

MCKOWEN-LILLEY-STIRLING FAMILY PAPERS

(Mss. 4356)

Compiled by
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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
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Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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SUMMARY

Size. 829 items (on microfilm)

Geographic locations. Louisiana, Italy.

Dates. 1797-1921.

Bulk dates. 1877-1901.

Languages. English, Italian, Spanish, French, German.

Summary. Early papers consist of financial and legal papers of the Lilley and Stirling families of the Plains region of East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. Most pertain to a lawsuit concerning ownership of Springfield Plantation, the home of Thomas Lilley and later, of his daughter, Edith. Papers of the McKowen family illustrate the family's personal and financial activities and the medical career of John Clay MacKowen. Many items document John C. MacKowen's role in the controversy surrounding a yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans in the late 1880s. Some materials relate to the Blue Grotto, a property that he owned in Anacapri, Italy.

Related collections. John Clay McKowen Papers (Mss. 2465)
McKowen and Beer Store Daybook, 90-110 (Mss. 4351)
George M. Lester Collection (Mss. 1209)
Elrie Robinson Collection (Mss. 1353)
Thompson's Creek Store Daybook, 90-107 (Mss. 4349)
Lewis Stirling Family Papers (Mss. 1866)

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Stack location. Mss.MF:M

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Thomas William Lilley (d. 1820) was an early planter and store owner in the Plains region of Louisiana. He founded and operated Springfield Plantation which was situated north of Baton Rouge. Lilley was active in the Rebellion of West Florida and was sheriff of East Baton Rouge Parish in the early 1800s. He married Eunice Smith of Natchez, and they had eight children: Edith Lilley (d. 1838), married three times to John Stirling, Jr. (1799-1825), John Hampton, and Samuel Gwin (d. 1838); Ann M. Lilley (1792-ca. 1870), married to George F. Behrns; George P. Lilley (1794-1846), married to Eunice Young; Elizabeth Lilley (ca. 1800-1821), married to Alexander A. White; Mary Lilley, married to John H. Mills; Thomas Wright Lilley (1802-1882), married to Elizabeth "Betsy" Young (1804-1882); Eunice Lilley (1804-1870), married to John Mills (1797-1839); and Samuel S. Lilley (1810-1870), married to Eliza.

In 1824, John Stirling, Jr., purchased Springfield Plantation with its equipment, buildings, and slaves from the estate of his father-in-law, Thomas Lilley. Upon Stirling's death in 1825, his widow, Edith, inherited the plantation. Springfield was later sold by Edith's heirs to Thomas Devall. The sale of the plantation was contested in the lawsuit "Eunice Stirling vs. George P. Lilley," with Charles Tessier as East Baton Rouge Parish Judge, 3rd District Court. George P. Lilley and other family members questioned the legality of the partition and sale of Springfield Plantation by Edith's widower and son-in-law, Samuel Gwin and Joseph D. Fonte respectively, who acted on behalf of Edith's minor heirs.

John McKowen (1812-1871) immigrated to Louisiana from Castle Dawson, Ireland, in 1830. He was a land owner and general merchant of Jackson, East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, managing the W. W. Chapman & Co. store in partnership with William W. Chapman from 1851 to 1861. McKowen and his first wife, Mary Ann Langford of Woodville, Mississippi, had three children: John Clay MacKowen (1842-1901), never married; Sarah Elizabeth McKowen, married to William H. Pipes; and Alexander McKowen (d. 1863?). John Clay MacKowen spelled his name differently from the rest of his family, who used McKowen. Both John and Alexander fought in the Confederate Army during the Civil War; Alexander was killed at Vicksburg. John was a lieutenant colonel in the 15th Louisiana Cavalry Regiment. He assisted in the capture of General Neal Dow at Port Hudson.

John McKowen married his second wife, Jane Shannon of Belfast, Ireland, in 1846; they had two children: William R. McKowen, married to Sally Pipes of Jackson, Louisiana; and Thomas Chalmers McKowen (1849-1926), married to Margaret Ann Germany (1852-1942). John McKowen was survived by his third wife, Christina, who signed over the estate of her late husband to his children, with William R. McKowen acting as executor.

