



State of Tennessee
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**McGAVOCK-HAYES
FAMILY PAPERS
1784-1888**

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INTRODUCTION

The McGavock-Hayes Family Papers, 1784-1888, center upon the lives of the Oliver B. Hayes and Lysander McGavock families of Brentwood, Tennessee. They were given to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. McGavock Hayes of Nashville, Tennessee, through the agency of Mrs. Henry Buckner on behalf of the Manuscript Collecting Program of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Tennessee.

The materials in this finding aid measure 3.36 linear feet. There are approximately 2,000 items in the collection. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the McGavock-Hayes Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The McGavock-Hayes Family Papers, 1784-1888, contain correspondence, indentures, estate papers, accounts, some medical items, a few race course accounts and documents, and school accounts for the families of Oliver Bliss Hayes, Sr., and Lysander McGavock. These families had close ties of kinship with New England through the Hayes and Harris families who had intermarried with the McGavocks. Oliver Bliss Hayes, Sr. (1783-1858), was born in South Hadley, Massachusetts, and came to Tennessee in 1808. His son, Oliver, Jr., married Emily McGavock, daughter of Lysander McGavock. Jeremiah George Harris (1809-1901) was a native of Connecticut and married Lucinda McGavock, daughter of James McGavock (brother of Lysander) and Mary Kent. These family letters and papers reflect social and political conditions and thought of the period both before and after the Civil War.

There are a number of Civil War items in the collection. Jeremiah George Harris wrote Oliver Hayes from Washington, D.C., January 10, 1861, that national matters “seem to be running from bad to worse every day.” He feared that overt acts might destroy the Union forever. When the War came, Harris, a naval officer, remained in the service of the United States while his son, Joseph Ewing Harris, enlisted in the Confederate Army. The son wrote a number of letters from camps in the Knoxville area.

Henry Martyn Hayes, brother of Oliver B. Hayes, Jr., described conditions in Nashville on February 16, 1862, two days before the Federal army, numbering 70,000, entered the city. There was a great excitement, and he lamented that the country would be overrun, and nothing but the intervention of England and France or the interposition of providence could save the South from subjugation. Letters of Henry, prior to the Civil War, describe his travels to Niagara Falls, Montreal, New York (1854), and Havana (1860). He also had a good deal to say about Kensington and Tyree Springs, well-known watering places patronized by Tennesseans.

Lucie M. Harris, daughter of Jeremiah George Harris, who later married Van Sinderin Lindsley, wrote from Connecticut and Philadelphia to members of the McGavock and Hayes families, her Tennessee cousins. Her letters contain information about the French girls' school outside Philadelphia where she was a student, about her roommate, Selene Harding, about Tennesseans who visited her, and conditions in the North during the Civil War. She wrote, “The people do not seem to feel it at all – they have never been inconvenienced in the least by this war – it is said there are more persons at New York and Saratoga than there has been for years – and oh, to think how the Southern people have suffered.”

The letters of John O. Ewing, son of Sally McGavock and Joseph Love Ewing, contain valuable information about the cattle and cotton business in Texas after the Civil War. His first letters were written in 1851 and 1852 while he was in school in Lebanon, Tennessee. A letter written on a vacation trip to the mountains of Smith County, Tennessee, describes the beautiful country. John married Sarah Lightfoot of Courtland,

Alabama, and lived there until he moved to Paris, Texas, in 1873. He became a cotton buyer in Texas. His letters are full of descriptions of the country, the cattle business, hunting, fishing, troubles with the Indians, crops, and politics during the 1870s.

Adelicia Hayes, sister of Oliver B. Hayes, Jr., who married (1) Isaac Franklin, (2) Joseph Alexander Smith Acklen, and (3) Dr. William A. Cheatham, has twenty-two letters in the collection written between 1835 and 1882. One letter was written during the Civil War when she was preparing for the advent of the Federals into the city of Nashville. Some letters tell of life on her Louisiana plantation and trips to New Orleans.

Margaret E. McGavock, youngest daughter of Lysander McGavock and Elizabeth Crockett, wrote eight letters to her brother, Hugh, during the years 1851-1852 while she was in school at the Nashville Female Academy, and he was in school in Lebanon. These letters contain information about the Academy and many of the students, including the O'Bryan girls, Fannie and Martha.

Other correspondents in the collection include Joseph L. Ewing, Emily (McGavock) Hayes, Lysander McGavock Hayes, Oliver Bliss Hayes, Jr., Oliver Bliss Hayes, Sr., Sallie (McGavock) Pointer, and her husband, Thomas Pointer. All of the letters reflect conditions and life in Williamson and Davidson counties and in parts of New England during the period 1851-1880.

