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**BROWN, JOSEPH  
PAPERS,  
1772-1965**

**(THS Collection)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The papers of Col. Joseph Brown (1772-1868), an early settler in Nashville and later in Maury County, Tennessee; a participant in the Indian Wars, 1794-1795; and in the War of 1812; and a minister in later life (1823-ca. 1855) of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church; were given to the Tennessee Historical Society and to the Tennessee State Library and Archives over a period of years, ending in 1965, by various donors. The collection numbers approximately 280 items and occupies .42 linear feet of shelf space.

Literary rights to the unpublished writings in these papers have been dedicated to the public. Single photocopies of unpublished materials may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers of Colonel Joseph Brown, numbering approximately 280 items, cover the period 1772-1965 and contain biographical and genealogical data, family and general correspondence, land records, financial records, claims, a photograph of a painting of Joseph Brown, etc.

The biographical and genealogical data consist of his commission in the War of 1812, a membership certificate in the Sons of Temperance, 1949, genealogical charts tracing Brown descendants to 1965, and posthumous newspaper clippings about the Brown family. The financial papers deal with the claim of the Brown family for reparation from the United States government for property lost in an Indian attack in 1788 in which Joseph Brown's father, James, and two brothers were killed. They also contain two letters from Mr. Brown applying to friends for financial relief, some statements, and a warrant.

Some correspondence is in regard to Joseph Brown's claim to a slave, Sue, stolen from his father in 1788, and to her children and grandchildren born in captivity but recovered by Joseph Brown in 1815. Additional correspondence and documents concern Joseph Brown's claim to bounty lands for service in the Cherokee campaign in 1795 and Seminole Indian War claims, 1818-1836. There are family letters from his various children, their wives and husbands, and other relatives. The family letters refer, among other things, to the election of Joseph's son, James, to the Mississippi legislature in the mid-1800's and to the attendance of several grandsons at the University of Mississippi in its earliest days. There are also some letters from Joseph Porter Brown, a son, to a business associate, John Gill, Jr., 1827-1835.

There are three biographical sketches containing references to enslavement by the Cherokee Indians at Nickajack, Tennessee, and to enslavement by the Creeks; to the Indian Wars of 1792-1796; to the War of 1812 and to the Seminole Indian Wars; to the schism in the Old Presbyterian Church which led to the founding of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1810; and to the settlement of Maury County, Tennessee.

Famous persons mentioned are John Sevier, James Robertson, and Andrew Jackson. Indian chiefs who appear are Cotetoy (Williams Island, Tennessee), Old Breath (Nickajack, Tennessee), and Alexander McGillivray (chief of the Creek Nation). A few early settlers near Columbia, Tennessee, are named: Thomas James Parsley, Col. Adam K. Alexander, Benjamin Thomas, Vincent Ridley, Ben Lewis, and Abner Pillow. In connection with the Old Presbyterian Church, Rev. Gideon Blackburn appears, and Rev. James B. Porter's founding of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is narrated.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

### **Colonel Joseph Brown, 1772-1868**

- 1772 August 2 Born in Surrey County, North Carolina, son of Colonel James Brown (1733?-1788), an Irish immigrant, and Jane Gillespie (1740-1831) of Culpepper County, Virginia
- Educated in schools of Guilford County, North Carolina
- 1788 May 9 Enslaved by Cherokee Indians living at Nickajack, Tennessee, after the boat on which he was traveling to Nashville with his family was plundered. His father, brothers, James and John, and an escort of five men were murdered. His mother, sister, Elizabeth, and brother, George, were captured by the Creeks.
- 1789 April 20 Joseph and his sisters, Jane and Polly, exchanged at Coosewattee, Tennessee, by John Sevier for Indian prisoners
- Attended school in South Carolina with cousins
- 1790 Fall Mother and sister, Elizabeth, released by Creeks  
1792 March Arrived at mother's homestead, located on the Duck River, three miles from Nashville, on lands awarded to father for services in Revolutionary War
- 1792-1796 Occupation - sometimes express carrier between Nashville and Knoxville, and sometimes in military service
- 1794 September 13 Under orders from General Robertson, guided and assisted in attack on Nickajack, known as the "Burnt Corn Expedition." The Indians were routed and the town demolished.
- 1795 Member of the Tennessee Volunteers in Captain Henry Childress' company and in company commanded by Lt. William Gillespie, which protected the frontier from hostile Creeks and Cherokees
- 1796 January 19 Married Sally Thomas and settled in woods about three miles from Nashville at mouth of White's Creek
- 1796-1800 Experienced a religious reawakening, became an elder in the Old Presbyterian Church, was active in church affairs

