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## Sumpter Family Collection (MSS 735)

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

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 735 SUMPTER Family Collection**

1 box. 14 folders. 171 items. 1822-1956. Originals, photocopies, typescripts.

1994.84.52

Related Collections: [MSS 130](#); [MSS 273](#)

***BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE***

Charles Ward (1794-1850), the son of Daniel Ward and Bridget French, was a native of Plymouth, New Hampshire. A captain in the U.S. Army, he served at various locations including Fort Delaware (Delaware), Fort Hamilton (New York), and Champlain Arsenal (Vermont). Charles Ward resigned from the Army in 1837 and settled on a plantation in Marion County, Georgia.

In 1819, Charles married Keturah "Catherine" Taylor Lindsey (1800-1872) of Newport, Campbell County, Kentucky. Among their children were: Catherine "Kate" Lindsey Ward, who married Reuben C. Shorter; James Noble Ward, who married Mary "Mollie" Backus; Charles Americus Ward, who married Julia Boring; Laura Amelia Ward, who married Asa Chapman; Dr. Ralph Shorter Ward, who married Mary Elizabeth "Mollie" Carter; and Marcus Lindsey Ward.

Ralph Shorter Ward and his wife Mollie had a daughter, Virginia Carter "Kate" Ward, who married William Cullin Sumpter of Bowling Green, Kentucky, the son of Samuel W. Sumpter and Sarah Elizabeth Cullin. William and Kate Sumpter's son Ward C. Sumpter was a 1922 graduate of Bowling Green, Kentucky's Ogden College and the holder of a master's degree from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. from Yale. He married Irene Malone Moss and taught chemistry at the College of the Ozarks (1930-1933) and Western Kentucky University (1938-1965).

***COLLECTION NOTE***

This collection consists primarily of correspondence and papers of Charles and Catherine (Lindsey) Ward and their descendants, most frequently their sons James Noble Ward and Ralph Shorter Ward; and correspondence and papers of Ralph's daughter, Kate (Ward) Sumpter, her husband William C. Sumpter, their son Ward C. Sumpter, and Ward Sumpter's wife Irene (Moss) Sumpter. Several miscellaneous items of genealogy and ancestral papers are also included.

Charles Ward's letters (Folder 2) are to his brother-in-law, John B. Lindsey of Newport, Kentucky. He initially writes from his military posting at Vermont's Champlain Arsenal of his hopes to return to Newport, where he has financial interests. After his move to Marion County, Georgia, he writes from Kichafoona, where he has been appointed postmaster, of his surroundings and of his hopes of operating a successful plantation. He also mentions the wreck on 10 October 1837 of the steam packet *William Gibbons*, on which he and his wife were passengers. The rest of his letters are focused on the details of a contorted scheme that, with Lindsey's help, would protect Ward's property from creditors while he attempts to pay debts arising out of a failed business partnership.

Catherine (Lindsey) Ward's correspondence (Folder 3) includes a letter written from Georgia to her sister recounting husband Charles's assignments in the years leading up to his resignation from the Army, including their experience of the *William Gibbons* wreck. Letters to Catherine from son Charles in Galveston, Texas express fears over the health of brother James. After Charles dies of yellow fever in 1858, his widow Julia (who would die soon afterward, along with their infant child), describes his final illness and her grief; another son, Marcus, writes from California upon James's death, apparently from tuberculosis, that same year. A letter from Catherine to "John," written in rhyme, appears to lament the onset of the Civil War, noting that the "rail splitter now has the reins."

Ralph Shorter Ward's papers (Folder 4) consist primarily of letters to him. His mother provides family updates, and relatives in Washington, D.C., Massachusetts and Georgia give details of far-flung relatives. Also included are Ralph's certificate appointing him to the Kentucky State Board of Health in 1898, and Ralph's obituary, which notes his Civil War service in John Hunt Morgan's 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Cavalry.

James Noble Ward's papers (Folder 5) include the lyrics of military songs collected at the popular Benny Havens tavern when James was a cadet at West Point. He also writes at length in 1856 about his wedding at Fort Columbus, New York, conducted in the middle of a storm. In letters to Ralph, James expresses a paternal-style concern for his much younger brother and describes two of his inventions, a water pump and some gun improvements, that he hopes will be profitable.

