writings and notes include memoirs of Esther Wright Boyd and quotations copied out by Sarah Robert Wright. Manuscript volumes consist of a memorandum book and record and cashbooks for North Bend and Greenwood plantations. Printed items consist of a catalogue and advertisements.

WRIGHT (JESSE D.) PAPERS
1831-1906

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LIST OF SERIES

- I. Correspondence, 1835-1899, undated** (box 1)
- II. Legal Papers and Property Papers, 1831-1889, undated** (box 1, OS folder 1)
- III. Financial Papers, 1833-1888, undated** (box 2, OS folder 2)
- IV. Writings and Notes, 1906, undated** (box 3, OS folder 3)
- V. Manuscript Volumes, 1870-1881** (box 3)
- VI. Printed Items and Realia, 1832-1859, undated** (box 3, OS folder 3)

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. Correspondence, 1835-1899, undated (0.2 linear feet)

Correspondence relating to property includes a letter (June 18, 1839) concerning land suitable for purchase on the banks of the Atchafalaya. Correspondence on the sale of lands includes a letter (December 16, 1870) discussing the sale of Sarah Wright's half of Greenwood Plantation, possibly to a daughter and one (June 26, 1871) to Mary Wright from Leroy Havard on the question of gaining power of attorney from her so that lands may be sold. Other letters (February-March 1853) concern a dispute between Sarah Wright and Leroy Stafford over North Bend Plantation in which Stafford was withholding the cotton crop until matters were settled. Another letter (May 17, 1886) includes a plat outlining land owned by the Wrights and their neighbors.

Correspondence concerning the division of the Wright estate includes a letter (August 11, 1869) from David Boyd to Leroy Havard on the settlement of Jesse Wright's estate, one (1866) from Esther Wright Boyd to David Boyd on the division of property to Jesse Wright's heirs, particularly the question of wild lands, and another letter (December 24, 1870) from David Boyd to Sarah Wright in which he states that he does not want anything to do with the problems of settling the Wright estate, though his wife may do as she pleases; he also invites Sarah and Mary Wright to make their home with him and Esther at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. A note (April 1877) from George Stafford to Sarah Wright requests a receipt for money given to his mother at her marriage as part of her inheritance, with an annotation by Sarah Wright stating that the receipt was not returned. There are also letters (December 1880) concerning Sarah Wright's will and the distribution of Wright property.

Correspondence concerned with financial matters includes a letter (July 9, 1835) to Jesse Wright on the question of recovering notes owed by others and a letter (February 13, 1858) to Sarah Wright from Leroy Havard concerning her difficulties in paying a note owing him.

Correspondence concerning the Greenwood property include several letters (1872) that discuss the repairing and leasing of the house and letters between Mary Wright and William Seay on buying into land bought by Leroy Havard. There is also a memorandum (November 27, 1880) from David Boyd to Esther Wright Boyd concerning the settlement of Greenwood. Another letter (January 17, 1882) from Mary Wright's cousin, J. W. Crawford, concerns repairs and management of Greenwood.

Other correspondence includes a letter (December 24, 1844) to Jesse Wright on the question of giving and receiving communion amongst members of different churches and a letter (June 15, 1862) concerning an insurance policy, with an annotation that part of Greenwood had to be sold to pay this policy and for taxes in 1866 and 1867.

II. Legal Papers and Property Papers, 1831-1889, undated (0.2 linear feet)

Documents relating to business include articles of agreement (October 30, 1828) between Jesse Wright and E. L. Briggs to establish a retail store in Cheneyville, the dissolution (June 20, 1848) of

the partnership of Jesse Wright and G. W. Smith, known as "Wright and Smith at Cheneyville," and an agreement (March 31, 1855) by John C. Cobb to act as overseer and vendor of Sarah Wright's cotton crop.

Wills include that of Jesse Wright (June 8, 1831), in which D. Cheney and Edmond L. Briggs are named as executors. There is also a new will (July 24, 1839) for Jesse D. Wright. There is a will (1869) of Sarah Wright in which she leaves all her property to Esther Wright Boyd and Mary Wright and another (October 13, 1880), written in Sarah Wright's hand, leaving items to Mary Wright. The will of Mary Wright (April 13, 1881) leaves her entire estate to Esther Wright Boyd. There is also a legal opinion (November 3, 1860) on the question of settling Wright property in accordance with the instructions in the will of Jesse Wright.

