



SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Margaret Hall Moffett Adger Papers, 1825-1911 **SCHS 1312.00**

Description: 9 linear ft.

Creator: Adger, Margaret Hall Moffett, 1820-1915.

Biog./Historical Note: Daughter of Andrew and Anna Moffett, she married William Adger (1816-1853), a Charleston, S.C. businessman, in 1840 and had nine children: Andrew Moffett, James, Anna Elizabeth (1843-1927) who wed Thomas Hart Law in 1864, James (1845-1873), Andrew Moffett (1846-1915) who wed Nannie W. Paul, Sarah Ellison (1848-1853), Margaret Crawford (1850-1892) who wed William Sinkler Manning in 1876, and William Sarah. After her husband's death she resided in the homes of her children and was known for preserving family ties and relationships. Beginning in 1886 until her death in 1915, Margaret Adger resided in the Spartanburg household of her daughter Agnes and son-in-law Henry Edmund Ravenel.

William Adger, (1816-1853), the fourth son of James Adger (1777-1853) and Sara Elizabeth Ellison (1783-1856), was a member of the firm of James Adger & Company, a director of the Planters and Mechanics Bank, elder of the Second Presbyterian Church, superintendent of the Sunday School, president of the Eagle Volunteer Fire Company, and member of the Board of Firemasters of Charleston, S.C.

In 1853, the Adgers booked passage by boat to New York to study the fire department of New York as a possible model for Charleston. One night William followed a fire wagon to a burning tenement house where none of the firemen were willing to rescue a woman recovering from smallpox. William brought the woman to safety. A few days later, he contracted smallpox and died on December 14, 1853.

Scope and Content: Papers chiefly consist of correspondence, mostly letters to Margaret H.M. Adger written between 1825 and 1911 (bulk 1860-1900) from friends and family members including her mother Anna Reid Moffett, brother George H. Moffett, sister-in-law Elizabeth K.S. Adger (a missionary to Turkey), and others.

Letters are from Charleston, Sullivan's Island, and the Pendleton area (Ashtabula, Boscobel, Rivoli, Woodburn, and Seneca plantations, and Mountain View, Keowee Chapel, and Cherokee Springs) of South Carolina. Letters concern family matters of the Adger, Moffett, Law, and Manning families such as the health of family members, rearing of children, cooking, making of clothes, needlework, courtships, travels, social life, ordering of fabrics (with price notations), management of servants, financial matters, Catholics in Turkey, and news of deaths, births, and marriages. There are also mentions of universities and college life by Adger's friend Eliza and son Andrew Moffett Adger (1846-1915); references to trips to Flat Rock (N.C.) and Saratoga Springs (N.Y.); comments on Presbyterian sermons, services, and activities; and

discussions of the migration of families, black and white, in and out of Hartsville (S.C.), and problems with the freedmen. There is additional correspondence of the Adger, Law, Smyth, and Moffett families, with correspondents including Andrew Moffett, Presbyterian minister Rev. T.H. Law, and James Adger, Jr.

Of note are several wartime letters, including one (1864) from James Adger of the Charleston Light Dragoons describing the severe damage to Charleston (S.C.) from Union shelling; and his letter of 5 April 1863 from Pocotaligo (S.C.) describing Federal raids at Mackeys Point where every house but one was destroyed. A letter (21 May 1864) from Andrew M. Adger on James Island (S.C.), expresses his hope that his unit will be sent north "to see the war carried home to the Yankees, as it has been too long to us. It is time for them, now, to have a turn in the horrors of war. It makes one's blood boil to hear of the devastation created by them." His letter of 8 June 1864 describes the entrenchments, fighting, and truce between the armies of Lee and Grant at Gaines Mill (Cold Harbor, Va.), and relates that "Grant's men were badly cut up. All here agree he is a perfect butcher...perfectly indifferent to the wants of his wounded...dozens of them, many dead, too, were left within 50 yards of his works, without the least attention being paid to them." A letter of 28 June 1864 describes fighting at Petersburg (Va.).

Other items include wedding announcements; visiting cards; journals of letters written and received (1879-1881); financial records including receipts (1840-1898) and household accounts; lists; notes on sermons; poems; photographs; a record of medication and treatment (1853) for William Adger (who died of smallpox); and printed material pertaining to various religious, social, educational, and charitable organizations.

