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MF 5735, Series B, Reel 1

ALLEN (WILLIAM M.) CORRESPONDENCE
(Mss. 701, 2287)
Inventory

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

Reformatted 2003
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SUMMARY

Size.	0.25 linear ft.
Geographic locations.	Pike County, Miss.; Webster Parish, La.; Natchitoches Parish, La.; Bossier Parish, La.; Port Hudson, La.; New Orleans, La.
Inclusive dates.	1858-1863
Bulk dates.	N/A
Language.	English.
Summary.	Letters (and typewritten copies) to farmer William M. Allen from family members and Confederate soldiers before and during the Civil War.
Organization.	Chronological.
Restrictions on access.	No restrictions. If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
Related collections.	N/A
Copyright.	Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
Citation.	Allen (William M.) Correspondence, Mss. 701, 2287, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack location(s).	E:3
Also available on.	Microfilm 5735, Series B, Reel 1

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

William M. Allen, born in 1833, was a farmer and lived in Holmesville, Pike County, Mississippi. During the Civil War, he served as a private in the Confederate Army, 38th Regiment, Mississippi Volunteers. His brother-in-law, John Houston, was farmer in Webster Parish, La., and his brother, F. L. Allen, served as a private in the Confederate Army, 39th Regiment, Mississippi Volunteers.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Pre-Civil War letters from John Houston discuss crops, weather, farm land, Houston's advocacy of secession, and local social events. Civil War letters from various individuals to Allen describe skirmishes in Kentucky and Louisiana, camp life and conditions, duties, and war news, such as the shelling of Port Hudson, Louisiana. Family affairs, illness and remedies, and attendance at the New Orleans School of Medicine are additional topics of discussion in the correspondence.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The earliest letters in the collection are written to Allen from his brother-in-law, John Houston, a farmer in Minden, Webster Parish, La. He comments on corn and cotton crops, drought, the Baptist Revival, and farm land on the Red River in Natchitoches Parish (Sept. 3, 1858). He also writes from Bossier Parish commenting on crops in which some farmers make 6 to 13 bales of cotton to the hand (Oct. 18, 1859), mentioning a drought and loss of 50 hogs in 3 weeks (June 11, 1860), the yield expected in corn and cotton, the response of North Louisiana to the call for troops, the departure of Coushatta Rifles commanded by Captain Simmons, the health of slaves, and the statement that he became a secessionist when Lincoln proclaimed “no compromise” for the South (Sept. 29, 1861).

A number of letters are also written to Allen from his brother, F. L. Allen, Confederate private in the 39th Regiment, Mississippi Volunteers, commanded by Captain Nash. He states that his company is the best drilled in eleven companies in Grenada, Mississippi (Nov. 30, 1861), and mentions the hours spent on guard duty as well as a skirmish with Federal troops at Columbus, Kentucky (Dec. 22, 1861). He comments on the proposed visit of his family, mentioning his need for food rather than clothing and commenting favorably on good tents with chimneys and cane beds. He also discusses his duties including work on fortifications in Port Hudson, Louisiana (Jan. 7, Dec. 16, 1862; Mar. 4, 1863). A letter from W. W. J. Magee, Confederate 3rd lieutenant, near Port Hudson, discusses shelling by United States gunboats and describes comfortable sleeping quarters (Dec. 16, 1862).

Also included are letters from Allen’s sister, J. A. Gillespie, in Liberty, Amite County, Miss., discussing family affairs and urging him to beware of the sins in camp (Dec. 19, 1861; June 30 and July 25, 1862), and a letter from his father, Felix Allen, commenting on the gloomy war news, drought, and poor corn crop (July 15, 1862). A letter from his sister, Letty, in Minden, La., comments on sickness in the area and people dying daily, stating that blue mass and quinine are prescribed for chills and fever, and mentioning the observation of July 4 in the area and Methodist preaching at night (July 9, no year).

Finally, a furlough approved by P. Brent, Confederate lieutenant colonel, for Allen, age 29, to go to Magnolia, Pike County, gives detailed information including physical description and date of enlistment (May 17, 1862).

CROSS REFERENCES

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Agriculture--Louisiana--Bossier Parish.	1859-1861	Comments on cottage acreage planted and yield per hand, lack of rain, hog deaths, health of slaves. John Houston: Oct. 18, 1859; June 11, 1860; Sept. 29, 1861.
Farmers--Louisiana.	1858-1863	Letters from John Houston, farmer, discuss farm land near the Red River, corn and cotton crops, drought in Northwest Louisiana.
Holidays--Louisiana--Webster Parish.	July 9, undated	Comments on celebrations in country including fish fry and Methodist Church service at night. Letty.
Houston, John.	1858-1861	Farmer, Webster Parish, Bossier Parish, comments on cotton and corn crops, lack of rain, hog deaths, Baptist Revival, response of North Louisiana to Confederate call for troops, 4 letters by,
Natchitoches Parish (La.)	Sept. 3, 1858	Farmer comments favorably on Red River bottom lands selling for three to four dollars an acre. John Houston.
New Orleans School of Medicine.	Nov. 29, 1860	T.W. McGehee, student, writes to his brother and sister, comments on Christmas vacation, boarding place, and expenses.
Port Hudson (La.)--History--Siege, 1863.	1862-1863	Confederate service men comment on duties including work on fortifications, visitors, lack of food, bombardment by United States gunboats, and sleeping quarters.
Secession--Southern States.	Sept. 29, 1861	Farmer blames Lincoln's proclamation of "no compromise" for the South for his advocating secession. John Houston.
Slaves--Health and hygiene--Louisiana.	Sept. 29, 1861	Comments on prevalence of colds, and death of Phillis from diarrhea. John Houston: Sept. 29
Traditional medicine--Louisiana.	July 9, undated	Blue mass and quinine prescribed for chills and fever. Letty.

ALLEN (WILLIAM M.) CORRESPONDENCE
1858-1863

Mss. 701, 2287
LSU Libraries Special Collections

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives, Confederate.	1861-1863	Comments concern drill performance of the 38 th Regular Mississippi Volunteers at Grenada, Mississippi, Nov. 30, 1861; military duties and skirmishes with enemy at Columbus, Kentucky, Dec. 22, 1861; and camp life, visitors, duties, work on fortifications, and bombardment of Port Hudson, in East Baton Rouge Parish, Jan. 7 and Dec. 16, 1862, and March 4, 1863. F.L. Allen letters
Webster Parish (La.)--History--19th century.	18[60], undated	Farmer comments on corn and cotton crops, drought, and Baptist revival. John Houston: Sept. 3, 18[58]. Comments on prevalence of sickness in area, drugs for chills and fever, and observation of July 4. Letty: undated

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder(s)</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
E:3	1	1	Letters (1858-1863)
		2	Typewritten copies of letters
MF 5735	Series B	Reel 1	