Legal documents relating to property include a lease of land and slaves (March 15, 1832) from Paul Grimball to Jesse Wright and John D. Grimball. There are also records of land grants (1834-1845) and copies (circa 1855) of land certificates from the Land Office at Opelousas, Louisiana. Papers concerning land purchase include a sale (March 30, 1853) of property by Leroy Stafford to Sarah Wright, by which she moved from North Bend Plantation to the Stafford Plantation (Greenwood), agreements (undated) between Leroy Stafford and Sarah Wright on the sale of lands, and several records (1835) of land sale in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana. Other papers include agreements (January 18, 1882 and August 23, 1883) amongst the Wright family concerning the division of the Greenwood Plantation property, a transfer (May 1, 1882) of Greenwood Plantation property from Leroy Havard to Mary Wright, and a document (undated) on the collation of property. There is also a land survey (March 29, 1832) of south west Louisiana and notices (October 26 and December 14, 1870) of land seized from Sarah Wright in the case of Payne Huntingdon & Co. vs. Sarah Wright.

Documents relating to court cases include a petition (March 24, 1840) to recover money from Jesse Wright and John D. Grimball, annotated with promises of repayment; a legal judgment (June 28, 1843) in favor of Jesse Wright against Roger B. Marshall; and papers (July 21, 1843) relating to the case of M. Prince vs. Jesse Wright and John D. Grimball.

Other items include a copy of a document (May 2, 1837) appointing John D. Grimball as attorney to Sarah Wright, a copy of a paper (February 24, 1861) in which Sarah Wright gives Ellen Wright Cheney \$5000 as part of her inheritance, and a statement (1877) by Sarah Wright concerning money lent to Oscar Cheney for the purchase of slaves.

Notes on property include an inventory (1870) of buildings and immovable property on Greenwood Plantation and a sketch (undated) of Wright and Stafford lands taken from a township map.

III. Financial Papers, 1833-1888, undated (0.3 linear feet)

Items relating to property include a receipt of land purchased (February 21, 1833) in Opelousas and receipts and assessment of stock (March 31, 1853) on property of Leroy Havard sold to Sarah Wright, with a note of a dispute concerning the possession of receipts.

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Items relating to debts and loans include notes of indebtedness (May 21, 1838) of Peter Hilckiah Robert with receipts of payment, a note (July 20, 1852) concerning money lent to Julia Havard by her mother Sarah Wright, and a receipt (April 11, 1891) for money collected on notes. There are also promissory notes (January 1, 1866) to pay Esther Wright Boyd and Mary Wright their share of wild lands sold by Sarah Wright.

Accounts include a list (October 1859) of school expenses, extracts (circa 1857) copied from the plantation record book of Sarah Wright, mostly concerning the apportioning and management of land, and accounts (1856-1861) with Payne Harrison.

Other items include notes of payments and debts incurred in court cases (for example January 4, 1843), receipts (April 1861) for payment of shares in the Louisiana Central Rail Road Co. to Sarah Wright, and tax bills that include one (October 2, 1866) listing the taxes on items such as a piano and gold watches.

IV. Writings and Notes, 1906, undated (1 folder)

Reminiscences (circa 1906) by Esther Wright Boyd in response to questioning by her son-in-law, Walter Fleming, describe home life, the Wright family, characters of her childhood, education, religion, and the area of Cheneyville in general in the nineteenth century. There are also quotations (undated) composed or copied by Sarah Wright.

V. Manuscript Volumes, 1870-1881 (2 folders)

A memorandum book (1870-1871) contains accounts and a household inventory and a "Greenwood Plantation Record Book" (1870-1881), apparently belonging to Mary Wright, includes notes of sale, rent, and receipts. There is also a cashbook for North Bend and Greenwood plantations (1850-1870), which includes inventories of Greenwood Plantation (1866 and 1870) and notes of land sale.

VI. Printed Items and Realia, 1835-1859, undated (2 folders)

These include an advertisement (March 1835) for a stallion and a catalogue for household furnishings (undated) at Du Bouchet & Lavancourt's, Philadelphia.

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Wright, Mary Cornelia, 1839-1888.
Boyd, Esther Wright, 1844-1915.
Boyd, David French, 1834-1899.
Grimball, John D.
Havard, Leroy S., 1828-1895.
Greenwood Plantation (La.)
North Bend Plantation (La.)
Rapides Parish (La.)
Slavery--Louisiana.
Plantations--Louisiana.
Administration of estates--Louisiana.
Executors and administrators--Louisiana.
Land grants--Louisiana.

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UU:249	3	6	Envelopes and fragments, 1848-1875, undated
			Series II. Legal Papers and Property Papers, 1831-1889, undated
UU:248	1	9-17	Legal papers, property papers, 1831-1889, undated
OS:W	--	1	Legal papers, property papers (oversize), 1832-1882
			Series III. Financial Papers, 1833-1888, undated
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OS:W	--	2	Financial papers (oversize), 1841-1861
			Series IV. Writings and Notes, 1906, undated
UU:249	3	1	Writings and notes, 1906, undated
		5	Original typescript of memoirs, circa 1906
OS:W	--	3	Notes (oversize), undated
UU:249	3	2-3	Series V. Manuscript Volumes, 1870-1881
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		4	Printed items and realia, 1859, undated
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