John Clay MacKowen graduated from Dartmouth College in 1866, became a doctor, and practiced medicine in Jackson, Louisiana. He was appointed to the Board of Administrators of the Insane Asylum in Jackson on February 28, 1866. MacKowen studied the causes of yellow fever and wrote a treatise on digestive disorders entitled *Aromatic Toxins*, which was published in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, June-Sept., 1898. He opposed Louisiana public health officials who failed to institute quarantine during a yellow fever epidemic which was centered in New Orleans in the late 1880s. MacKowen's opponents in this matter included Edmond I. Souchon, president of the Louisiana State Board of Health, and Quitman Kohnke, chairman of the Board of Health in New Orleans. A libel suit was brought against MacKowen by Kohnke because of an article published by MacKowen in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on Jan. 19, 1899, which charged Kohnke of suppressing news of the presence of yellow fever in New Orleans. The court ruled in MacKowen's favor. MacKowen also authored a pamphlet entitled *Murder as a Money-Making Art*, which criticized official health policy in New Orleans.

Beginning in the 1870s, MacKowen spent much of his time in Anacapri, Italy, where he owned a property called the Blue Grotto and had a daughter, Giulia. He collected rare books and manuscripts during his travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia. MacKowen died in 1901 when, during a return visit to Clinton, Louisiana, he was shot by a neighbor.

William R. McKowen took over the operation of his father's general store, W. W. Chapman & Co. In 1869, William purchased the share of the store owned by John C. MacKowen and managed it in partnership with David W. Pipes. The store became known variously as W. R. McKowen & Co. and McKowen & Pipes. William's brother, Thomas Chalmers McKowen, was also a general merchant with a store in Lindsay, East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana.

The McKowen family is linked to the Lilley and Stirling families through the marriages of two of Thomas Chalmers McKowen's daughters to sons of Thomas Lilley Mills (1835-1918). Thomas was the son of Eunice Lilley and John Mills. Mary Virginia McKowen (1873-1952) married Thomas Lilley Mills (1867-1960), and Margaret Jane McKowen (b. 1890, called "Maggie") married Albert Carter Mills (1882-1956).

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Papers of the Lilley and Stirling families cover the years 1797 to 1853 and include legal documents and financial papers. Legal documents relate to the lawsuit Eunice Stirling vs. George P. Lilley. The lawsuit concerned the legality of the sale of Springfield Plantation from the estate of Edith Gwin (nee Stirling) to Thomas Devall. Included are documents related to the estates of Edith Gwin, Samuel Gwin, Joseph D. Fonte, George P. Lilley and others; and documents delineating custody of minor heirs Elizabeth Mosley Gwin, Eunice L. Stirling (daughters of Edith Gwin), and Samuel S. Lilley (brother of Edith). Many of the legal documents are copies of originals in the office of Charles Tessier, an East Baton Rouge Parish Judge. Many of these copies are signed by Tessier or by M. Moreno, Deputy Clerk. Documents are filed chronologically by the date of creation of the original, not by the date of their copying. Some documents were bound in groups according to subject. These groups have been maintained and are filed among the papers by date of the latest document. Among the undated materials is a document entitled "Schedule of title papers in the succession of Edith Lilley Gwin" and a document containing opinions forwarded to Thomas Devall on the validity of the title to Springfield Plantation.

Financial papers of the Lilley and Stirling families include land warrants for property granted to Thomas Lilley and Philip Bradshear. Bills of sale for slaves bought by John Stirling, Jr. are included along with a receipt for payment of a debt by Edith Gwin to Samuel S. Lilley. Also included is an undated list of property belonging to Devall, which was submitted to the attorney of Citizens' Bank of Louisiana as security for purchase of stock in the bank.

The McKowen family papers consist of correspondence, legal documents, financial papers, professional and personal papers, printed items, and photographs. Papers chiefly document the activities of John C. MacKowen but they include papers of John McKowen, William R. McKowen, David M. Pipes, and other Louisiana figures.

Correspondence primarily relates to the activities of John C. MacKowen and consists of three subseries: general correspondence, medical letters, and letters from publishers and editors. Within subseries, correspondence is arranged alphabetically by names of principal correspondents, then chronologically. Letters of minor correspondents are filed chronologically at the end of each subseries. General correspondence (1863-1901) contains letters by John C. MacKowen to family members along with drafts of his letters to officials, lawyers, and associates, and letters by a lawyer, Robert Chisolm, Arthur King, Grace King, Thomas C. McKowen, William R. McKowen, Tom Mills, David M. Pipes, Sarah E. Pipes, and N. B. Riddle. Other letters by miscellaneous authors discuss Louisiana politics, the

capture of General Neal Dow (letters dated 1898), and the possible donation of MacKowen's book collection to a New Orleans library (letters dated 1897-1898). Letters of William R. McKowen include one by John McKowen concerning his estate, and several by William King concerning the disposition of property in the estate of John McKowen. Letters in Italian, French, and German are primarily personal and include items by MacKowen's daughter, Giulia, and her husband, Giovanni Maresca.