Papers of Ralph Ward's daughter Kate (Ward) Sumpter (Folder 6) include academic scores and recommendation letters related to her schoolteaching. Much of her correspondence is with relatives regarding genealogy, and includes her own 1926 narrative about her ancestry. Of interest is her reference in a letter of 1 January 1926 to husband William's failed campaign for mayor of Bowling Green; she blames the Ku Klux Klan, stating that "our city and county government is in their hands."

Papers of William C. Sumpter (Folder 7) include congratulatory notes on the birth of his son, invitations in connection with his status as a Kentucky Colonel, and telegrams sent to him on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Correspondence of Ward C. Sumpter (Folder 8) includes letters to his parents written during his studies at the University of Florida and Yale. When he is teaching in Arkansas, he and his father discuss financial affairs in light of the 1933 bank holiday ordered by President Roosevelt. Correspondence of Ward's wife Irene (Folder 9) is primarily genealogy-related.

Other miscellaneous items include the typescript of an 1852 letter of Laura Amelia Ward breaking her engagement to a cousin (Folder 10); colorful, fringed Victorian-style Christmas cards (Folder 13); and an 1828 bill of sale for an enslaved girl (Folder 14).

**SHELF LIST**

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Sumpter Family Collection</b>	<b>1822-1956</b>	<b>171 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Charles Ward – Correspondence and papers	1822-1838	9 items
Folder 3	Catherine (Lindsey) Ward – Correspondence	1838-1860	7 items
Folder 4	Ralph Shorter Ward – Correspondence and papers	1856-1924	16 items
Folder 5	James Noble Ward – Correspondence and papers	1842-1858	8 items
Folder 6	Virginia “Kate” (Ward) Sumpter – Correspondence and papers	1889-1934	34 items
Folder 7	William Cullin Sumpter – Correspondence and papers	1903-1956	30 items
Folder 8	Ward Cullin Sumpter – Correspondence and papers	1929-1938, n.d.	18 items
Folder 9	Irene (Moss) Sumpter – Correspondence	1930-1936	10 items
Folder 10	Ward family – Miscellaneous correspondence and papers	1852-1900	4 items
Folder 11	Genealogy notes – Ward, French families	n.d.	15 items
Folder 12	Cullin family – Papers	1842-1910	5 items
Folder 13	Christmas greeting cards	n.d.	3 items
Folder 14	Miscellaneous	1828-1931, n.d.	11 items

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS SUMPTER Family Collection 1822-1956  
735

Correspondence and papers of the family of Captain Charles Ward, including descendants in the Sumpter family of Bowling Green, Kentucky.  
1 boxes. 14 folders. 171 items. Originals, photocopies, typescripts.  
1994.84.52

**SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

Banks and banking, 1933 – Relating to B1,F8  
 Brantley, Laura Burt, 1883-1968 B1,F4,6  
 Brown family B1,F6  
 Brown, Margaret Noble (Russell), 1830-1917 – Relating to B1,F4  
 Burgess, Caroline A., 1838-1918 B1,F4  
 Carter family B1,F6  
 Cholera – New York, 1832? B1,F3  
 Cholera – Vermont, 1832 – Mentioned B1,F2  
 Christmas cards B1,F13  
 Civil War, 1861-1865 – Comments about, 1860? B1,F3  
 Clubs – Bowling Green B1,F14  
 Confederate States of America – Relating to B1,F14  
 Consolation, 1858, 1859 B1,F3  
 Crabb, Alfred Leland, 1884-1979 B1,F14  
 Cullin family B1,F12  
 Cullin, Josiah Wright, 1808-1889 – Relating to B1,F12  
 Deeds – Campbell County, 1822 B1,F2  
 Deeds – Warren County, 1846 B1,F14  
 Democratic Party – Warren County, 1932-1938 B1,F6-8  
 Disasters – Steamboats, 1836 – *William Gibbons* – Relating to B1,F2,3  
 Flenner, Martha Elizabeth, 1831-1910 B1,F4  
 French family B1,F11  
 Fry, Elcie, 1882-1968 B1,F6  
 Georgia – Marion County – Travel and description, 1837 B1,F2  
 Havens, Benny, 1787-1877 – Relating to B1,F5  
 Hodges, Ida Leighton, 1885-1949 B1,F6  
 Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels – Relating to B1,F7  
 Ku Klux Klan – Bowling Green – Comments about, 1926 B1,F6  
 Leete, Harriet Cornelia, 1848-1923 B1,F6  
 Lindsey family B1,F6  
 Lindsey, Helen Bradley, 1880-1952 B1,F6,9