Preferred Citation: Adger, Margaret Hall Moffett, 1820-1915. Margaret Hall Moffett Adger papers, 1825-1911. (1312.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

Series Descriptions:

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

The collection also includes announcements, visiting cards, drawing of an obelisk, essays, travel itinerary, journals of letters written and received, financial records, housebooks, lists, notes on religious topics, extracts of plays, copied poetry, and printed ephemera and documents of mainly Charleston and Spartanburg, South Carolina charitable, social, educational, and religious organizations.

Series 1

Correspondence, 1825-1911

The antebellum correspondence is sparse and, for the most part, social. The majority are from "Eliza" who discusses news such as college life and courtships. The remaining is family correspondence with the main topic being the health and well-being of one or more members of the family. Civil War letters reflect the rise and fall of optimism in Charleston after the seizing of Fort Sumter and include an account of a wounded relative. Letters during Reconstruction discuss the migration of families, both black and white, in and out of Hartsville with Northern families replacing Southern families who have moved. There is also discussion of problems with the "everlasting Negroes."

The bulk of the letters date between 1865 and 1900. They contain a variety of family

news (death, illness, weddings, births, etc.) as well as religious commentary on sermons and various actions of the Presbyterian community. Discussions of domestic duties enter more so in these letters than in earlier letters. There is much discussion of needlework, shopping for material, types of fabrics, the making of clothing, etc. as well as some about cookery. Also in the later letters the subject of money is mentioned more frequently. Some individual letters contain account balances and requests for loans, and among more intimate correspondence there is often mention of prices of goods and various money exchanges.

Throughout the letters, travel is a common topic. The sister Susan Adger, William's sister, travels to Europe in the 1870s and a brother (possibly Andrew) in the 1880s. These letters deal mostly with family matters and contain only brief descriptions of sights in Europe. Mention of domestic travel is more prevalent. The mid-1870s correspondence contains information on springtime-trips to Flat Rock, N.C. including preparations for travel and routes taken. In addition to Flat Rock, there are trips to "the Island," New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and other sites on the east coast.

Series 2

Essays, poetry and other writing

- Itinerary of journey in Great Britain
- Journals of letters written and received
 - record of letters sent and received, 1879 December - 1880 April (with clothes list Spartanburg and Charleston, Sept. - Nov. 1879)
 - record of letters sent and received, 1880 May - 1881 May
 - gifts and cards for Christmas 1880
- Poetry (Some original, some copied)
- Scribbling (February 1898)
 - Two "letters" enclosed in an envelope addressed to Mrs. M. H. Adger. Seems that the scribbles are from the granddaughter Agnes and Nannie Ravenel. One of the pages has the signature of Mrs. H. E. Ravenel.
- Play excerpts
 - Extracts of what appears to be two different plays. One appears to be a parody on the medical profession.

Series 3

Financial records

- Receipt book (1844-1879) [dummy folder]

Book of receipts kept mostly in chronological order with the first page starting at the end of 1853. Among the receipts for 1853 to 1861 are interspersed random receipts for later dates.

The majority of receipts fall are from 1853 to 1861. Receipts are made out mostly to Mrs. William Adger and represent a variety of interests from dry goods to French and drawing lessons. Most are from Charleston, but a few are from other cities, including Dublin, Ireland. There are both hand written and business printed receipts in the book.
- Loose receipts, 1840-1898.
- Housebooks, 1854-1886 (bulk 1868-1870).
 - Account (1854-1856) of Mrs. William Adgef with Bailey & Douglas. Includes

- o charges for household items and notes of payments*received.
- o House book, No. 4, 1868 July 10 - 1869 Jan 10.
Account of household items bought during above time period, including foodstuff, servant wages, and minor house repairs (painting, etc.).
- o Account of Mrs. William Adger with D. Paul and Co., 1869 January - 1870 October
 - ~ with clothes list for 1870 June 6 - October 3
 - ~ clothes list for James and Andrew for 1870 June 6 - October 3
 - ~clothes list (bed linens) for 1870 June 6 - October 3
 - ~ amounts paid for washing and repair of laundry (1870 June, October)
 - ~List of clothes, bed linens, carpets, etc. (1886 May)
- Miscellaneous accounts
 - o Account of Mrs. Adger in account with W.A. Law for an 1887 trip to New York.
 - o Account for board of three person at Mr. England's, 1882 September.
 - o Two accounts with Messrs McLoy and Rice
 - o Financial records for religious and charitable work

Series 4

Lists

- Books [dummy folder]
- Christmas presents given and received, and cards sent
- Mary H. Law's school companions, 1881
- "Names of pastors of colored churches in Charleston"
- "Names of the Ward Superintendents"
- Packing lists (1886 May)

Series 5

Notes on religious topics

Notes, commentary, and sermon notes.