There are some school records and accounts for Columbia Athenaeum, Cumberland University, Montgomery Bell Academy, Nashville Female Academy, Miss O'Bryan's School, University of Nashville, and Ward's Seminary.

Some accounts deal with the rental of a race course by Lysander McGavock. Estate papers of Oliver B. Hayes, Jr., and Lysander McGavock; some Civil War records of supply purchases; and accounts of Lucie Harris, Lysander M. Hayes, Oliver B. Hayes, Jr., Cynthia McGavock, Mrs. Elizabeth McGavock, Lysander McGavock, Thomas Pointer, and other members of these families are in the collection. Some genealogical data for the Cocke, Drake, Fenton, and Robertson families make up the remainder of the collection. A portion of this material has been microfilmed. (See Mf. Ac. No. 75.)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Oliver Bliss Hayes, Sr.

- 1783 Born in South Hadley, Massachusetts; son of The Reverend Joel Hayes
- 1808 Moved to Nashville, TN
- ca.1815 Married Sarah Clement Hightower of Franklin, Tennessee; lived at “Rokeby” and had the following children: Richard, Joel Addison, Adelia, Laura, Oliver Bliss, Henry Martyn, and Corinne
- Ordained as a Presbyterian minister
- Studied law and practiced in Nashville
- 1858 Died in Nashville

Oliver Bliss Hayes, Jr.

- 1825 Born April 30 in Williamson County, Tennessee; son of Oliver Bliss Hayes, Sr., and Sarah Clement (Hightower) Hayes
- 1852 Married Emilie McGavock and had the following children: Thomas Pointer, Elizabeth, and Lysander McGavock (1853-1888)
- 1868 Died

Lysander McGavock

- 1800 Born in Nashville, Tennessee; son of David (1763-1838) and Elizabeth McDowell (- 1807) McGavock
- 1822 Married Elizabeth Crockett (1795-1862); farmer and lived at “Midway” in Williamson County, Tennessee; interested in horse racing and had a course on his estate
- 1855 Died in Williamson County, Tennessee

CONTAINER LIST

Microfilm Roll #1

Box 1

1. Correspondence – Author unknown
2. Correspondence – Acklen, William H. - Pauline
3. Correspondence – Alexander - Bratton
4. Correspondence – Brenthall - Charttan
5. Correspondence – Cheatham, Adelia (Hayes) - Franklin Acklen, 1860-1882; n.d.
6. Correspondence – Clack - Cunningham
7. Correspondence – Davis - Ewing
8. Correspondence – Ewing, John O., 1851-1879
9. Correspondence – French - Graham
10. Correspondence – Hagan - Harbert
11. Correspondence – Harding, E. McGavock - John
12. Correspondence – Hargrove, Kate Harpeth
13. Correspondence – Harris, Jeremiah George, 1851-1868
14. Correspondence – Harris, Joseph Ewing, 1861-1865

Box 2

1. Correspondence – Hayes, Alice - Bettie
2. Correspondence – Hayes, Emily McGavock, 1851-1879
3. Correspondence – Hayes, Henry, M., 1852-1880
4. Correspondence – Hayes, J.A. - Lysander M., 1866-1888
5. Correspondence – Hayes, Oliver B., Sr., 1852-1858
6. Correspondence – Hayes, Oliver B., Jr., 1852-1867
7. Correspondence – Hayes - Hymer
8. Correspondence – Jackson - Knox
9. Correspondence – Ladd - Lovering
10. Correspondence – Lindsley, Lucie Harris, 1863-1888
11. Correspondence – McDonald - McFerrin
12. Correspondence – McGavock, A., Agnes, and Bettie P.
13. Correspondence – McGavock, Carrie - Cynthia

Box 3

1. Correspondence – McGavock, David, E.P., and Ephraim
2. Correspondence – McGavock, Hugh, J.H., and James
3. Correspondence – McGavock, John - Lysander
4. Correspondence – McGavock, Margaret E., 1852-1887
5. Correspondence – McGavock, Myra, Polly, and Randall

6. Correspondence – McGavock, Willie H. – McNairy, R.C.
7. Correspondence – Maddin - Ormes
8. Correspondence – Park - Pointer, Pattie
9. Correspondence – Pointer, Sallie McGavock, 1852-1855
10. Correspondence – Pointer, Sallie McGavock, 1857-1876
11. Correspondence – Pointer, Samuel A., 1852 - Thomas, 1852-1857
12. Correspondence – Quigley - Shields
13. Correspondence – Shipp, Sarah, 1875-1886
14. Correspondence – Smith - Twitty
15. Correspondence – Wallace - Wather
16. Correspondence – Wilcox - Yeatman

