

James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee Papers

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Revised by Melinda K. Friend

Collection Summary

Title: James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee Papers

Span Dates: 1784-1953

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1852-1904)

ID No.: MSS11767

Creator: Barbee, James Dodson, 1832-1904

Creator: Barbee, David Rankin, 1874-1958

Extent: 5,000 items ; 17 containers plus 1 oversize ; 7.2 linear feet ; 2 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: James Dodson Barbee, Methodist clergyman in Tennessee and Alabama and publishing agent, and son David Rankin Barbee, journalist. Correspondence, including family letters, notebooks, account books, printed matter, notes, and sermons chiefly relating to the Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee, and to claims of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, growing out of Civil War property confiscations, and to the writings and research of David Rankin Barbee.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Barbee family--Correspondence.

Barbee, David Rankin, 1874-1958. James Dodson and David Rankin Barbee papers. 1784-1953.

Barbee, James Dodson, 1832-1904.

Bledsoe, Albert Taylor, 1809-1877. Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers.

Buchanan, James, 1791-1868--Correspondence.

Cunningham, John Whitfield, 1805-1874--Correspondence.

Dabney, Virginius, 1835-1894--Correspondence.

Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889.

Denny, Collins, 1854-1943--Correspondence.

Duncan, Waddy T. (Waddy Thompson), 1867- --Correspondence.

Duncan, William Wallace--Correspondence.

Hoss, E. E. (Elijah Embree), 1849-1919--Correspondence.

Keener, John Christian, 1819-1906--Correspondence.

Morris, James Craik, 1870-1944--Correspondence.

Plitt, George. George Plitt papers. 1836-1873.

Reeves, Elbert C., 1841-1929--Correspondence.

Organizations

All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church (Washington, D.C.)

Cleveland Park Memorial Library.

Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Methodist Publishing House.

Subjects

African Americans.

Methodist Church--Tennessee.

Publishers and publishing--Tennessee--Nashville.

Religious literature.

Slavery--United States.

Places

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Claims.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Religious aspects.

Occupations

Editors.

Historians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of James Dodson Barbee, Methodist clergyman in Tennessee and Alabama and publishing agent, and his son, David Rankin Barbee, journalist, were given to the Library of Congress by David Rankin Barbee from 1946 to 1956. The George Plitt papers, comprising the Historical File, Part A, in the collection, were loaned to the Library for photocopying and microfilming through David Rankin Barbee by Mrs. Edson W. Briggs. Microfilm made for David Rankin Barbee of the Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers held by the University of Virginia was added to the collection in 1981.

Processing History

The papers of James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee were arranged in 1953 and revised or expanded in 1964, 1970, 1978, and 1981. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

The James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee Papers are described in *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 12, no. 45 (1953): 2-3; and *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* 11, no. 3 (1954): 159-160.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on three reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, James Dodson Barbee and David Rankin Barbee Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

James Dodson Barbee

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1832, Mar. 16	Born, Lawrence County, Ala.
1852	Admitted as itinerant minister, Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South
1853-1867	Minister at various parishes in Alabama

1866	Married Margaret R. Rankin
1868-1869	Minister, Elm Street Church, Nashville, Tenn.
1869	Presiding elder, Huntsville District, Methodist Episcopal Church, South
1870-1873	Presiding elder, Fayetteville
1873-1877	Minister at Murfreesboro, Tenn.
1877-1879	Presiding elder, Columbia District, Methodist Episcopal Church, South
1879-1883	Minister, Clarksville, Tenn.
1882	Delegate, General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, Tenn.
1883-1887	Minister, McKendree Church, Nashville
1887-1904	Book agent, Methodist Publishing House
1898	Settled war claims of Methodist Publishing House
1902	Presiding elder, Nashville District, Methodist Episcopal Church, South
1904, Dec. 5	Died, Nashville, Tenn.

David Rankin Barbee

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1874, Oct. 15	Born, Murfreesboro, Tenn.
circa 1892-1895	Studied at Emory and Henry College, Emory, Va., and Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.
1896-1899	Reporter, <i>Nashville Banner</i>
1901	Reporter, <i>Nashville American</i>
1901-1908	Telegraph editor, <i>Memphis Commercial Appeal</i>
1908	Editor, <i>Chattanooga Star</i>
1908-1910	News editor, <i>Memphis Commercial Appeal</i>
1910-1911	Managing editor, <i>Montgomery Advertiser</i>
1911-1918	Managing editor, <i>Mobile Register</i>
1913	Married Elina Guzman
1918-1926	News editor, <i>New Orleans States</i>

1926-1928	Managing editor, <i>Asheville Citizen</i>
1928-1932	Feature writer, <i>Washington Post</i>
1933	Assistant to secretary of commerce
1933-1940	Special assistant, Federal Alcohol Administration
1940-1942	Public Relations Department, Treasury Department
1947	Published "The Capture of Jefferson Davis," <i>Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine</i>
1958, Mar. 7	Died, Orange, Tex.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of James Dodson Barbee (1832-1904) and David Rankin Barbee (1874-1958) span the years 1784-1953, with the bulk of the material dating from 1852 to 1904. Material relating to James Dodson Barbee largely dates between 1852 and his death in 1904, while that of his son, David Rankin Barbee, was compiled in the first half of the twentieth century. The collection is organized into the following series: [General Correspondence](#); [Sermons and Notebooks](#); [Account Books](#); [Historical File](#); [Subject File](#); [Printed Matter](#); [Scrapbook](#); and [Microfilm](#).