Series 6

Visiting cards and ephemera

Set of visits received, Charleston, S.C., January and February, 1890

Miscellaneous cards

Wedding Announcements

Funeral Announcements

Other Announcements

- Christmas Dinners & Relief for the Poor
- Solicitation for funds to be given during caroling

Series 7

Documents by Corporate body

Types of organizations: Charitable, social, educational, and religious organizations

Types of documents: Invitations, announcements, orders of service, handbills, annual reports, pamphlets, subscription forms, report cards, newsletters, and programs

- Charleston Exchange for Woman's Work
 - Second annual report, 1885
- Charleston Female Seminary
 - Program, 1884 June 13.
- Confederate Home
 - Appeal for assistance with earthquake repairs, 1886
- Converse College
 - Senior class of Converse College (1897)
- Enoree Presbytery. Woman's Missionary Union.
 - Constitution and By-Laws.
- First Presbyterian Church (Spartanburg, S.C.)
 - Circular letter announcing Thank Offering Service, 1894 November 20.
- Ladies Mutual Aid Society
 - First annual report, 1867
 - Fifth annual report, 1871
- Miss Lee's School
 - Program of Exhibition, 1891
- Nonpareil Club
 - Invitation to dance
- Order of the Roundtable. Wade Hampton Chapter, No. 147 (Spartanburg, S.C.)
 - "Phax" : newsletter (1893) [dummy folder]
- Mrs. Hopson Pinckney's School for Young Ladies
 - Weekly reports, for Miss A. Adger [1880s?]
- Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.
 - "Work Among the 'Poor Whites,' or 'Crackers.'"
 - "A Leaflet for Teeble Dioceses,' 'Poor Parishes' and 'Weak Mission Stations.'
- Second Presbyterian Church (Charleston, S.C.)
 - Order of worship, No. 4., 1889
- Yellow envelope subscription
- South-Carolina Sunday School Union
 - Order of Exercises, 1854
- South Carolina Club
 - Invitation to ball
- Special Services conducted by Messrs. Moody & Sankey
 - Schedule for services, 1886
- Thornwell Orphanage (Clinton, S.C.)
 - Solicitation for support
- Wofford College
 - Commencement program (1870 June 29)
 - Commencement program (1885)
 - Invitation from the Gymnasium Association of Wofford College (1897)

Series 8

Visual images(see VMA 1312.00)

- Black and white photograph of portrait Adger, John B., 1810-1899
- Cartes-de-visites
- "Daisy's baby" in letter from Anna Morris (September 12, 1898).
- Two images of unidentified women
- One image of an unidentified house in Scotland

Inventory of Collection (Container List):

Boxes:

- 28-850 Correspondence, 1825-1857
- 28-851 Correspondence, 1860-Oct. 1868
- 28-852 Correspondence, Nov. 1868-1870
- 28-853 Correspondence, 1871-July 1873
- 28-854 Correspondence, Aug. 1873-June 1878
- 28-855 Correspondence, July 1878-1880
- 28-856 Correspondence, 1881-1882
- 28-857 Correspondence, 1883-1884
- 28-858 Correspondence, 1885-1886
- 28-859 Correspondence, 1887-Sept. 1888
- 28-860 Correspondence, Oct. 1888-1891
- 28-861 Correspondence, 1892-March 1895
- 28-862 Correspondence, April 1895-191 1
- 28-863 Undated correspondence, [ca. 1825-1869]
- 28-864 Undated correspondence, [ca. 1870-1879]
- 28-865 Undated correspondence, [ca. 1870-1879]
- 28-866 Undated correspondence, [ca. 1880-1889]
- 28-867 Undated correspondence, [ca. 1880-1889]
- 28-868 Undated correspondence, [ca. 1890-1911]
- 28-869 Miscellaneous items: wedding announcements, essays, financial records, lists, etc.
- 28-870 Miscellaneous: notes on religious topics, writings, photographs,visiting cards, printed material, school records, etc.
- 28-871 Miscellaneous: receipt and account