

**BERRY, BASIL
PAPERS
1815-1868**

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INTRODUCTION

This collection contains the records of a blacksmith's shop in Williamson County, Tennessee (1815-1868), which was owned by Basil Berry. In addition, there are five hand-written nineteenth century arithmetics. These items were the gift of Mrs. Ernest S. Solomon, Nashville, Tennessee. The collection consists of 1.29 linear feet of shelf space occupied: 1.29, and numbers approximately 25 items and 37 volumes.

Single photocopies may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This Basil Berry Papers are composed of approximately 25 items and 32 volumes of financial records of Basil Berry's blacksmith shop, located in Williamson County, Tennessee. The period covered is 1815-1868, with five volumes undated. In addition to the account books there are about five hand-written arithmetic's (one dated 1812) compiled for members of the Berry family.

The names of many well-known Williamson County persons appear in the volumes. They include William Bateman, Ephraim Brown, John Cartright, Stephen Childress, John D. Garrett, Zacheus German, Thomas Gray, Joseph Hews, Benjamin Lee, Benjamin Leigh, James McGavock, Hezekiah Oden, Daniel Perkins, Nicholas Perkins, William Perkins, Demay Sawyer, Henry Steward, William Swanson, Benjamin Tarkington, Abraham Truett, and John Williamson.

Examples of work performed by Berry are: "welding bout," "repairing log chain iron, "pointing plows," "making pot hooks," "soddering bridle bitt, "repairing wedge," "removes," (apparently removing horse shoes), "sharping (sharpening) sheers" "making heel and putting on sithe and making strap and putting it on," "shose (shoes) and setting," "pr. single trees," "ring and steeple for ox yoak," "putting old irons on double tree," "sharping sheer and shovel," "repairing augur," and "making nails."

The records indicate that at times Berry accepted raccoon skins, an old shovel and basket, a cart, and "20 one half barrels corn," in lieu of cash as remuneration for his services. In one of the account books he recorded a sale of whiskey to Whiton Mammon at fifty cents per gallon on May 30, 1822.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Basil Berry

Blacksmith and landowner of Williamson County, Tennessee; bachelor (a brother, Richard (1802-1866) was also a bachelor)

- ____ Born November 17,
- 1801 Listed in William County Tax list as owner of a section (640 acres)War of
- 1812 Private in Captain James McEwen's Company, 2nd Regiment, Tennessee Volunteers, commander, Colonel Thomas Hart Benton; participant in Battle of Talledega
- 1814 Administrator, with others, of the will of James Berry (he was not a legatee of James, therefore probably not his son)
- 1817 Was paid \$121 from the estate of James Berry "for military services rendered"

For at least some of his business life and at the time of his death, Berry was in partnership with Julius G. Berry, probably a brother. Berry was a man of considerable property; post-mortem inventory of real estate, \$14,731.73, and of cash and notes, \$23,514.43. Berry maintained a home at which his nephew, Andrew J. Hamilton, resided; nephew cared for him in his old age; home was probably located in the present-day (1967) "Grassland" section of Brentwood, Tennessee, as the graves of Basil and his brother, Richard, are located on a farm in this area.

According to his will, legatees were his nieces and nephews as named, and Basil Smith, child of Mrs. Adeline Smith, his "reputed son." Nephews besides Andrew J. Hamilton named in the will as follows: James T. Hamilton, Thomas B. Hamilton, Benjamin B. Berry, Mansfield Lafayette Berry, and Thomas F. Berry.

- 1871 Died, November 27 1871

Sources:

1. Williamson County records (typed). Transcribed by members of the W.P.A.
2. Microfilm in the Archives Division, Tennessee State Library and Archives, for Williamson County wills, 1870's.
3. Manuscripts in the Manuscript Division, Tennessee State Library and Archives. "McEwen family genealogy".

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

Blacksmith Shop Account Books

1. Volumes I-V, 1815-1828
2. Volumes VI-X, 1821-1828
3. Volumes XI-XIV, 1829-1831

Box 2

Blacksmith Shop Account Books

1. Volumes XV-XIX, 1831-1838
2. Volumes XX-XXIII, 1837-1855
3. Volumes XXIV-XXVII, 1843-1868

Box 3

1. Blacksmith shop account books (five volumes), undated
2. Arithmetics (five volumes)
3. Correspondence, 1845
4. Maps - Tennessee, Post route, 1914; U. S., ca. 1820
5. Promissory notes, 1821-1849