

BELL (WILLIAM R.) PAPERS
Mss. 2117, 2118
Inventory

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

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CONTENTS OF INVENTORY

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Proper acknowledgement of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

SUMMARY

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| Size. | 78 items and 2 manuscript volumes |
| Geographic locations. | New Orleans, Louisiana; Detroit, Michigan; California; Knock Kincardine, Inverneshire, Scotland |
| Inclusive dates. | 1842-1941 |
| Bulk dates. | 1842-1869 |
| Language. | English |
| Summary. | Collection consists of family correspondence and business papers relating to William R. Bell's stable and mortuary in New Orleans. |
| Restrictions on access. | No restrictions. If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm. |
| Related collections. | None. |
| Copyright. | Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law. |
| Citation. | Bell (William R.) Papers, Mss. 2117, 2118, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. |
| Stack locations. | C:6 |

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

William R. Bell (ca.1814-1874), a native of Scotland, was a mortician and owner of Union Stables on Carondelet Street in New Orleans, Louisiana. He and Jessie Russell Fisher wed in 1869.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of the papers consist of business correspondence and records of Bell's stable and mortuary. Items relative to Bell's Union Stable include orders and statements for rental of horses, carriages, and buggies to Federal soldiers occupying New Orleans. Letters (1863-1864) contain requests and instructions for exhumation, embalming, and transport of bodies of Federal soldiers to their families in the North.

Correspondence from Bell's relatives in Scotland, Canada, Michigan, and California discuss, among other things, economic conditions, family news, the Civil War, and gold mining (1842-1869). Of note is a letter relating the scarcity of food throughout Scotland and Britain resulting from the Irish potato famine (Feb. 26, 1847), as well as a letter from Minnesota discussing a Native American massacre (Sept. 24, 1862).

The volumes are comprised of a letter file book (1858-1867) in which business and a few personal letters were pasted, and a biography (1941) of Bell by Isabel Fisher Molony. A photograph of Bell is also included (ca. 1870).

CROSS REFERENCES

| Subject | Date | Description of relevant documents |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Banks, Nathaniel Prentiss, 1816-1894. | 1863-1864 | Abstract of bills against Department of the Gulf directed by William Bell to General Banks, Aug. 26, 1863 |
| Dakota Indians--Wars, 1862-1863. | Sept. 24, 1862 | Letter mentioning Native American massacre in Minnesota. |
| Gold mines and mining--California--History--19th century. | 1851, 1854 | Letter relating gold mining and arrangements for miner's wife to migrate to Calaveras County, California, Mar. 21, 1851; letter relating gold mining process and proceeds to laborers in the mines, Oct. 25, 1854. |
| Guerrillas--Confederate States of America. | 1863-1864 | Two letters relating guerilla warfare along the Mississippi River, Dec. 27, 1863; Union soldiers troubled by rumors of guerillas approaching Brashear City, Mar. 23, 1864. |
| Late blight of potato--Scotland. | Feb. 26, 1847 | Letter relating famine and exorbitant prices of food resulting from failure of potato crop. |
| New Orleans (La.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Collaborationists. | 1863, July-Oct. | Letters from Dr. Thomas Holmes granting William Bell use of his embalming process on condition of Bell's sympathy for the Union. |
| Plantation overseers--Alabama--Mobile. | Feb. 26, 1847 | Letter containing message for Peter Stuart, overseer in the employ of George Field, Esq. |
| Scotland--Economic conditions--19 th century. | 1842-1854, 1863 | Thirteen letters to William Bell, New Orleans, from relatives in Scotland, relate social and economic conditions. |
| Undertakers and undertaking--Louisiana. | 1863-1864 | Fifty-four letters requesting exhumation of bodies of Federal soldiers at New Orleans, with instructions for embalming and transportation of bodies to relatives in Northern states. |
| Union Stables (New Orleans, La.) | 1862-1864 | Forty-eight items consisting of orders and statements for rental of horses, cabs, and buggies to Federal soldiers occupying New Orleans. |
| United States. Army--African American troops. | Mar. 23, 1864 | Letter relating defense of Brashear City by African American troops. |

CONTAINER LIST

| <u>Stack</u> <u>Location</u> | <u>Box</u> | <u>Folders</u> | <u>Contents</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------|----------------|---|
| C:6 | 1a | 1-4 | Papers (1842-1869) |
| | 1b | -- | Letter file book (1858-1867) Bell biography (1941) |