Box 4

1. Commission – Harris, Jeremiah George, 1843
2. Genealogical Data – Cocke, Drake, Fenton, and Robertson families
3. Invitations & Programs – Commencement, reception, and weddings
4. Land Surveys & Plats – 1784-1837; map of U.S. mail line
5. Legal Documents – Agreements, power-of-attorney, etc., 1819-1869
6. Legal Documents – Estate papers, Archibald Carmichael
7. Legal Documents – Estate of Oliver B. Hayes, Jr., 1866-1870
8. Legal Documents – Estate Papers of Lysander McGavock
9. Legal Documents – Indentures, 1790-1834
10. Legal Documents – Indentures, 1835-1862
11. Legal Documents – Indentures, 1784-1838
12. Legal Documents – Land, 1840-1847
13. Legal Documents – Land, 1840-1877
14. Legal Documents – Race course
15. Legal Documents – Slave deeds

Box 5

1. Civil War records
2. Medical notebook
3. Miscellaneous – Advertisements; Almanac, 1868; clippings, etc.
4. Obituaries and funeral invitations
5. Recipes
6. Schools (see folder for schools' names)
7. Stamps and Envelopes
8. Writings – Lysander M. Hayes, re: California; Indians
9. Accounts – Harris, Lucie, 1860-1866
10. Accounts – Hayes, Lysander M., 1869-1880
11. Accounts – McGavock, Cynthia, 1847-1874
12. Accounts – McGavock, Cynthia, 1875-1881

13. Accounts – McGavock, Mrs. Elizabeth, 1860-1867
14. Accounts – McGavock family: David, Hugh, Margaret, and Sallie
15. Accounts – Miscellaneous
16. Accounts – Pointer, Thomas G., 1857-1883

Box 6

1. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – n.d.
2. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1842 -1853
3. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1854 -1855
4. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1856-1857
5. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1858 -1859
6. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1860
7. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1861
8. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1862 -1863

Microfilm Roll #2

9. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1864-1865

Box 7

1. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1866-1867
2. Accounts: Hayes, O.B. – 1868-1875
3. Account Books – Hayes, O.B., 1865
4. Bank Books – Hayes, O.B., 1856-1865
5. Cancelled Checks – Hayes, O.B.
6. Accounts: Hayes, Mrs. O.B., Jr. (Emily McGavock Hayes) – 1859-1871
7. Accounts: Hayes, Mrs. O.B., Jr. (Emily McGavock Hayes) – 1872-1880

Box 8

1. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – n.d.
2. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1821-1826
3. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1827-1829
4. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1830-1831
5. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1832-1833
6. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1834-1839
7. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1840-1845
8. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1846-1847
9. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1848-1849
10. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1850-1851
11. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – 1852-1872
12. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – Medical – 1824-1862
13. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – Racing – 1824-1851
14. Accounts: McGavock, Lysander – Schools – 1837-1861
15. Account Book – 1853-1854

NAME INDEX

This is a name index of only the correspondence in the McGavock-Hayes Family Papers, together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the box and folder in which the material is to be found.

Acklen, Adelia (Hayes) Franklin See Cheatham
Acklen, Pauline, 1882, 1-2
Acklen, William H. (4), 1882-1884, 1-2
Alexander & Bostick, 1848, 1-3
Allison, Martha (2), 1870-1874, 1-3
Baker, Sarah, 1855, 1-3
Barker, W.A., 1854, 1-3
Barthill, J.P., 1870, 1-3
Bate, W.B., 1872, 1-3
Beech, H., 1851, 1-3
Berry, A.D., 1854, 1-3
Blackman, W.C., 1877, 1-3
Bond, Mattie W., 1875, 1-3
Bratton, W.S., (2), 1873, 1874, 1-3
Brenthall, C.J. (14), 1873-1877, 1-4
Briggs, George I., 1869, 1-4
Brown, Robert, 1868, 1-4
Caldwell, Hu, 1840, 1-4
Campbell, Alex W., 1859, 1-4
Card, Benjamin C., 1865, re: claim against U.S., 1-4
Carter, M.B., 1861, re: Civil War, Christmas in camp, 1-4
Carter, Sallie, n.d., 1-4
Chapeze, Susie M. (9), 1875-1886, re: farming and whiskey distillery in Kentucky, 1-4
Chartan, Edmund, 1826, 1-4
Cheatham, Adelia (Hayes) Franklin Acklen (22), ca. 1835-1882, 1-5
Clack, Mary E. (6), 1873-1877, 1-6
Clark, Bettie, 1867, 1-6
Cloyd, Joseph, 1869, 1-6
Cloyd, Mary E., 1852, 1-6
Conley, Sarah Wood, n.d., 1-6
Crockett, James (2), 1834, 1837, 1-6
Crockett, James T., 1866, 1-6
Crockett, John, 1837, 1-6
Crockett, Pauline L., 1882, 1-6
Crockett, W.A., n.d., 1-6
Crockett, William D. (2), 1837, 1-6

