

See also UPA Microfilm:
MF 5735, Series B, Reel 17

Abishai W. Roberts Papers
(Mss. 370)
Inventory

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

Reformatted 2007

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Use of manuscript materials. If you wish to examine items in the manuscript group, please fill out a call slip specifying the materials you wish to see. Consult the Container List for location information needed on the call slip.

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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

Size.	363 items
Geographic locations.	New Orleans, La.; Lake Providence, La.; Ocean Springs, Miss.; Pass Christian, Miss.; Sandusky, Ohio
Inclusive dates.	1837-1916
Bulk dates.	1866-1878
Language.	English
Summary.	Legal papers, receipts, and personal and business correspondence of Abishai W. Roberts, attorney of Lake Providence, Louisiana.
Organization.	Chronological.
Restrictions on access.	If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
Related collections.	N/A
Copyright.	Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
Citation.	Abishai W. Roberts Papers, Mss. 370, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack location(s).	A:13-14; H:12; OS:R
Also available on:	Microfilm 5735, Series B, Reel 17 Omission: Papers 1870-1916

Biographical/Historical Note

Abishai W. Roberts (d.1878) was an attorney of Lake Providence, Louisiana. He served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War and was a prisoner of war at Johnson's Island Prison, Sandusky Bay, Ohio. Roberts was married to Lucy Smith and the two had four children.

Lucy and her sister, Josephine, were educated at a school in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Their mother, Aurelia Woodward, was previously married to General Eleazer Wheelock Ripley (1782-1839), Thomas Bell Smith (father of Lucy and Josephine Smith), and John S. Woodward (stepfather of the girls). She died in 1866.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains legal papers, receipts, a license to practice law signed by the Louisiana Bar Association (1857), papers concerning court cases, and personal and business correspondence of Abishai W. Roberts spanning the years 1857-1875. Papers dating before 1860 are principally those of John S. Woodward and Aurelia Woodward and include receipts, deeds, and mortgages, some showing the Woodwards' ownership of the San Socie Hotel in Pass Christian, Mississippi. A few letters of Lucy and Josephine Smith were written from boarding schools in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, and New Orleans (1851-1859).

Letters from Roberts during the Civil War include one written from Johnson's Island Prison (1864). Many post-Civil War letters were written to and from Lucy (or Lucie) Roberts and concern daily activities and family matters. Correspondents include various friends, her nephew J.M. Kennedy (1879-1881) and her husband (1867-1875). Bound typescript copies are available.

Numerous printed items are included, such as "Seventh Annual Report of the Young Men's Christian Association of New Orleans" (1860), "The Law Almanac for the Year 1870" (Hurd and Houghton, 1869), and "Convention Call Louisiana Branch of the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons" (1910).

List of Series

Series I, Correspondence, 1837-1916, undated

Series II, Legal and Financial Papers, 1853-1878, undated

Series III, Printed items, 1896-1910, undated

Series IV, Bound transcript copies, 1837-1916

Series Descriptions

Series I, Correspondence, 1837-1916, undated

The earliest letters in the collection are written to Aurelia Ripley, one from Judah Dana discussing the illness of her husband General E.W. Ripley (August 1837), and another from her stepdaughter Mrs. Lawson (November 1837). A number of letters to Lucy and Josephine Smith are from friends and cousins discussing family members and events in different towns (1853-1859), and also from their mother Aurelia writing to the girls at school in Ocean Springs, Mississippi (1855-1858). Also included are letters from Mrs. Lawton to Lucie Smith (1861) and from A.W. Roberts to his mother describing his trip to Lake Providence, La. (1860).

Civil War correspondence begins with a letter from Benjamin D. Roberts to his mother informing her of his enlistment in a voluntary company and speculating about the actions of his brother Abishai's regiment (1862). A letter to Lucie Smith from A.W. Roberts thanks her for a supply of provisions sent to his regiment and expresses a desire to become acquainted (1863) and a letter sent from Johnson's Island Prison in Ohio expresses Roberts' loneliness as a prisoner of war and his longing to see Lucie again (1864). A letter from J.D. Austen to Lucie Smith discusses the uncertain whereabouts of a mutual friend and the progress of the war itself (1865), and a letter to A.W. Roberts from his mother discusses the situation in Franklin, La. and mentions a school that is opening there for the education for former slaves (September 1865).

