



**Abbeville Merchants Records, 1846-1892 (bulk 1852-1870)
SCHS# 0586.00**

Description: 10.5 linear ft. (11 boxes)

Biographical/Historical Note:

Adolphus A. Williams (1827-1866), a native of Georgia, was a merchant in Abbeville. His wife was Margaret G. Williams. The 1860 Abbeville District census lists him in a household that included John McLaren and J. McBryde. The 1860 census lists his age as 25 but this is probably an error; the 1850 census lists his age as 22. His store was burned in a fire in 1872.

George McDuffie Miller (1831-1899), farmer and merchant of Abbeville District, was the son of Allen Thompson Miller (1795-1856) and Isabella Hamilton. George M. Miller served as an officer in the Confederate Army and after the war returned to Abbeville, where (according to an obituary in a Greenwood newspaper) he formed a business partnership with his friend and the lieutenant colonel of his regiment (Orr's Rifles), James Townes Robertson. Obituary (1899): "He [Miller] sold his interest in the business some twenty years ago and moved to his plantation near Ninety-Six."

James Townes Robertson (1832-1905) was an Abbeville merchant and farmer. He married Miss Eugenia Miller (1852-1894) in 1872. He was a partner in the firm of Gray & Robertson, which began about 1857. His first business partner was likely John James Gray (1834-1903). (The 1860 Abbeville census lists a John Gray, merchant, age 30.) After the war Robertson was in business with George McDuffie Miller (Miller & Robertson) in Abbeville.

Scope and Content: This collection chiefly consists of business records, most of which are account books, of at least two merchants of Abbeville, S.C., namely the company of Miller & Robertson, and that of Adolphus A. Williams, both of which were apparently general stores. The bulk of the collection dates from 1852 to 1870 and includes a volume dating 1846-1853 which includes lending records (1846-1848) of the Lyceum (a private library, or the library of a lyceum). The first page lists a brief catalog of the Lyceum books, mostly works of history and natural history. The remainder of this volume consists of store accounts (1852-1853) with numerous customers for purchases of hardware, shoes, stockings, clothing, pens, dishes, castor oil, toothbrushes, cigars, school books, coffee, soda, candles, and fabrics including silk, calico and osnaburg. Individuals represented include Charles T. Haskell, David L. Wardlaw, John A. Calhoun, J. M. Perrin, Samuel McGowan, Edward Noble, and the Commissioners of the Poor. A receipt book (1859-1860) documents purchases made by A. A. Williams of Abbeville, almost all

of which were made in New York City. Items purchased include a spring bed, ledgers, fabrics, clothing, shoes, boots, cigars, hats, blankets, “fancy goods,” hardware, cutlery, linens, and two Colt pistols. An invoice book (1868-1869) contains invoices, most dating to 1869, of purchases by Miller & Robertson of Abbeville. Most transactions are with merchants in New York City, but some pertain to transactions with merchants in Charleston, S.C., Baltimore, Md., Philadelphia, Pa., Charlotte, N.C., and Pendleton, S.C. Goods represented include cotton and other fabrics, blankets, clothing, groceries, hardware, cutlery, curtains and dishes. An invoice dated October 16, 1868, is for the purchase of a suit “made to order” for General Samuel McGowan by Baldwin, Starr & Company in New York. A cotton account book (1871-1873) of Miller & Robertson contains records of cotton shipped to factors in Charleston including A. J. Salinas, Williams, Birnie & Company, and George W. Williams & Company. Also included are cotton accounts with Smith, Woodward & Stillman (a cotton commission house in New York).

Preferred Citation: Abbeville merchants records, 1846-1892 (bulk 1852-1870). (0586.00)
South Carolina Historical Society.

Search terms: Miller, George McDuffie, 1831-1899.
Robertson, James Townes, 1832-1905.
Salinas, Anthony J., 1825-1875.
Williams, Adolphus A., 1827-1866.
Miller & Robertson (Abbeville, S.C.)
Cotton trade -- South Carolina -- Abbeville.
General stores -- South Carolina -- Abbeville.
Lyceums -- South Carolina -- Abbeville.
Stores, Retail -- South Carolina -- Abbeville.
Subscription libraries -- South Carolina -- Abbeville.
Abbeville District (S.C.) -- Commerce -- 19th century.
Abbeville (S.C.) -- History -- Sources.
South Carolina -- Commerce -- Abbeville County.

Container List:

BOX 1

1 Bound volume containing records of the Lyceum (1846-1848) and store accounts (July 1852 – February 1853). Pages 1 through 69 document books which were taken out of the Lyceum (a private library, or the library of a lyceum) by various individuals including Samuel McGowan, James M. Perrin, and D. L. Wardlaw. Page 1 lists the catalog of the Lyceum, mostly works of history and natural history, and a record of (overdue) fines charged is on page 61. The page numbering resumes with the store accounts, which are headed “Abbeville C. H.” Accounts are with numerous customers for purchases of hardware, shoes, stockings, clothing, pens, dishes, castor oil, toothbrushes, cigars, school books, coffee, soda, candles, and fabrics including silk, calico and osnaburg. Individuals represented include Charles T. Haskell, D. L. Wardlaw, John A.

