Guide to the William Pinckney Montgomery / Locust Plantation Collection

Processed by D. Tambo and T. Lewis
Department of Special Collections
Davidson Library
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
Phone: (805) 893-3062
Fax: (805) 893-5749
Email: special@library.ucsb.edu
URL: http://www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/speccoll.html
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Guide to the William Pinckney Montgomery / Locust Plantation Collection, ca. 1822-1883

Collection number: Wyles Mss 9

Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara

Contact Information:
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Processed by:
D. Tambo and T. Lewis
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Encoded by:
David C. Gartrell

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Descriptive Summary
Title: William Pinckney Montgomery / Locust Plantation Collection,
Date (inclusive): ca. 1822-1883
Date (bulk): (bulk 1830s-1860s)
Collection Number: Wyles Mss 9
Creator: Montgomery, William Pinckney
Extent: .2 linear feet (1 half-size document box)
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Department of Special Collections
Santa Barbara, California 93106-9010
Physical Location: Del Sur
Abstract: 1834-1870. Includes bills, receipts, indentures, yearly cotton sales records of Montgomery, a planter and plantation owner in Washington County, Mississippi, who declared bankruptcy in 1869. .4 linear feet (1 box).
Language: English.

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Preferred Citation

Acquisition Information
Undetermined.

Biography
William Pinckney Montgomery was born on November 27, 1799 in South Carolina, and arrived in southwest Mississippi with his parents sometime in the 1820s. In 1831, he married Catherine Cameron and started a family. They moved north to an area known as "Batchelor's Bend" on the Mississippi River, in Washington County. Then, in 1838, Montgomery and his business partner, Augustus McAllister, purchased a tract of land which they named Locust Plantation, and went into the cotton business.

W.P. Montgomery proved to be a shrewd businessman, and within a few years he was able to buy out McAllister's share and become a gentleman planter. He began building a permanent plantation home in 1846. However, two years later, his wife Catherine died just weeks after giving birth to their youngest son. With five children having survived infancy, Montgomery went on to see that they were well educated. His eldest son, William Eugene Montgomery, married the daughter of a prominent politician and future governor. Daniel Cameron Montgomery became a well-respected physician. Even his daughter, Katie, attended the prestigious Nashville Female Academy. In 1850, Montgomery married again, to the much younger Evelyn Bacon, though all of her children died young.

The Civil War proved disastrous for Montgomery, as it did for most Southern planters. In early 1865, for example, he was informed that nearly two thousand pounds of his cotton had been seized and burned by the Confederate Army to keep it from falling into enemy hands. At the war's end, the South's economy was a shambles, and the once wealthy Montgomery was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1868. Tragedy had struck again on a more personal level as well: although his three oldest sons fought for the Confederacy, it was his only daughter who died, in 1863, shortly after marrying Montgomery's attorney, W.L. Nugent. Having seen his life's work undone, William Pinckney Montgomery died on October 4, 1876.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection contains correspondence, documents (mainly land transactions), financial records (including cotton sales records), and other items relating to the family of William Pinckney Montgomery, owner of Locust Plantation in Washington County, Mississippi. Although incomplete, it provides an intimate portrayal of the fortunes of a southern plantation before, during, and after the Civil War.

| Box 1: 1 | Correspondence |
| Box 1: 2 - 6 | Documents, 1830s-1860s |
| Box 1: 7 - 14 | Financial Records |
| Box 1: 7 - 12 | General (bills, receipts, etc.) |
| Box 1: 13 | Cotton Sales |
| Box 1: 14 | Katie Montgomery |