The [General Correspondence](#) consists of family letters and correspondence between James Dodson Barbee and a variety of his brother ministers regarding church matters, problems in operating the Methodist Publishing House, in Nashville, Tennessee, and church war claims for property taken during the Civil War as well as secular press reaction to them. The only sizable individual correspondent outside the family is Collins Denny of Virginia, a bishop who exchanged letters with David Rankin Barbee over the five-year span 1927-1931. Other correspondents include John Whitfield Cunningham, Virginius Dabney, Waddy T. Duncan, William Wallace Duncan, E. E. Hoss, John Christian Keener, James Craik Morris, and Elbert C. Reeves.

The [Subject File](#) largely relates to the special interests of David Rankin Barbee and includes letters, research notes, printed matter, clippings, a manuscript for a book on Jefferson Davis, and material related to the All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church and the Cleveland Park Memorial Library, both located in Washington, D.C. The file also contains a book of conference proceedings for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in Clarksville, Tennessee, and kept by James Dodson Barbee.

The [Historical File](#) is divided into two parts. [Part A](#) is comprised of photostatic copies of letters of James Buchanan to his friend, George Plitt, with various other letters to Plitt from Pierce Butler, William B. Fordney, and John W. Forney, as well as letters from James Buchanan to William L. Hirst and Forney; a letter from William Rice to Forney; one from Lord Erskine to Buchanan; one from Forney to Buchanan; a Forney obituary of George Plitt (typescript copy); and two statements by unknown authors. The Plitt materials are positive photocopies and appear on the microfilm except for two negative photocopies and the Forney obituary of Plitt. [Part B](#) comprises a variety of letters and documents, some original but mostly photostatic copies or typescripts, and some historical clippings. Many of the items in Part B pertain to Albert Taylor Bledsoe. The [Microfilm](#) was made for David Rankin Barbee and is comprised of the Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers held by the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

[Sermons and Notebooks](#) contain individual sermons and sermon drafts as well as notebooks including sermons, Biblical references, and lists of either Bible class or Sunday school members. The [Account Books](#) are comprised of notepads and notebooks listing expenses, including church expenses and Sunday school offerings. The collection is rounded out by [Printed Matter](#) and an oversized [Scrapbook](#) regarding Negro slavery.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- General Correspondence, 1852-1951
- Sermons and Notebooks, circa 1861-circa 1903
- Account Books, 1867-1903
- Historical File, 1784-1937
- Subject File, circa 1865-circa 1953
- Printed Matter, 1885-1901
- Scrapbook, 1904-1928
- Microfilm, circa 1858-circa 1904

