

**MATHEWS-VENTRESS-LAWRASON FAMILY PAPERS**

(Mss. 4358)

**Inventory**

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

2001

## CONTENTS OF INVENTORY

SUMMARY .....	3
BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE .....	4
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE .....	5
LIST OF SUBGROUPS AND SERIES .....	6
SUBGROUP AND SERIES DESCRIPTIONS .....	7
INDEX TERMS .....	11
CONTAINER LIST .....	14

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**SUMMARY**

- Size.** 3 linear feet
- Geographic locations.** Louisiana—West Feliciana Parish, Lafourche Parish, Rapides Parish, New Orleans, Alexandria, Opelousas, Thibodaux, Baton Rouge; Mississippi—Natchez, Woodville, LaGrange; Pensacola, Florida; Staunton, Virginia; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Washington, D.C.; and Georgia.
- Inclusive dates.** 1772-1933, undated
- Bulk dates.** 1797-1798; 1820-1838; 1860-1876; 1919-1933
- Languages.** English and French
- Summary.** Chiefly personal and business correspondence, printed items, newspaper clippings, financial records, manuscript volumes, and legal documents of the Mathews, Ventress, and Lawrason families, cotton and sugar planters of West Feliciana, Lafourche, and Pointe Coupee Parishes, Louisiana. Some papers of the related Carpenter, Randolph, Flower and Stewart families are included. Early correspondence documents tensions between Spain, France, and the United States over Louisiana territories. Most nineteenth-century papers reflect planting activities of the Mathews family. Materials from the twentieth century reflect real estate management and investment activities by the Ventress and Lawrason families.
- Source.** Mrs. Anne Butler Hamilton, St. Francisville, Louisiana; September 29, 1990.
- Related Collections.** Mathews (Charles L.) and Family Papers, Mss 910.  
Lawrason (J. Bruns) Papers, Mss 1487.  
McCutchon (Samuel) Papers, Mss 1049, 1087, 1060, 1109.
- Copyright.** Physical rights are retained by the LSU Libraries. Copyright of the original materials is retained by the creators, or their descendants, of the materials in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
- Citation.** Mathews-Ventress-Lawrason Family Papers, Mss. 4358, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Stack Location.** UU: 255-258, OS:M

**BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

The Mathews family members represented by papers in this collection include General George Mathews (1739-1812), an officer in the Revolutionary War and former governor of Georgia, and his son Judge George Mathews (1774-1836), justice of the Superior Court of the Territory of Orleans (1806-1813) and the Supreme Court of Louisiana (1813-1836). By 1835, George Mathews owned four plantations: Greenwood, along Bayou Sara near St. Francisville, Georgia Plantation in Lafourche parish, and Coco Bend and Chaseland plantations in Rapides Parish.

Judge Mathews's first wife was Sarah Carpenter. Their daughter, Anne, married Captain William Chase, with whom she had a daughter, Annie. They resided at Chaseland Plantation. After the death of his first wife, Judge Mathews married Harriet Flower (1794-1873). They had one surviving son, Charles Lewis Mathews (1824-1864), who married Penelope Stewart (1828-1897) of Woodville, Mississippi. Charles Lewis Mathews and Penelope Stewart had five children: George (1849-1859), Charles S. (1853-1923), Harriet (1856-1921), Sarah (Sallie) (1859-1934), and George (1860-1907). They resided at Greenwood Plantation and were also associated with Coco Bend Plantation.

Charles S. Mathews attended the Virginia Military Institute for two years (1869-1871), then returned to Louisiana and assisted his mother in the management of Greenwood. He later made his home at Georgia Plantation near Raceland, Louisiana. He married Kathleen Byrnes and adopted her daughter, Bonnie.

The Lawrason family is connected to the Mathews family by marriage. Harriet (Hattie) Mathews, daughter of Charles Lewis Mathews and Penelope Stewart, married Judge Samuel McCutcheon Lawrason (1852-1924). They had nine children:

- Zelia Lawrason
- Annie Mathews Lawrason (married Edward Butler)
- George C. Lawrason (married Blanche Buchanan Powell)
- Charles Lawrason (married Aurelie Berthe Naccari)
- Helen Stewart Lawrason (married Douglas Kilpatrick)
- Margaret Butler Lawrason
- Thomas Butler Lawrason
- Samuel Lawrason
- Levering Lawrason

The Ventress family is also connected to the Mathews and Lawrason families by marriage. Sarah (Sallie) Mathews, second daughter of Charles Lewis Mathews and Penelope Stewart, married James Alexander Ventress (1853-1912), son of James Alexander and Charlotte Davis (Pinchon) Ventress. He was born in Wilkinson County, Miss., and died at Greenwood, West Feliciana Parish, La.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Chiefly personal and business correspondence, printed items, newspaper clippings, financial records, and legal documents of the Mathews, Ventress, and Lawrason families, cotton and sugar planters of West Feliciana, Lafourche, and Pointe Coupee Parishes, Louisiana. Records relate to planting activities on Chaseland and Coco Bend plantations (Rapides Parish), Georgia plantation (Lafourche Parish), and Greenwood plantation (West Feliciana Parish). The collection is divided into two groups: the Mathews Family Papers and the Lawrason-Ventress Family Papers. Some papers of the related Carpenter, Randolph, Flower and Stewart families are included.