Post-war correspondence is primarily that of Lucie Smith. In one letter to A.W. Roberts, she consents to marriage but expresses reluctance to leave her ailing mother alone (July 1866) and a later letter from the caretaker of her mother updates Lucie Smith Roberts on her poor condition (October 1866). Letters to Lucie from various friends are included, such as Ella B. Jones, writing from Belize and St. Thomas, who discusses the different locations and the activities of her trips (1867-1868), her cousin Mary L. Smith discussing social activities, family members (1867-1869) and an outbreak of yellow fever in Port Hudson (1867), and a letter from "Mac B." to A.W. Roberts congratulating him on the birth of a son, Henry Roberts (May 1869). A large portion of the correspondence consists of letters between Lucie and her husband which discuss their daily activities, the children, financial matters, and travels of A.W. Roberts (1867-1878). Also included are letters from W.W. Leake to Mrs. A.W. Roberts providing information about a burial plot in St. Francisville and expressing sympathy for her husband's death (November 1878), to Lucie from her godmother giving her advice about financial issues (January 1879), and from John M. Roberts in Clinton, La., discussing Lucie's family's interests (August 1879).

Later correspondence consists of letters to Lucie Roberts from various friends and family, many from her nephew J.M. Kennedy (1879-1881). Also included are letters to and from Josie Roberts, daughter of Lucie and A.W. Roberts, from friends discussing school and visits (1891-1916, undated).

A number of other personal papers are found in the collection. These include an invitation to Commencement at McDonogh High School No.1, with Abishai W. Roberts listed as a graduate

(1893), an invitation for Mrs. Roberts to a Junior Department of the YMCA annual picnic at Spanish Fort (1898), and an invitation to Commencement of the New Orleans College of Dentistry (1902).

Series II, Legal and Financial Papers, 1853-1878, undated

The earliest legal document is a transfer of property from Mrs. Aurelia Woodward to her daughters Lucy and Josephine Smith (1855). The remainder of the legal papers belongs to A.W. Roberts and his family, including his certified copy of his license to practice law (1857). A number of letters to A.W. Roberts discuss legal issues and provide advice and information, while documents consist of bonds, mortgage papers, claims, and sales of property (1865-1875). Papers pertaining to the estate of Samuel Hecht (1870) and the succession of Benjamin Mosby (1878) are included, as are briefs: "In the Supreme Court of Louisiana: Shryock & Rowland v. Charles M. Pilcher" and "Supreme Court of Louisiana: Scott & Williams v. The Sheriff et als" (undated).

Some of the financial papers include tax receipts, deeds, and mortgages of Mr. and Mrs. Woodward, while the majority consists of various receipts, in particular tax receipts, and account sheets belonging to A.W. Roberts.

Series III, Printed items, 1896-1910, undated

The collection contains a large number of printed items. They include pamphlets such as:

"Seventh Annual Report of the Young Men's Christian Association of New Orleans" (1860),
"The Magic Crystal" Pacific Coast Borax Co. (undated),
"Amended Charter of The Children's Home of the Protestant Episcopal Church of New Orleans" (New Orleans, 1872),
"Garden Calendar and Price List" Otto Schwill & Co. Memphis, 1876),
"The Acts of Congress Relating to Loans and the Currency" (1868),
"The Law Almanac for the Year 1870" (Hurd and Houghton, 1869),
"Convention Call Louisiana Branch of the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons" (1910),
"The Latest Best Graded and Cheapest Series of School Books Published in America" (Timothy Morony, New Orleans),
"R. Maitre's Catalogue of Dutch, Winter, Spring and Summerflowering Bulbs" (undated)
The Teacher's Improved Sunday School Class Book (New York, 1884).

Also included are a fragment of a school primer and broadsides such as Root & Tinker's "Description of the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World" (undated), "The New Morse Cotton Press" New Orleans (undated), and "Babcock Fire Engines and all kinds of Fire Department Machinery" New Orleans (1870).

ABISHAI W. ROBERTS PAPERS
1837-1916

Mss. 370
LSU Libraries Special Collections

Series IV, Bound typescript copies, 1837-1916

Volume I. August 29, 1837-December 24, 1865

Volume II. May 2, 1866-December 5, 1870

Volume III. January 19, 1871-December 9, 1872

Volume IV. January 1, 1873-December 30, 1879

Volume V. January 8, 1880-April 7, 1916

Index Terms

Dana, Judah, 1772-1845.

Johnson Island Prison.

Hotels--Mississippi.

Lake Providence (La.)--History.

Lawyers--Louisiana.

Legal documents--Louisiana.

Louisiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives, Confederate.

Ripley, Eleazer Wheelock, 1782-1839.

Roberts, Lucy Smith.

Smith, Josephine.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Prisoners and prisons.

Woodward, Aurelia Smith, 1802-1866.

Woodward, John S.

Container List

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder(s)</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
A:13	1	1-3	1837-1869
	2	1-3	1870-1875
	3	1-4	1876-1916, undated
OS:R	--	1	Broadsides "The New Morse Cotton Press" New Orleans (undated); "Babcock Fire Engines and all kinds of Fire Department Machinery" New Orleans (1870)
H:12	--	--	Volumes 1-5 Typescripts
MF:5735, Series B	--	Reel 17	Omission: Papers 1870-1916