- 1806 May 1 Inherited and bought about 2,000 acres of land, two or three miles south of where Columbia, Tennessee, now stands, and settled near Columbia
- 1807 December 21 Meeting at Joseph Brown's house, a commission formed by Governor John Sevier established Maury County and organized the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions
- 1809 Appointed justice of the peace; was a member of the corporation, the Columbia Water Company, organized to supply water to the public square at Columbia; and was one of the first trustees of Woodward Academy
- 1810 Was an elder in Old Presbyterian Church at Columbia, but because of a doctrinal disagreement was barred from attending
- 1810 February 4 Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized by Rev. James B. Porter. Joseph Brown subsequently became an elder in this church.
- 1813 September 10 Commissioned lieutenant-colonel. He took part in the Battle of Tulluschatchie (November 3, 1813) and in the Battle of Talladega (a few days later) under Andrew Jackson.
- After the Indian Wars Brown returned to religious pursuits, travelling during his lifetime to Alabama (1822), Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, Texas, and Kentucky. He aided in constructing several churches both in and out of Maury County, Tennessee. He also helped to form the Kentucky Synod of the Presbyterian Church.
- 1823 Became a "regular minister of the gospel"
- 1849 May 16 Became member of Sons of Temperance
- 1857 From 1857 to death lived with a widowed daughter, Ann Lindsay, in Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee
- 1868 February 4 Died in Pulaski, Tennessee

## CONTAINER LIST

### **Box 1**

1. Biographical Sketch No. 1—by Joseph Brown, 1860?
2. Biographical Sketch No. 2—by Thomas F. Lindsay, 1859 (written from grandfather's notes)
3. Biographical Sketch No. 3—by Rev. Isaac Shook (undated)
4. Biographical Data—1813, 1849, 1961
5. Correspondence—Re: Negroes recovered from Indians, 1814-1816
6. Papers relating to land holdings of the Brown family, 1799-1851
7. Financial documents and letters, 1788-1835
8. Papers—Re: Claim of Joseph Brown to bounty lands for 1795 service, 1850-1856
9. Correspondence and Legal Documents—Re: Seminole Indian War claims, 1818-1836
- 9a. Correspondence—Joseph Brown to Joseph Emerson Brown, 1858-1859
10. Correspondence—to Joseph Brown from brothers, George (1835) and William (1831, 1834)
11. Correspondence—David Franklin Brown to father, Joseph, 1838-1861; to brother, Joseph P., 1841
12. Correspondence—Esther Elizabeth King (Brown) Lane to father, Joseph Brown, 1858-1861; M. M. Lane to father-in-law, Joseph Brown, 1858-1860
13. Correspondence—James Brown to his father, Joseph, 1830-1859
14. Correspondence—Mary A. (Strong) Brown and wife of James) to father-in-law, Joseph, 1848, 1857
15. Correspondence—John T. Brown to father, Joseph, 1828-1849
16. Correspondence—Nancy Brown (wife of John T.) to father-in-law, Joseph, 1852-1862; to two sisters-in-law, 1841, 1854
17. Correspondence—Joseph Porter Brown to father, Joseph, 1830, 1841. Letter announcing J. P. Brown's death.
18. Correspondence—Joseph P. Brown to John Gill, Jr., 1827-1835
19. Correspondence - Jane S. (Frazier) Brown (wife of Joseph P.) to father-in-law, Joseph, 1844-1857
20. Correspondence—Joshua T. Brown to father, Joseph, 1842, 1847
21. Correspondence—Mary Armour (Brown) Rogan to grandfather, Joseph Brown, 1846-1858
22. Correspondence—Family, 1833-1857
23. Secondary source material, 1727-1965: genealogical charts, photograph of Joseph Brown, map of the route by Brown family from North Carolina to Tennessee; 2 1979 letters not accessioned.

folders 1, 2, and 3 appear to contain material which was published in the *Southwestern Monthly Magazine*, 1852, in two parts, pp. 10-16, 72-80