



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

O'BRYAN, JOSEPH BRANCH
(1838 – 1900)
PAPERS
1836 - 1884

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INTRODUCTION

The Joseph Branch O'Bryan Papers, containing family papers of O'Bryan, Harrison, and others, were placed on deposit by Laurence O'Bryan Trabue, Nashville, Tennessee, a grandson of Joseph Branch O'Bryan.

The materials in this collection measure .42 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Joseph Branch O'Bryan Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Joseph Branch O'Bryan Papers are composed of approximately seventy-five items and four volumes, and span the years 1846-1884. They contain correspondence, legal documents, invitations, election tickets, a diary, a college catalog, sketches, and genealogical data on the Belser, Gray, O'Bryan, Trabue, and related families. Thirty-four letters (1861-1865) were written by Joseph Branch O'Bryan to his sisters, Martha and Fannie, during the Civil War from camps in Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. He expressed great admiration and confidence in Joseph E. Johnson and was not pleased over his removal. There are a number of items dealing with the political career of Horace Harrison Harrison (1829-1885), who served as Tennessee legislator, U. S. District Attorney, and Representative from Tennessee to the U. S. Congress. A catalog of Jackson College in 1846 and two report cards of Laurence O'Bryan while he was a student are in the collection.

One little volume contains the diary kept by one of the O'Bryan sisters beginning in February 1862, on receiving news of the fall of Fort Donelson and ending in July of the same year. The diary contains a description of a trip from Nashville to Red Fork, Arkansas and return. Some genealogical notes deal with the families of Toole, O'Bryan, Simpson, Branch, and Williams.

An addition to these papers is composed of family correspondence, clippings, reports, speeches, and other data about Jackson College while Laurence O'Bryan was in school there, a few military papers of Joseph Branch O'Bryan, a biographical sketch of General Lawrence Branch and a phrenological reading of Horace H. Harrison. The family correspondents include James M. and Mary Chambers, George and John H. Gordon, Horace H. Harrison, Barsha Norfleet (Gorgon) O'Bryan and Fannie, Joseph, Laurence, and Martha O'Bryan. In addition to family correspondence, there is one letter each for the following: John Catron, Sam Milligan, John A. Logan, and Oliver Perry Morton. The addition is the gift of Mr. Laurence O'Bryan Trabue.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Horace H. Harrison

- 1829 August 7, born in Lebanon (Wilson County) Tennessee
- ca. 1838 Attended Carroll Academy
- 1841 Moved to McMinnville
- 1859 Moved to Nashville
- 1863 – 1866 United States District Attorney
- 1866 Chancellor of Nashville Division
- 1867 – 1868 Judge of Tennessee Supreme Court
- 1868 Presidential elector for Grant and Colfax
- 1872 – 1873 U. S. District Attorney
- 1873 – 1875 Elected by Republicans as member of House of Representatives from Tennessee
- 1880 – 1881 Member of State Legislature
- 1884 Presidential elector on Republican ticket for Blaine and Logan
- 1885 Dec 20, died in Nashville

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Beall, John Yates – Printed items – Memoir and sketch
2. Biographical data – O’Bryan, Martha Maney
3. Biographical sketch – Branch, Gen. Lawrence
4. Correspondence – Chambers, Mary E., 1868 and Chambers, James M., 1833
5. Correspondence – Gordon, George, 1819 and Gordon, John, 1821
6. Correspondence – Incoming and outgoing – Harrison, Horace H. – Milligan, Logan, Catron, and Morton
7. Correspondence – Incoming and outgoing – O’Bryan, Barsha Norfleet (Gordon), 1843- 1868
8. Correspondence – O’Bryan, Fannie, 1851
9. Correspondence – O’Bryan, Joseph Branch, 1853-1863
10. Correspondence – O’Bryan, Joseph Branch, 1864-1865
11. Correspondence – O’Bryan, Lawrence, 1825-1847
12. Correspondence – O’Bryan, Martha, n.d. and 1851-1852
13. Diary, 1862
14. Genealogical data – Belser, Gray, O’Bryan, Trabue, and related families
15. Harrison, Horace H. – Phrenological character
16. Memoranda and memorabilia
17. Military papers – United States – Discharges, 1836 – McMinnville, Tenn.
18. Military papers, re: press of Methodist Publishing House, 1864
19. Military Papers – Orders, etc., Confederate, 1863 -1864 – O’Bryan, Joseph Branch
20. Schools – Jackson College Catalog, 1845-1846; Lawrence O’Bryan’s reports; clippings
21. Schools – O’Bryan, Misses Frances Blount and Martha Maney
22. Speeches and writings – O’Bryan, Lawrence and Jackson College
23. Photographs – First Tennessee Infantry, C. S. A.