Medical correspondence (1898-1901) contains letters from health officials and colleagues, chiefly concerning the yellow fever controversy. Included are letters from J. Bloom of Charity Hospital in New Orleans; officials at the Mississippi State Board of Health; the Orleans Parish Medical Society; the Quarantine Department of Texas; Dr. R. L. Randolph of the Louisiana State Board of Health; and George Tabor, a New Orleans city health officer. Form letters from Edmond Souchon at the Louisiana State Board of Health are included. Letters from patients and medical colleagues concerning general health matters are included.

Letters (1898-1901) from publishers and editors concern the publication of works and articles by MacKowen, many of which concern the yellow fever controversy. Included are letters by George H. Benton, a commercial publisher in Baton Rouge; W. C. Cheois of the Baton Rouge newspaper, *Daily Advocate*; Martin Engman of the *St. Louis Medical Gazette*; H. M. Folkes of *The Journal of the Mississippi State Medical Association*; H. W. Loeb of *Medical Review*; Mae E. Leake of *The True Democrat*; Richmond McKinney of *The Memphis Medical Monthly*; and John J. O'Shea of *The Catholic Standard and Times*. Form letters from various commercial publishers are included.

McKowen family legal documents primarily relate to activities of John C. MacKowen in Louisiana and Italy but include items documenting legal concerns of John McKowen, William R. McKowen, and others. Legal documents of John C. MacKowen include a deed of sale of his share of the store in Clinton, Louisiana, to William R. McKowen (1869); papers from a lawsuit against I. Ann Fluker (1868-1869); a list of documents related to property in San Francisco (1873); notes on a case of domestic violence in Clinton, Louisiana, with a statement by John C. MacKowen (1900); and commercial and domestic leases (1898-1900). Italian legal documents (1876-1890) include two documents in German and deal with John C. MacKowen's conduct in Anacapri, Italy, and his ownership of the Blue Grotto property. Included are plans and drawings of this property. Quitman Kohnke's libel suit against MacKowen is documented by papers (1898-1901) which include records of court proceedings, MacKowen's public apology for the publication of his libelous article, and copious medical and legal notes and statements prepared by MacKowen in support of his position. Notes discuss the presence and history of yellow fever in Louisiana. Letters from MacKowen's legal defense attorney, E. A. O'Sullivan, are included, with two letters by the attorney, W. S. Parkerson, who resigned as MacKowen's council in the Kohnke vs. MacKowen case.

Among the legal papers of John McKowen are a partnership agreement; an oath of allegiance (1840); testamentary documents (1869-1871) and estate papers of McKowen and his widow, Christina; and items documenting property holdings in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Kansas. Legal documents (1875-1881) of William R. McKowen include acts of subrogation in cases brought by William against Mrs. M. S. Johnson and A. G. Miller. Other items include a copy of a legal decision (1857) on the novation of debts, an act (1876) repealing the establishment of the College of Franklin, Saint Landry Parish, and a copy of testimony (1909) taken at the inquest of E. K. Judson at a murder trial in Clinton, Louisiana.

Financial papers of the McKowen family contain records of debts and accounts of John McKowen (1852-1868), W. W. Chapman and his wife, Mary (1855-1876), John C. MacKowen (1866-1901), William R. McKowen (1869-1920), and members of the Pipes family (1888-1921). Papers of John McKowen include a list (1862) of supplies sold to the Confederate Army and a tax assessment of his property (1864). Among the papers of John C. MacKowen are accounts (1866-1901) with the firm McKowen & Pipes; records (1897-1901) documenting property holdings in San Francisco managed by the real estate brokerage firm Madison & Burke; receipts (1899-1901) for medical supplies; and bills and receipts (1881-1901) for goods and services, taxes, and miscellanea.

Professional papers of John C. MacKowen include medical notes, a certificate (1866) appointing him to the Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana Insane Asylum, and a license to practice medicine in New Orleans (1899). Personal papers include John MacKowen's Italian visa (1900), a list of white, Democratic registered voters in East Feliciana Parish (1915), biographical notes on John C. MacKowen and the McKowen family, and a manuscript abridgement of *Gone With the Wind* (undated).

