

000 9200
001 J02
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005 Small Manuscript Collection
006 Johnson Papers
140 Johnson Family Records
200 1793
210 1883
220
240 1.83 cf
241 2 @ 0.47 box, 1 @ 0.24 box, 1 @ 0.65 box
261 Papers relating to James Johnson (d. 1828), surveyor of Kent County, and his descendants. Majority of records belonged to Alexander Johnson (1812-1896), son of James, who was sheriff of Kent County (1842-1845). The collection also includes correspondence and financial papers from James's son William (d. 1863) who was a Kent county lawyer and surveyor.

270 The types of documents include correspondence, account books, sales records, sheriff's notices, court records, cancelled checks, drafts of legislation, probate records, and various financial papers. The first document in the collection is a brief handwritten note on the Johnson family's history.

Alexander Johnson's records are primarily from his work as Kent County sheriff (**Folders 1-9**). The dates range from 1842 to 1849. Folders 1 and 2 contain correspondence to Alexander Johnson from 1842 through 1845. The majority are concerned with various duties the citizens of Kent County needed their sheriff to perform. A large number of the letters gave dates that people would arrive at his office to pay off their debt. Others were inquiring about the status of their complaint against persons who owed them money. The scheduling of executions and the sale of a debtors property overseen by the sheriff, was the concern of most of the letters. Other topics of the letters included requests for Alexander to use his influence to help people receive government appointments, questions from jurors, and inquiries about the status of purchases from execution sales. One particularly interesting letter dated September 8, 1845, from Charles Draper "a crazy man" who was writing to the sheriff from prison. He discusses the benefits of marriage but also refers to it as a mousetrap, speaks of his suffering in prison for 10 years, and claims that his hardships are the result of mistakes made by the levy court. He makes threats if his farm is not returned to him after he is released and says had it not been for the government's errors he would be married and doing well.

Folder 3 contains Alexander Johnson's account books. A large account book for 1843 to 1854 lists the plaintiff and defendant and gives the amounts for subpoenas, bail, mortgages, appeals, services and mileage charges, and other fees. He notes what has and has not been paid. Five small account books concern his personal accounts and schedules. The first two books are his personal accounts from January 12, 1843 through January 28, 1845. Here he lists money he is paid and what he pays to others. Two of the small account books (both with blank covers) contains a variety of notes on the sale of certain properties, the holding of inquiries, and advertising sales. The final book entitled "Little Matters" has a few charges from 1844 and some miscellaneous notes but is mostly blank.

Folder 4 contains the sales records from executions that Johnson oversaw. Two of the notebooks record the sale of goods and merchandise belonging to John R. Bostick in July of 1843. Johnson records the items sold, their price, and to whom they were sold. Bostick had a lot of goods to sell and the execution lasted many days. Another notebook contains similar information but for the sale of Charles and Andrew

Harper's property in July and August of 1843. A large account book covering 1843 to 1845, which includes an alphabetical index, contains the sale information for many persons who had been involved in executions. For example, both the Harpers and Bostick appear in the book with Johnson listing who the money from their property sales was paid to.

Folder 5 contains sheriff sale notices and conditions of sale. The sheriff sale notices date from May 1843 to February 1845. Most are 7 X 8 inch handwritten notices but three are larger printed broadsides (see large document box). These documents were intended to inform the public of whose property was being sold, when and where the execution would take place, and gave descriptions of some of the more significant items up for sale. The conditions of sale are all from 1843. All have virtually the same text which says the purchaser has to pay ten percent of the purchase money immediately and the balance must be paid before the sitting of the next superior court. If they failed to make payment, they lost a ten percent deposit and forfeited the purchase.

Folder 6 contains loose leaf records from the executions of various people's property, similar to the logs found in Folder 4 but for smaller property holders. The lists of items are useful for understanding the types of possessions common in households in Kent County from March 1843-October 1844.

Folder 7 contains loose leaf records of judgments from court cases. They list the plaintiff and defendant, the real debt, the interest, advertising, commissions, and court and sheriff costs. There are often multiple cases on a single piece of paper. The documents are in chronological order by their most recent date. The dates are 1831, 1842 to 1846, with most of the documents falling between 1843 and 1844.

Folder 8 contains canceled checks from 1843 to 1847. An "X" is punched through all of the checks which indicates they are cancelled. Folder 9.1 includes eleven documents that appear to be drafts and notes on various pieces of legislation. Their titles include: "An act directing the manner in which certain records will be kept", "A supplement to the act entitled 'An act concerning the seals of the court'", and "An act for the relief of Jacob Trader." Folder 9.2 contains a variety of documents from Alexander's papers. Many of them are simply miscellaneous notes or calculations. One interesting document is the guest list for the "Terrapin Supper at Biddles." Another is an inventory of an H. Burr's property which goes room by room and lists the belongings.

Folders 10 through **12** concern James Johnson, the father of Alexander. Folder 10 contains his daybook from June 1793 through 1802. The title page says he was named deputy surveyor on August 13, 1796, and appointed surveyor general of Kent County on May 16, 1798. The book contains an alphabetical index. The accounts often involved charges for surveying and plotting and includes the names of those he did business with and their methods of payment. **Folder 11** contains five documents surrounding the death of Richard Hayes in 1796. Richard Hayes was the father of Elizabeth Hays, James Johnson's wife. The papers appear to have been prepared by James Johnson. The documents include an estimate of the estate's value with payments to all those to whom it owed debt, a list of his survivors and what they received, and a few miscellaneous papers.

Folder 12 contains James Johnson's probate records. James died in 1828 and William Johnson, his son, was the administrator.

Folder 13 contains a letter to Nicholas R. Johnson, Alexander Johnson's son, from a "Mark," possibly M.A. Johnson whose name is printed on the envelope. The letter is dated August 22, 1883. **Folder 14** contains letters sent to and from William Johnson, son of James and brother of Alexander, regarding the death of James Johnson. **Folder 15** contains a variety of William Johnson's financial papers and includes many receipts from the years 1827 to 1843. **Folder 16** contains a photograph of Hotel

Richardson in Dover and a copy of the book *The Talisman*.

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329 WORK STATUS:

- needs sorting
- needs unfolding
- needs foldering/reboxing
- other:

ARCHIVIST:

- review for identification/needs further identification
- needs processing
- determine origin/purpose
- other:

CONDITION:

- totally disorganized
- order not apparent
- origin questionable
- other:

330 Arranged alphabetically by name of Johnson family member;
chronologically within each folder.

331 No index.

332 Handwritten, forms with handwriting.

350

360 Poor - fair condition. Acid, storage, dirt damage.

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390

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430 Refoldered, arranged and described by Seabrook Jones, UD intern, June
2006.

990 June 30, 2006

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SJ/rlg