**Items given to the Manuscript Division as an addition to the Joseph
Branch O' Bryan Papers by Mr. Laurence O'Bryan Trabue
Acc. No. 68-138**

Jackson College – Successor of Jackson Seminary in Maury County – three miles from
Spring Hill, founded in 1908 – clipping
Memorabilia – Horace H. Harrison – Invitations, calling cards, memoranda, election lists,
vote to abolish slavery in Tennessee

Correspondence

Catron, J. to H. H. Harrison, 1863, re: clerkship of H. H. Harrison
Logan, John
Morton, Oliver Perry, 1875, re: bonded indebtedness of Tennessee
Milligan, Sam, 1868, re: proposed meeting with Harrison
Park, J. S., 1845, to Barcia O'Bryan, re: resolutions on the death of Dr. Lawrence
O'Bryan

Family Correspondence

Chambers, Mary E. (3), 1868, to Captain O'Bryan, re: marriage
Chambers, James M. , 1833, re: Georgia Legislature
Gordon, George, 1819, to his daughter, Barsha, in school in New York
Gordon, John H., 1821, to his father George Gordon
Harris, Leonora, 1868, re: family news
Harrison, Horace H., 1877, re: invitation from the President of the United States
O'Bryan, Barsha Norfleet (Gordon) (6), 1843-1852, re: personal news
O'Bryan, Fannie, 1851, re: dress materials purchased and lace purchased at Thompsons
for \$12.00; heard Mr. Cross at the Methodist Church; Dr. Breckenridge to preach the
dedicatory sermon at the new Presbyterian Church
O'Bryan, Joseph Branch, 1853, 1858, re: family matters
O'Bryan, Lawrence (2), 1845, 1847, re: Jackson College; Columbia, Tennessee; brother
of Neill S. Brown; roommate Wardlow; studying for the ministry
O'Bryan, Martha (6), 1851-1852, re: Nashville Female Academy; costumes;
McGavocks; McEwens; Maney's; Nashville

O'Bryan Papers
Manuscript Section
Tennessee State Library and Archives
Location I-C-3
Trabue Collection
Ac. Nos.: 208, 781

The following items have been placed on deposit in the Manuscript Section of the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mr. Lawrence Trabue, 3819 Harding Place, Nashville, Tennessee.

1. Beall, John Yates – A sketch reprinted from the *Confederate Veteran* entitled, “John Yates Beall, Account of his Thrilling Career for the South ”
2. Correspondence of Joseph Branch O'Bryan – Thirty four letters written by Joseph Branch O'Bryan to his sisters, Martha and Fannie, 1861 -1865; one letter written to Joseph Branch O'Bryan by E. M. Belew from Edensburg, Virginia
3. Six discharges from the service of the United States dated June 21, 1836 for the following men: John Harper (Private), Pemberton R. Wear (Private), William C. Allen (Corporal), James Smith (Private), John Hicks (Private), and Milton A. McHamar (Private)
4. Harrison, Horace H., 1829-1885, United States District Attorney and member of the Legislature and Congress, and Judge of State Supreme Court
 1. Letter to Gen. R. S. Grainger, Commanding at Post at Nashville, January 10, 1864, in regard to the “Southern Methodist Publishing House,” – including the Press, type, machinery, & fixtures of said establishment – taken possession of for the purpose of being used as a printing establishment for this military department.
 2. Letter from John A. Logan, December 3, 1884
5. Harrison, Horace H., fourteen items including invitations, election ticket bearing Harrison's name, an admission ticket to the floor of the House of Representatives for memorial service for James A. Garfield, a pass on the L & N Railroad for the year 1885, and calling cards for James G. Blaine, Mr. and Mrs. James A. Garfield, Mr. and Mrs. John Sherman, and Hannibal Hamlin.
6. Jackson College – Catalogue for 1846 and two reports of Lawrence O'Bryan for 1846-1847. Jackson College was in Columbia, Tennessee. Lawrence O'Bryan was a brother of Joseph Branch O'Bryan.
7. O'Bryan – A little diary kept by one of Joseph Branch O'Bryan's sisters, beginning February 16, 1862, on receiving news of the fall of Fort Donelson, and ending July 10, 1862. The diary describes the harrowing experiences the author had while making a trip from Nashville to Red Fork, Arkansas and return. There are some genealogical notes in the book which deal with the families of Toole, O'Bryan, Simpson, Branch, and Williams.

Confederate Letters
Joseph Branch O'Bryan
Company B – Captain Field
1st Tennessee Infantry

Included are thirty-four letters written by Joseph Branch O'Bryan to his sisters, Martha and Fannie, 1861-1865. O'Bryan was one of the founders of O'Bryan Brothers Overall Factory, which is in operation in Nashville at the present day. These letters are owned by Lawrence Trabue, 3819 Harding Place, a grandson of the writer.

The two earliest letters were written from Nashville to the two O'Bryan sisters who were then in Florida. Later during the Civil War the sisters were in Alabama and in Columbus, Georgia. Nine letters dating from January 20, 1862, to November 1, 1863, were written from camps in Tennessee near Shelbyville, Tullahoma, and Chattanooga; fifteen were written from camps in Georgia, December 13, 1863 to September 12, 1864; one from Tuscumbia, Alabama; one from Columbus, Mississippi; two from Mobile, Alabama; one from Montgomery, Alabama; and the last letter was written July 9, 1865, after the war was over, from Nashville, Tennessee. The letters are interestingly and intelligently written and contain a great deal of valuable information. Of the removal of Joseph E. Johnston and his replacement by Hood, he wrote, "The army is not at all pleased with General Hood and do not think him the man for the time. Jo Johnston is the man to command this army. He would soon straighten things out. All have great faith and confidence in him and if he were sent here it would not be long before many of the stragglers & absentees would return. He is decidedly the most popular commander we have ever had."