

Alexander Hamilton Stephens Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by R. Preston



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2009

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Finding aid encoded by Library of
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Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010138>

Collection Summary

Title: Alexander Hamilton Stephens Papers

Span Dates: 1784-1886

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1850-1883)

ID No.: MSS41335

Creator: Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, 1812-1883

Extent: 27,000 items; 116 containers; 29 linear feet; 57 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Lawyer, journalist, governor of Georgia, member of both houses of Congress, and vice president of the Confederate States of America. Correspondence, telegrams, memoranda, legal documents, clippings, and an autobiography and journal reflecting Stephens's career in government and politics.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Blair, Francis Preston, 1791-1876--Correspondence.

Brown, Joseph E. (Joseph Emerson), 1821-1894--Correspondence.

Byrdsall, Fitzwilliam, 1810-1875?--Correspondence.

Cleveland, Henry--Correspondence.

Cobb, Howell, 1815-1868--Correspondence.

Garland, A. H. (Augustus Hill), 1832-1899--Correspondence.

Gordon, John Brown, 1832-1904--Correspondence.

Hayne, Paul Hamilton, 1830-1886--Correspondence.

Hidell, William H.--Correspondence.

Jackson, Henry R. (Henry Rootes), 1820-1898--Correspondence.

Johnson, Herschel V. (Herschel Vespasian), 1812-1880--Correspondence.

Johnston, Richard Malcolm, 1822-1898--Correspondence.

Lamar, L. Q. C. (Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus), 1825-1893--Correspondence.

Randall, James Ryder, 1839-1908--Correspondence.

Scott, Dred, 1809-1858--Trials, litigation, etc.

Smith, J. Henley, b. 1829--Correspondence.

Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, 1812-1883.

Toombs, Robert Augustus, 1810-1885--Correspondence.

Waddell, James I. (James Iredell), 1824-1886--Correspondence.

Wright, Ambrose R. (Ambrose Ransom), 1826-1872--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Party.

Confederate States of America.

Democratic Party (U.S.)

Republican Party (U.S. : 1854-)

United States. Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Whig Party (U.S.)

Subjects

American literature--19th century.

Charities.

Compromise of 1850.

Education--United States.
Elections--United States--1876.
Indians of North America--Government relations.
Plantations--Georgia.
Political parties--United States.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)
Secession.
Slavery--Georgia.
Slavery--Law and legislation--United States.
Slaves--Georgia--Correspondence.
States' rights (American politics)
Tariff--United States.
Transportation--United States.

Places

Confederate States of America--History.
Confederate States of America--Politics and government.
Georgia--History--1775-1865.
Georgia--History--1865-
Georgia--Politics and government--1775-1865.
Georgia--Politics and government--1865-1950.
Southern States--History--1865-1877.
Texas--Annexation to the United States.
Texas--History--Republic, 1836-1846.
United States--Economic conditions.
United States--History--1865-1898.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.
United States--Social conditions.
United States--Territorial expansion.

Occupations

Governors--Georgia.
Journalists.
Lawyers.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Georgia.
Senators, U.S. Congress--Georgia.
Vice-Presidents--Confederate States of America.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Alexander Hamilton Stephens, lawyer, journalist, governor of Georgia, member of both houses of Congress, and vice president of the Confederate States of America, were received by the Library of Congress through various gifts and purchases, 1900-1938.

Processing History

The Stephens Papers were processed in 1971, and the finding aid was revised in 2009. The collection was described in the *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress* (1937): 1.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Alexander Hamilton Stephen is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Alexander Hamilton Stephen are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of these papers is available on fifty-seven reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Alexander Hamilton Stephens Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1812, Feb. 11	Born near Crawfordsville, Wilkes County (now Taliaferro County), Ga.
1832	Graduated, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.
1834	Admitted to the bar, Crawfordsville, Ga.
1836-1842	Served in the Georgia house and senate
1843-1859	Served in U.S. House of Representatives
1861	Member, Georgia secession convention; elected to congress of the Confederate States of America
1861-1865	Vice president, Confederate States of America
1865	Headed unsuccessful Confederate Peace Commission at Hampton Roads, Va., with President Abraham Lincoln Arrested and confined at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor, Boston, Mass. Paroled
1866	Elected U.S. senator from Georgia, but did not present his credentials
1871	Became part owner and editor, Atlanta <i>Southern Sun</i>
1872	Unsuccessful candidate for U.S. Senate
1873-1882	Served in U.S. House of Representatives
1882-1883	Governor of Georgia
1883, Mar. 4	Died, Atlanta, Ga.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Alexander Hamilton Stephens (1812-1883) span the years 1784-1886, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1850-1883. The collection consists primarily of correspondence, supplemented by an autobiography and journal and miscellaneous memoranda, legal documents, and clippings. The papers are organized in [General Correspondence](#), [Letters from Servants](#), and [Autobiography and Journal](#) series.

The correspondence, mainly letters received, touches on virtually all aspects of Stephens's private and public life, focusing on the divisive issues leading to the Civil War, the operation of the Confederate government, and postwar problems and issues in the South. Specific topics discussed include plantation management, slavery, Texas annexation, territorial expansion, political parties, states' rights, the compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott decision, secession, formation of the Confederate government, the conduct of the Civil War, Reconstruction in the South, and the disputed election of 1876. Broader subjects include transportation, the tariff, education, and social, economic, and literary matters.

Prominent correspondents include Francis Preston Blair (1791-1876), Joseph E. Brown, Fitzwilliam Byrdsall, Henry Cleveland, Howell Cobb, Martin Crawford, A. H. Garland, John. B. Gordon, Paul Hamilton Hayne, William H. Hidell, Henry R. Jackson, Herschel V. Johnson, Richard Malcolm Johnson, L. Q. C. Lamar, James Ryder Randall, J. Henley Smith, Robert Augustus Toombs, James Iredell Waddell, and Ambrose R. Wright.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [General Correspondence, 1784-1886](#)
- [Letters from Servants, 1867-1883](#)
- [Autobiography and Journal, 1834-1837](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-114
REEL 1-57

Series

General Correspondence, 1784-1886

Letters received and occasional letters sent supplemented by memoranda, legal documents, and clippings.
Arranged chronologically with undated material arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.

BOX 115
REEL 57

Letters from Servants, 1867-1883

Bound volume of letters.
Arranged chronologically.

BOX 116
REEL 57

Autobiography and Journal, 1834-1837

Bound volume of an autobiographical writing and journal.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 15,135

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BOX 3 REEL 2	1852, Oct. 15-1855, Dec. 27
BOX 4 REEL 2	1855, Dec. 28-1857, Aug. 3
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General Correspondence, 1784-1886

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General Correspondence, 1784-1886

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