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## Goodnight Family (MSS 148)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
 Department of Library Special Collections  
 Western Kentucky University  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 148 GOODNIGHT Family**

1 box. 13 folders. 77 items. 1782-1990. Originals, photographs.

SC2012.41.3

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Thomas Mitchell Goodnight (1837-1908) was born in Allen County, Kentucky, the son of Isaac Goodnight (1802-1871) and Lucinda Jane (Billingsley) Goodnight (1814-1877). Thomas Goodnight was one of eight children. His brother, James Lincoln Goodnight (1846-1914) was president of West Virginia University, while another brother, Isaac Herschel Goodnight (1849-1901), served as a United States congressman and Kentucky circuit judge. Other siblings included John Jackson Goodnight (1832-1912), Jacob Henry Goodnight (1835-1876), Mary Helen Goodnight (1839-1908), Alexander Roland Goodnight (1842-1842), and Margaret Elizabeth Jane Goodnight (1850-1884). In 1858, Thomas enrolled at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee, to pursue training for the Cumberland Presbyterian ministry. At the onset of the Civil War in 1861, the draft requirement cut short Thomas' academic endeavors. He chose to join the Confederate Army, eventually securing a position as a chaplain. On July 22, 1864, Thomas was captured by Union forces near Decatur, Georgia. At the end of the war, he was released and returned home on 17 July 1865. The following year, he married Amanda Rebecca Middleton (1839-1882).

Trials plagued the lives of Thomas and Amanda Goodnight. Amanda constantly suffered from poor health and their first two children died in their infancy. They also moved numerous times throughout their marriage, initially from Kentucky to Kansas, and eventually from Kansas to Texas, always under difficult financial constraints. In 1872, they had a daughter, Delia, who lived to be fifty-seven years old. However, Amanda's own failing health led to her premature death at the age of forty-three in 1882. Thomas remarried in 1886 and resided in Lincoln County, Kentucky, until his death in October 1908.

Isaac Herschel Goodnight (1849-1901), one of Thomas Mitchell's brothers, was born on 31 January 1849 in Allen County. Like Thomas, he graduated from Cumberland University in 1872 and stayed on in 1873 to do post-graduate work in law. From 1889 to 1895, he served as a Kentucky representative in the United States Congress, but illness forced him to resign his seat. After recuperating for a year, he served as a Kentucky circuit judge from 1897 until his death in 1901. At the time of his death, he was a leading candidate for the United States Senate. His wife, Ella Hoy Goodnight (1857-1935), remained an influential presence in Franklin, especially in the Presbyterian Church, until her death.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The Collection.

*Simpson County, Kentucky: Families past and present, 1819-1989.* Simpson County Historical Society, comp., c1989.

**COLLECTION NOTE**

The collection consists of a wide array of items including correspondence, a journal, legal papers, tax receipts, articles on family members, and genealogical data. Also included are the extensive financial records of Isaac Goodnight, Sr. (1782-1869) found in a lengthy account book and a smaller record book. Isaac was a great-uncle of Thomas Mitchell Goodnight and was recognized as the first white man born in Kentucky.

One particularly intriguing piece in the collection is the journal of Cumberland Presbyterian minister Thomas Mitchell Goodnight. Thomas served as a chaplain for the Confederate States of America during the Civil War and gives a fairly detailed reminiscence of his service and ultimate capture during the war. He also chronicles his post-war travels and struggles while living in Kansas and Texas. Extensive records of births, deaths, marriages, and church records exist as well. The collection contains many financial and personal papers of Isaac Herschel Goodnight, a Kentucky judge and congressman in the 1880s and 1890s. Letters from three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of the Treasury J. G. Carlisle, and future governor of Kentucky William J. Goebel to Isaac Herschel Goodnight are included.

**SHELF LIST**

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Goodnight family</b>	<b>1782-1990</b>	<b>78 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory and family data	1782-1990	6 items
Folder 2	Isaac Goodnight, Sr.	1846-1904;1974	11 items
Folder 3	Isaac Goodnight, Sr. – Account book, (297p.) and letter, 1860	1816-1834;1860	2 items
Folder 4	Isaac Goodnight, Sr. – Financial record book (original and photocopy)	1824-1862	1 item, 74p.
Folder 5	Isaac Herschel Goodnight	1864-1905	14 items
Folder 6	Thomas McMurray Goodnight – Legal papers	1869-1884	11 items

Folder 7	Thomas Mitchell Goodnight – Journal	1868-1880	1 item, 97p.
Folder 8	Thomas Mitchell Goodnight – Journal [photocopy and typescript]	1868-1880	3 items
Folder 9	Legal papers	1798-1833; 1889-1914	10 items
Folder 10	Correspondence – From prominent individuals	1893-1899	5 items
Folder 11	Patent application	August 1889	1 item
Folder 12	Cooney and Edmunds families	1846-1873; 1924; n.d.	10 items
Folder 13 C1-D2b,#4	Certificates – Appointment	1897; 1912	2 items

### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD***

MSS GOODNIGHT Family 1782-1990  
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Letters, legal papers, photographs, articles, and data on the Goodnight family, Franklin, Kentucky; journal, 1868-1880, of Cumberland Presbyterian minister Thomas Mitchell Goodnight; items from William Jennings Bryan, William J. Goebel, J. G. Carlisle, and Frances Cleveland included.

1 box. 13 folders. 77 items. Originals, photographs.

### ***SUBJECT ANALYTICS***

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***SEE and SEE ALSO***

Goodnight family

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