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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

| BOX 1 | Goodnight family | 1782-1990 | 78 items |
|--------------|---|------------------|-----------------|
| 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 |

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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.

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SEE and SEE ALSO

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