Calhoun, J. M. Perrin, Samuel McGowan, Edward Noble, and the Commissioners of the Poor. A few customers are noted as being from Little Mountain.

2 Coverless account book, 1858, section 1. Pages 1 to 144. Accounts, many with the heading “Abbeville C. H.” contains entries for numerous customers for purchases of fabrics and other goods. Fragile and damaged condition.

3 Coverless account book, 1858, section 2. Pages 145 to [392].

4 Cotton account book, 1871-1873. This volume is inscribed “Miller & Robertson” on the first page. It contains a record of “Cotton Shipped to A. J. Salinas.” This was Anthony J. Salinas (1825-1875), a Charleston cotton factor. The shipments list the customers’ names, marks, and amounts shipped. Beginning on page 33, there is a record of “Cotton Shipped to Williams, Birnie & Co.” This was a commission merchant business in Charleston (George W. Williams and William Birnie). Page 60 resumes shipments to A. J. Salinas. Page 80 begins shipments to George W. Williams & Co in Charleston. Page 90 begins more shipments to A. J. Salinas. Page 110 begins cotton accounts with Smith, Woodward & Stillman (a cotton commission house in New York). The last few pages of the accounts in this volume are headed “Carolina Fertilizer.” FRAGILE condition.

5 -7 Invoice book, 1868-1869. This is an invoice book which has been disbound. Folders 5 – 7 contain invoices dated September – December 1868. The 1869 invoices, January – December, continue in Box 2.

BOX 2

1 - 9 Invoice book, 1868-1869. Continuation of a disbound volume containing invoices, most dating to 1869, of purchases by Miller & Robertson of Abbeville. Most transactions are with merchants in New York City, but some pertain to transactions with merchants in Charleston, S.C., Baltimore, Md., Philadelphia, Pa., Charlotte, N.C., and Pendleton, S.C. Goods represented include cotton and other fabrics, blankets, clothing, groceries, hardware, cutlery, curtains and dishes. An invoice dated October 16, 1868, is for the purchase of a suit “made to order” for General Samuel McGowan by Baldwin, Starr & Company in New York.

N.B.: Boxes 3 – 9 are oversize containers located on the flat file shelves next to the 33’s.

BOX 3

Account book, 1855-1858 (bulk 1856-1857). Bound volume with “Journal” on spine. Volume contains accounts for purchases of various goods by numerous individuals and at least one company (Barnes & Co., p. 131). Goods purchased include fabrics, clothing, tobacco, buggy whips, shoes, cologne, ribbons, candles, hardware, soap and paper goods.

BOX 4

Account book, 1856-1859. Accounts, which begin in October 1856, are for purchases of various goods by individuals, and some companies, including Cobb & Hunter, Davis & Crews, and Grey (or Gray) & Robertson (or Robinson) in Abbeville. These are monthly accounts arranged roughly alphabetically by customer name. The name of John James Grey (Gray?) appears on pages 649, 772 and elsewhere; also A. [L.] Grey, page 667, etc. Some pages torn and missing.

BOX 5

1 Account book, 1856-1865. Coverless cash account book pertains to cash purchases of unspecified merchandise by numerous individuals. Many of the names correspond to known residents of Abbeville.

2 Receipt book, 1859-1860. Disbound volume of receipted invoices posted on to yellow sheets of paper. All the documents pertain to purchases made by A. A. Williams of Abbeville, almost all of which were made in New York City. Items purchased include a spring bed, ledgers, fabrics, clothing, shoes, boots., cigars, hats, blankets, "fancy goods," hardware, cutlery, linens, and two colt pistols (Sept. 6, 1860). The binding of this volume was extremely damaged and has been removed. Some pages were missing and torn. Fragments of a few torn pages indicate that the receipts continued into early 1861.

BOX 6

Ledger, 1858-1860. Bound volume with the words "Ledger" and "A. C. Jr." on the spine (part of the initials may be missing). Volume contains yearly summary accounts for unspecified purchases by numerous individuals, arranged roughly alphabetically, mainly for 1858-1859.

BOX 7

Account book, 1859-1862. Bound volume bearing the name "A. A. Williams" and "Journal A" on the spine. This book chiefly contains monthly accounts, 1859-1861, with numerous individuals (and at least one company, Gray & Robertson) for store purchases in Abbeville. Each monthly account is arranged roughly alphabetically by customer name. There are monthly accounts for January 1862 and other scattered accounts for that year. Also included are accounts for bills receivable. Entries for John Gray appear on page 369 (1861).

BOX 8

Bound volume with labels on spine: "Journal" and "A. A. Will---" This fragile and damaged volume has a first section containing store accounts dating from July 1860 to November 1863. Accounts with the heading "Abbeville" are with numerous individuals for the purchase of clothing, soap, fabrics, tobacco and many other goods. After November 16, 1863, accounts

dating 1891 to 1892 begin. The names of Andy and William Watts appear frequently in the account headings. An entry for May 18, 1861, is for violin strings and bridges.

BOX 9

Daybook, December 1869 – July 30, 1870. Bound volume contains daily entries for purchases of fabrics, clothing, tobacco, clothing and other goods by numerous customers.