Printed materials include John C. MacKowen's printed work *Aromatic Toxins*, (1898); items related to medicine and public health in Louisiana; a summary of the Kohnke vs. MacKowen case; membership materials for societies and clubs including the American Social Science Association; invitations; calling cards; promotional items from alternative healers including J. M. Peebles, Charles S. Clark, H. J. Malvey and others; ephemera; and newspaper clippings. Photographs include a portrait, perhaps of John C. MacKowen, and three views of places in Louisiana.

LIST OF SUBGROUPS, SERIES, AND SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Subgroup 1. Lilley-Stirling Family Papers, 1797-1853 (96 items)

Series I. Legal documents, 1821-1853, undated (88 items)

Series II. Financial papers, 1797-1832 (8 items)

Subgroup 2. McKowen Family Papers, 1840-1921 (733 items)

Series I. Correspondence, 1863-1901 (296 items)

Subseries 1. General correspondence, 1863-1901 (170 items)

Subseries 2. Medical correspondence, 1898-1901 (69 items)

Subseries 3. Publishers' correspondence, 1898-1901 (57 items)

Series II. Legal documents, 1840-1909 (143 items)

Series III. Financial papers, 1852-1921 (193 items)

Series IV. Professional and personal papers, 1866-1915 (24 items)

Series V. Printed materials and photographs, 1875-1901 (77 items)

SUBGROUP, SERIES, AND SUBSERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Subgroup 1. Lilley-Stirling Family Papers, 1797-1853 (96 items)

Series I. Legal documents, 1821-1853, undated (88 items)
Documents related to the lawsuit Eunice Stirling vs. George P. Lilley; documents related to the estates of Edith Gwin, Samuel Gwin, Joseph D. Fonte, George P. Lilley and others; and documents demonstrating custody of minor heirs.

Series II. Financial papers, 1797-1832 (8 items)
Land grants for property granted to Thomas Lilley and Philip Bradshear. Bills of sale for slaves bought by John Stirling, Jr. and a receipt for payment of a debt by Edith Gwin to Samuel S. Lilley.

Subgroup 2. MacKowen Family Papers, 1840-1921 (733 items)

Series I. Correspondence, 1863-1901 (296 items)
Subseries 1. General correspondence, 1863-1901 (170 items)
Letters of John C. MacKowen, family, and friends concerning family matters, the yellow fever controversy, the capture of Neal Dow, the gift of MacKowen's rare book collection to a New Orleans library, and Louisiana politics. Personal letters in Italian, French, and German are included.

Subseries 2. Medical correspondence, 1898-1901 (69 items)
Letters of medical colleagues, health officials, patients, and others concerning the yellow fever controversy and other matters.

Subseries 3. Publishers' correspondence, 1898-1901 (57 items)
Letters from editors and publishers concerning the publication of works by MacKowen, chiefly on the subject of yellow fever.

Series II. Legal documents, 1840-1909 (143 items)

Documents of John C. MacKowen related to his suit against I. Ann Fluker, ownership of the Blue Grotto property in Anacapri, Italy, and other Italian lawsuits. Records of court proceedings, medical and legal notes, and attorneys' letters relating to the Kohnke vs. MacKowen libel suit. Property and testamentary documents of John MacKowen and documents related to William R. MacKowen's lawsuits against Mrs. M. S. Johnson and A. G. Miller.

Series III. Financial papers, 1852-1921 (193 items)

Records of accounts of John MacKowen, William W. Chapman, William R. MacKowen, John C. MacKowen, and members of the Pipes family. Papers of John C. MacKowen document medical expenses and proceeds from property owned in San Francisco.

Series IV. Professional and personal papers, 1866-1915 (24 items)

Professional papers of John C. MacKowen include medical notes, a certificate of appointment to the Board of the Louisiana Insane Asylum, and a medical license. Personal papers include an Italian visa, a list of voters in East Feliciana Parish, biographical notes the MacKowen family, and an abridgement of *Gone With the Wind* (undated).

Series V. Printed materials and photographs, 1875-1901 (77 items)

John C. MacKowen's printed work *Aromatic Toxins*, items related to medicine and health in Louisiana, club and society membership materials, invitations, calling cards, promotional items, ephemera, newspaper clippings, and photographs.

INDEX TERMS

<u>Terms</u>	<u>Series</u>
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Stirling, Eunice	1. I
Lilley, George P., 1794-1846	1. I
Lilley, Edith, d. 1838	1. I-II
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CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Reels</u>	<u>Contents</u>
Mss. MF:M	1-2	1797-1921