Cullom, J.W. (Chaplain, Civil War), 1861, 1-6
Cunningham, The James Cunningham, Son and Company, 1887, 1-6
Davis, F.W., n.d., 1-7
Dickinson, Jacob McGavock, 1918, 1-7
Douglass, Mary (2), n.d., 1-7
Drake, Maggie, 1875, 1-7
East, Edward H. (2), 1875, 1876, 1-7
Ewin, John L., 1853, 1-7
Ewing, A.B., 1873, 1-7
Ewing, Eliza McD., 1861, 1-7
Ewing, Hugh F. (5), 1852-1858, 1-7
Ewing, H. McG. (4), 1866-1874, 1-7
Ewing, John O. (20), 1851-1879, re: cattle and cotton business; Indians in Texas; game; camp meetings, etc., 1-8
Ewing, Joseph, 1878, 1-7
Ewing, M.V., 1851, 1-7
Ewing, Sarah E., 1852, 1-7
Franklin, Adelia (Hayes) See Cheatham
French, E.A. (4), 1872-1884, 1-9
Gale, Thomas, 1864, 1-9
Gardner, James (3), 1869-1874, 1-9
Garretson, William & Co. (2), 1874, 1-9
German, Dan, n.d., 1-9
Gillman, Henry, 1869, 1-9
Graham, D., 1831, 1-9
Hagen, Sarah M., 1879, 1-10
Hadley, Sallie J., 1869, 1-10
Harbert, Anna (3), 1877-1878, 1-10
Harbert, D.O., 1877, 1-10
Harding, E. McGavock (2), 1855, 1856, 1-11
Harding, John (6), 1867-1879, 1-11
Hargrove, Kate (8), 1882-1887, 1-12
Harpeth, 1868, re: Reconstruction, 1-12
Harris, J. George (19), 1851-1868, re: travels in Orient, 1-13
Harris, Joseph Ewing (13), 1861-1865, re: Civil War, 1-14
Harris, Lucie M. See Lindsley, Lucie Harris
Hayes, Adelia See Cheatham
Hayes, Alice, 1873, 2-1
Hayes, Bettie (7), 1875-1879, 2-1
Hayes, Emilie (McGavock) (24), 1851-1879, 2-2
Hayes, Henry Martyn (18), 1852-1880, 2-3
Hayes, J.A., 187_?, 2-4
Hayes, Lysander McGavock (14), 1866-1888, 2-4

Hayes, Oliver Bliss, Sr. (15), 1858, re: New England, slavery, etc., 2-5
Hayes, Oliver Bliss, Jr. (10), 1852-1867, 2-6
Hayes, Sarah C. (2), n.d., 1857, 2-7
Heims, Aaron, 1872, 2-7
Hightower, Loulie (2), n.d., 2-7
Hightower, R.R., 1861, 2-7
Hill, F.R., 1875, 2-7
Hill, G.W., 1870, 2-7
Hough, John N., 1851, 2-7
Hymer, Chas W., 1922, 2-7
Jackman, Mary (2), 1860, 1866, 2-8
Jackman, W.A., 1872, 2-8
Jackson, Robert, 1856, 2-8
Jackson, S.S. (2), 1873, 2-8
Johns, John (3), 1851-1852, 2-8
Jones, Edgar, 1866, 2-8
Jones, J.H., 1860, 2-8
Kent, Lizzie, 1887, 2-8
Knox, J. (2), 1867, 2-8
Knox, W.H., 1905, 2-8
Ladd, Alice E., n.d., 2-9
Lambuth, Daisy, 1880, 2-9
Lambuth, M.J., (Mrs. J.W.) (2), 1876, 1878, re: Shanghai, 2-9
Langham, John, 1879, 2-9
Lawrence, Ade, n.d., 2-9
Lawrence, Corinne (3), 1884-1888, 2-9
Lawrence, W.L.B. (2), 1869, 1871, 2-9
Ledbetter, J.W., 1852, 2-9
Lightfoot, H.W., 1873, 2-9
Lindsley, Van Sinderin (3), 1869, 2-9
Lindsley, Lucie Harris (18), 1863-1888, 2-10
Lovering, L. & Co., 1865, 2-9
McDonald, Ade H., n. d., 2-11
McEwen, John B. (2), 1867, 2-11
McFerrin, C.T., 1877, 2-11
McFerrin, J.B. (3), 1876-1878, 2-11
McGavock, A. (4), n.d., 2-12
McGavock, Agnes, 1841, 2-12
McGavock, A.J., 1875, 2-12
McGavock, Bettie P. (6), 1873-1888, 2-12
McGavock, Carrie (2), n.d., 2-13
McGavock, Cynthia (31), 1851-1884, 2-13
McGavock, David (3), 1850-1859, 3-1