Lindsey, John Brown, 1775-1849 – Letters to B1,F2  
 Lord, Catherine “Kate” Ward (Cox), 1840-1936 – Correspondence B1,F6,9,14  
 McGehee family B1,F9  
 McPike, Sarah “Sallie” Harris (Lindsey), 1782?-1856 – Letter to B1,F3  
 Mell, Alonzo W., 1855-1931 B1,F6  
 Morgan, John Hunt, 1825-1864 – Comments about, 1918 B1,F6  
 Noble family B1,F6  
 Obenchain, Lida Calvert, 1856-1935 – Relating to B1,F6  
 Ogden College – Bowling Green – Relating to B1,F8  
 Poems B1,F14  
 Potter, David Morris, 1910-1971 – Relating to B1,F6  
 Potter, Kittie Fanning (Brown), 1878-1952 B1,F6  
 Shorter, Catherine “Kate” Lindsey (Ward), 1821-1857 B1,F4  
 Shorter family B1,F6  
 Slave trade – Warren County, 1828 B1,F14  
 Sumpter, Irene Malone (Moss), 1902-1996 – Letters to B1,F9  
 Sumpter, Samuel Wheeler, Jr., 1829-1905 – Relating to B1,F14  
 Sumpter, Samuel Wheeler, Sr., d. 1829 – Relating to B1,F14  
 Sumpter, Sarah Elizabeth (Cullin), 1836-1919 B1,F14  
 Sumpter, Virginia Carter “Kate” (Ward), 1866-1933 – Correspondence B1,F6,8  
 Sumpter, Virginia Carter “Kate” (Ward), 1866-1933 – Relating to B1,F6  
 Sumpter, Ward Cullin, 1903-1977 – Correspondence B1,F8  
 Sumpter, Ward Cullin, 1903-1977 – Relating to B1,F6,7  
 Sumpter, William Cullin, 1862-1958 – Correspondence B1,F6-8  
 Teachers and teaching – Bowling Green, 1889, 1893 B1,F6  
 Teachers and teaching – Mississippi, 1894 B1,F6  
 Van Arsdall, Sarah “Sadie” E. (Carter), 1889-1969 B1,F6  
 Ward, Charles, 1794-1850 B1,F2  
 Ward, Charles, 1794-1850 – Relating to B1,F3  
 Ward, Charles Americus, 1825-1858 B1,F3  
 Ward, Daniel, 1764-1841 – Relating to B1,F6,9,10  
 Ward family B1,F4,6,9,11  
 Ward, James M., 1868-1896 – Relating to B1,F10  
 Ward, James Noble, 1823-1858 B1,F5  
 Ward, James Noble, 1823-1858 – Relating to B1,F3  
 Ward, Julia (Boring), 1835?-1858 B1,F3  
 Ward, Keturah Taylor “Catherine” (Lindsey), 1800-1872 – Correspondence B1,F3-5  
 Ward, Laura Amelia, 1831-1890 B1,F10  
 Ward, Marcus Lindsey, b. 1829 B1,F3  
 Ward, Marcus Lindsey, b. 1829 – Relating to B1,F10  
 Ward, Mary “Mollie” Electus (Backus), 1837-1867 – Relating to B1,F5  
 Ward, Ralph Shorter, 1839-1924 – Letters to B1,F4,5  
 Ward, Ralph Shorter, 1839-1924 – Relating to B1,F4  
 Weaving – Patterns B1,F6  
 Weddings, 1856 B1,F5  
 Wilson, Joseph Nicholas, 1858-1940 – Correspondence B1,F6

Wright, Thomas Briggs, 1862-1902 – Relating to B1,F14  
Wylie, W. B., 1854-1894 B1,F6

**SEE or SEE ALSO**

Sumpter, Kate Carter (Ward), 1866-1933

See

Sumpter, Virginia Carter “Kate” (Ward)

Ward, Catherine Taylor (Lindsey), 1800-1872

See

Ward, Keturah Taylor “Catherine” (Lindsey)

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