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-4	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1852-1951</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received and related material. Arranged chronologically by year with undated letters placed at the end and arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.</p>
BOX 5-6	<p><u>Sermons and Notebooks, circa 1861-circa 1903</u></p> <p>Sermons and sermon drafts, notes, and notebooks. Unarranged.</p>
BOX 7	<p><u>Account Books, 1867-1903</u></p> <p>Notepads and notebooks containing lists of expenses. Unarranged.</p>
BOX 8	<p><u>Historical File, 1784-1937</u></p>
BOX 8	<p><u>Part A, 1836-1873</u></p> <p>Photostatic copies of letters to George Plitt from or concerning James Buchanan. Arranged alphabetically by name of writer or recipient and therein chronologically. <i>Available on microfilm except for two negative photocopies and the Forney obituary of Plitt. Microfilm shelf no. 4,471.</i></p>
BOX 9	<p><u>Part B, 1784-1937</u></p> <p>Original and photostatic copies of letters, clippings, articles, and printed matter, including a group of papers of Albert Taylor Bledsoe. Arranged alphabetically with the items from the Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers arranged chronologically. <i>See also Microfilm. Microfilm shelf no. 18,651.</i></p>
BOX 10-16	<p><u>Subject File, circa 1865-circa 1953</u></p> <p>Letters, clippings, printed matter, research notes, and book manuscript drafts. Arranged by subject.</p>
BOX 17	<p><u>Printed Matter, 1885-1901</u></p> <p>Newspaper clippings, pamphlets, and extracts. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 18	<p><u>Scrapbook, 1904-1928 (Oversize)</u></p> <p>Scrapbook on Negro slavery.</p>
REEL 1	<p><u>Microfilm, circa 1858-circa 1904</u></p> <p>Microfilm of Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers. <i>Microfilm shelf no. 18,651.</i> Arranged as filmed.</p>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-4	General Correspondence, 1852-1951 Letters sent and received and related material. Arranged chronologically by year with undated letters placed at the end and arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 1	1852-1894 (20 folders)
BOX 2	1895-1898 (13 folders)
BOX 3	1899-1903 (11 folders)
BOX 4	1904-1951, undated (28 folders)
BOX 5-6	Sermons and Notebooks, circa 1861-circa 1903 Sermons and sermon drafts, notes, and notebooks. Unarranged.
BOX 5	Sermons and notes, undated (61 folders)
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BOX 6	Notebooks, 1861-1903, undated (3 folders)
BOX 7	Account Books, 1867-1903 Notepads and notebooks containing lists of expenses. Unarranged.
BOX 8	Historical File, 1784-1937
BOX 8	Part A, 1836-1873 Photostatic copies of letters to George Plitt from or concerning James Buchanan. Arranged alphabetically by name of writer or recipient and therein chronologically. <i>Available on microfilm except for two negative photocopies and the Forney obituary of Plitt. Microfilm shelf no. 4,471.</i>
BOX 8	B-U, 1836-1873, undated <i>Includes the following correspondents:</i> (10 folders)
BOX 8	Buchanan, James, to William L. Hirst, 1852
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- BOX 8 Fordney, William B., to George Plitt, 1845
- BOX 8 Forney, John W., to George Plitt, 1853-1859, undated
- BOX 8 Forney, John W., obituary of George Plitt in the *Philadelphia Press* , 1873
- BOX 8 Rice, William, to John W. Forney, 1854
- BOX 8 Unknown, statements, undated
- BOX 9 **Part B, 1784-1937**
- Original and photostatic copies of letters, clippings, articles, and printed matter, including a group of papers of Albert Taylor Bledsoe.
- Arranged alphabetically with the items from the Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers arranged chronologically.
- See also Microfilm. Microfilm shelf no. 18,651.*
- BOX 9 A-V, 1784-1937, undated *Includes the following correspondents:*
(40 folders)
- BOX 9 *Anderson (S.C.) Daily Record* on the burning of Columbia, clipping, 1937
- BOX 9 Barbé-Marbois, to unknown correspondent, 1816
- BOX 9 Bayard, James A., to T. A. Cheney, 1863
- BOX 9 Blair, Montgomery, to Cassius M. Clay, 1881
- BOX 9 Bledsoe, Albert Taylor, to Jefferson Davis, 1864
- BOX 9 Bledsoe, Albert Taylor, papers (chronologically arranged)
- BOX 9 Everett, Edward, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1858, June 24
- BOX 9 Henry, Joseph, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1860, Feb. 19
- BOX 9 Polk, Leonidas L., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1861, July 18
- BOX 9 Smith, Stephen, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1861, Aug. 19
- BOX 9 Spruce, James, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1863, Jan. 7
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- BOX 9 Grinnaw, Cornelia, to Duke of Argyle, 1863, Sept. 12
- BOX 9 Lee, Robert E., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1866, Oct. 8
- BOX 9 Wilmer, Richard, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1866, Nov. 13
- BOX 9 Hopkins, John H., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1866, Nov. 23
- BOX 9 McGoskey, William, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1866, Dec. 21
- BOX 9 Davis, Jefferson, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1870, Mar. 22
- BOX 9 Lamar, L. Q. C., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1870, May 25
- BOX 9 Lamar, L. Q. C., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1870, May 30
- BOX 9 Haldeman, J. J., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1870, Dec. 29
- BOX 9 Hampton, Wade, to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1871, Feb. 13
- BOX 9 Davis, Jefferson, to Anna Bledsoe, 1871, May 15
- BOX 9 Tyndall, John, to Mrs. S. B. Herrick, 1872, Dec. 1
- BOX 9 Johnston, J. E., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1873, July 11
- BOX 9 Johnston, J. E., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1873, July 22
- BOX 9 Garland, L. C., to Albert Taylor Bledsoe, 1875, Feb. 11
- BOX 9 Lytton, to unknown, 1875, June 26
- BOX 9 Herschel, M. B., to S. Bledsoe Herrick, 1875, June
- BOX 9 Darwin, C. L., to Mrs. J. B. Herrick, 1876, Mar. 6
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BOX 9	Oliphant, M. V. W., to unknown, no year, July 6
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BOX 9	Dunham, Charles A., plot to link Andrew Johnson with the Abraham Lincoln assassination, undated
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Historical File, 1784-1937

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BOX 18	Scrapbook, 1904-1928 (Oversize) Scrapbook on Negro slavery.
REEL 1	Microfilm, circa 1858-circa 1904 Microfilm of Albert Taylor Bledsoe papers. <i>Microfilm shelf no. 18,651.</i> Arranged as filmed.