McGavock, E.P., 1887, 3-1
McGavock, Ephraim (3), 1825-1839, 3-1
McGavock, Hugh L. (2), 1851-1852, 3-2
McGavock, J.H. (2), 1872-1876, 3-2
McGavock, James (5), 1825-1831, 3-2
McGavock, John (4), 1830-1875, 3-3
McGavock, Lysander (4), 1837-1847, 3-3
McGavock, Margaret E. (30), 1851-1887, 3-4
McGavock, Myra, 1867, 3-5
McGavock, Polly, 1858, 3-5
McGavock, Randal, 1842, 3-5
McGavock, Sarah (Sallie) See Pointer, Sallie McGavock
McGavock, Willie H. (8), 1866-1878, 3-6
McNairy, R.C., 1873, 3-6
Madden, T.L., 1871, 3-7
Mariner, W., 1852, 3-7
Marshall, Nancy A. (3), 1873-1876, 3-7
Mathews, H.S., 1849, 3-7
May, Marwena, 1845, 3-7
Mayfield, S.D., 1876, 3-7
Mayfield, S.S., 1875, 3-7
Mayfield, William, 1871, 3-7
Mays, Nettie, 1868, 3-7
Meigs, R.J., 1855, 3-7
Morison, D., 1830, 3-7
Morrison, John, 1806, 3-7
Morrison, Manie J. (3), 1879-1880, 3-7
Newsom, Sarah L., 1872, 3-7
Noel, O.F., 1878, 3-7
Norman, Thomas, 1853, 3-7
Ormes, Evan B., 1847, 3-7
Park, Andrew, 1848, 3-8
Peebles, W.R. (2), 1878, 3-8
Phelps, William D., 1847, 3-8
Poe, Mary, n.d., 3-8
Pointer, Pattie (3), 1860-1861, 3-8
Pointer, Sallie (59), 1852-1876, 3-9, 10
Pointer, Samuel A., 1853, 3-11
Pointer, Thomas (13), 1852-1875, 3-11
Quigley, George J., 1836, 3-12
R., K.L., 1883, 3-12
Rice, T.B., 1839, 3-12
Rogers, James A., 1865, 3-12

Roper, William, 1872, 3-12
S., Sara E., 1884, 3-12
Sanders, Hannah, 1872, 3-12
Savage, Sarah C., n.d., 3-12
Scarboro, Ella, n.d., 3-12
Seay, Mary W., 1860, 3-12
Sharp, H.W. (3), 1858-1861, 3-12
Shields, James, 1848, 3-12
Shields, Laura (3), n.d., 3-12
Shipp, Sarah (13), 1875-1886, 3-13
Smith, E., Kirby, n.d., re: University of Nashville terms, 3-14
Smith, S.S., 1859, 3-14
South, John R., 1873, 3-14
South, S.S., 1872, 3-14
Stratton, Cheney & Roy, 1866, 3-14
Talbreath, Susie, 1884, 3-14
Taylor, Nat C., n.d., 3-14
Truett's Sons & Morgan, 1841, 3-14
Twitty, Mrs. L.D., 1867, 3-14
Wallace, J.P., 1917, 3-15
Ward, Eunice, 1880, 3-15
Ward, John, 1832, 3-15
Ward, W.E., 1878, 3-15
Wathen, Flaget (6), 1875-1881, 3-15
Wathen, R.M., 1877, 3-15
Wilcox, A.G. (2), 1867, 1868, 3-16
Williams, Turner, 1872, 3-16
Wills, A.W. (5), 1875-1880, 3-16
Wilson, J.W. & Co., 1874, 3-16
Wright, B., 1873, 3-16
Wright, James (2), 1871, 1872, 3-16
Yeatman & Armistead, 1847, 3-16