



**John Blake White papers, 1800-1844**  
**SCHS 1116.00**  
**Container 11/459**

**Creator:** White, John B.

**Description:** 7 volumes; 8 items.

**Biographical/Historical Note:** Artist, dramatist, and lawyer. Born in Eutaw Springs, S.C., he later resided in Charleston, S.C. In 1800 he went to London to study painting under Benjamin West; in 1808 he was admitted to the bar in South Carolina. White produced a number of paintings including portraits, miniatures, and historical paintings. He also authored several plays which were produced in the theaters of Charleston and elsewhere. His first wife was Elizabeth Allston (d. 1817).

**Scope and Content:** Papers consist of sketchbooks, diaries, plays and other writings, genealogical material, and other items.

Three diaries cover the years 1800 to 1818. The first diary ("My Journal," 1800-1802) begins with White's departure from Charleston (S.C.) on board the ship *Amity* and its capture by French privateers, then goes on to describe his stay in Cork (Ireland); his introduction to and studies with Benjamin West; his friends, including Washington Allston and other students from South Carolina; and a visit to Oxford University and Blenheim Castle. The second diary (1802-1803) discusses various amusements of London including tea gardens and a fair; King's Bench Prison; architecture of St. Paul's Cathedral; London restaurants and social life; the British Museum; a visit to Bath; and meeting Laurence and Sir William Beechie. Third diary (1803-1818) covers White's last months in England and his return to South Carolina; the death of his mother (1803); his stay in Boston (Mass.) during 1804; law studies; first marriage and children; his plays; and the death of his first wife.

Plays (1805-1830) include two versions of "Foscari, or the Venetian Exile," a tragedy performed in Charleston in 1806; a manuscript of "Modern Honor" (1811), a tragedy concerning duelling; and a manuscript of "Mordaunt, or the Victim of Intemperance" (1829). In addition, there is a letter (16 August 1830) from White to "Dana" discussing "Mordaunt."

Two sketchbooks (1802) contain pencil drawings of children, landscapes, and other subjects. Writings (1832-1844) include a manuscript of "An Essay on the Moral Excellence of Painting" (read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Charleston in 1832); essays on capital punishment and hydropathy (hydrotherapy); and an address (1836) about temperance.

Genealogical material consists of a volume (n.d.) containing notes on the White, Bellinger, Blake, O'Driscoll, and other related families. Other items include a fragment (n.d.) of a notebook containing names and addresses as well as a list of books; and a promissory note (1806).

**Preferred Citation:** White, John Blake, 1781-1859. John Blake White papers, 1800-1844. (1116.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

**Search terms:**

Allston, Washington, 1779-1843.  
Beechey, William, Sir, 1753-1859.  
Lawrence, Thomas, Sir, 1769-1830.  
West, Benjamin, 1738-1820.  
White, John Blake, 1781-1859.  
Bellinger family.  
Blake family.  
Driscoll family.  
White family.  
Capital punishment.  
Hydrotherapy.  
Painting.  
Temperance.  
Bath (England)  
Boston (Mass.)  
Charleston (S.C.) -- History.  
Cork (Ireland) -- Description and travel.  
England -- Description and travel.  
London (England)  
South Carolina -- History -- 1775-1865.  
Drawings.  
Essays.  
Plays.  
Lawyers.  
Painters (artists)  
Playwrights.

**Container list:**

**11/459/1-6 White, John Blake. 1780-1859**

**Sketchbooks & Journals, 1800-1818. 6 vols.**

Charleston artist and lawyer. Sketchbook (1802) of John Blake White while studying in England with Benjamin West. Journals (1800-1818) of White with descriptions of life in London, England (1800-1804) including attack of privateers (1800) and mentions of English castles, libraries, universities, theatre, Oxford University, parks, a prison, the royal family, parties, the countryside and much more material. Also included are descriptions and scattered mentions of Benjamin West and Washington Allston. Journals (1804-1818) cover a trip to Boston, Massachusetts (1804), White's return to Charleston, his marriage to Eliza Allston, births of his children, death of family members, his career as a lawyer, travel, description of a duel (1812), productions of his tragedies, and much more material. Also fragment of address book (ca. 1804)

**11/459/7-10 White, John Blake, 1780-1859**

**Essays, 1832-1844. 4 items.**

Charleston writer. Essays (1832-1844) of John Blake White. Included are essays on painting read before the Literary & Philosophical Society of Charleston (1832); on capital punishment (1834); on temperance, read to the young Men's temperance Society (1836); and the manuscript copy of John Blake White's pamphlet on "Hydrophathy of the Use of Water in the Treatment of Disease" (1844).

**11/459/11-14 White, John Blake, 1780-1859**

**Plays, 1805-1830**

Charleston playwright. Manuscripts (1805-1830) of three tragedies of John Blake White. Included are two versions of "Foscari" (1805, revised 1830) and performed by the Charleston Stage (1806); "Modern Honor" (1811) regarding dwelling; and "Mordaunt" (1829) regarding temperance. Includes one letter (1830) of CBW regarding "Mordaunt."

**11/459/15 White, John Blake, 1780-1859**

**Genealogy notes, n.d. 1 vol.**

Charleston author. Genealogy notebook of John Blake White's ancestors. Included are the White, Bellinger, Blake, O'Driscoll, and other families.