**Mathews Family Papers:** Early correspondence documents tensions between Spain, France, and the United States over Louisiana territories. Antebellum correspondence regards family news, plantation operation and crop conditions, and slavery. Letters of the Civil War era concern plantation operation and cotton selling and the flight of slaves from Louisiana plantations, as well as impressments of sugar by the Confederate army. Post-war correspondence includes letters from the Mathews's plantation managers and lawyers relating to the family's financial difficulties; also relates to issues of labor and labor negotiations. Financial papers include account statements, especially with cotton factors, promissory notes and receipts, and Confederate bonds. Legal documents pertain to financial disputes and settling estates. Printed items include newspaper clippings, especially obituaries, related to the family. Miscellaneous materials are comprised of recipes and genealogical materials.

**Ventress- Lawrason:** Personal correspondence is primarily comprised of letters addressed to Sallie Mathews Ventress and concerns family news (including members' participation in World War I), genealogy, finances, and economic hardships relating to the Depression. Some business correspondence relates to Ventress-Lawrason Investment Company. Printed items primarily include newspaper clippings and other items related to the families, especially obituaries. Financial papers are comprised of stock and bond certificates, tax returns and receipts, bulletins from the Ventress-Lawrason Investment Company, and records of the Santa Maria Apartments in New Orleans. Legal documents include oversize surveys of land owned by Sallie Mathews Ventress. Manuscript volumes record investments in municipal bonds and stocks in Louisiana banks and utility companies. Miscellaneous materials are primarily genealogical information for the Stewart, Randolph, and Cary families.

**LIST OF SUBGROUPS AND SERIES**

Note: This collection is organized as follows:

- Subgroup 1: Mathews Family Papers (1772-1917, undated)
  - Series I: Correspondence (1772-1879, undated)
  - Series II: Printed Items (1812-1923, undated)
  - Series III: Miscellaneous Items (1812-1897, undated)
  - Series IV: Financial Papers (1776-1917, undated)
  - Series V: Legal Documents (1796-1877, undated)
  
- Subgroup 2: Ventress-Lawrason Family Papers (1890-1933, undated)
  - Series I: Correspondence (1890-1933, undated)
  - Series II: Printed Items (1901-1924, undated)
  - Series III: Miscellaneous Items (1905-1924, undated)
  - Series IV: Financial Papers (1903-1933, undated)
  - Series V: Legal Documents (1908-1917)
  - Series VI: Manuscript Volumes (1914-1933, undated)

## **SUBGROUP AND SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Subgroup 1. Mathews Family Papers, 1772-1917, undated (2 linear feet)**

#### **Series I. Correspondence, 1772-1879, undated (0.8 linear feet)**

Early correspondence includes a 1772 letter to Richard Carpenter discussing importing slaves to ensure profitable planting activities in the Louisiana territory; a 1784 letter to Carpenter arguing for free navigation of the Mississippi River and for a national boundary set at the 31<sup>st</sup> parallel; and personal and business correspondence relating to General George Mathews, including several 1808 letters from General Mathews to his son Judge George Mathews regarding the death of the elder Mathews's wife.

Correspondence from the 1810-1840 period is primarily comprised of letters from Judge Mathews, Anne Chase, and Captain Chase to Harriet Mathews regarding family members' health, the purchase of household and plantation supplies, the state of family sugar and cotton crops, Judge Mathews's travels throughout the state as Justice for the Supreme Court of Louisiana, and slavery (specifically, fugitive slaves, purchase and sale of slaves, treatment and colonization of slaves, vigilance board activities, and abolition).

Correspondence from the Civil War period contains letters from A. D. Kelly, a New Orleans cotton factor; letters from Dr. James Selby concerning plantation management; and letters from Captain William Chase regarding the deprivations on southern plantations during the war, the death of his wife, Anne, and the flight of slaves from Louisiana plantations. It also contains a series of 1865 letters in which Chase protests the impressments of sugar from a Mathews plantation by the Confederate army.

Correspondence from the post-war period includes letters from plantation managers Dr. James Selby and Philip B. Key and letters from W. D. Winter, who served as attorney for Penelope Stewart Mathews. Also included are letters from New Orleans cotton factors A. D. Kelly; Richard Flower; and Renshaw, Cammack & Co. These letters relate to financial difficulties encountered by planting families in the post-war era, as well as issues of labor and labor negotiation. Also provided are pay schedules for freedmen laborers.

#### **Series II. Printed Items, 1812-1923, undated (2 folders)**

Printed items include newspaper clippings and other printed materials relating to the Mathews family. The newsclippings include obituaries for General George Mathews, Judge George Mathews, and Charles S. Mathews. Also included are accounts of the successions of Charles L. Mathews's estate and Julien Bringier Trist's estate. Other printed materials include an 1837 pamphlet entitled *A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Hon. George Mathews*; a copy of an 1869 ordinance regarding the

storage of sugar and molasses in the port of New Orleans; an 1873 death announcement for Harriet Flower Mathews; and a diagram of flood stages of the Mississippi River for the 1840s and 1850s. Oversized printed item is a 1906 *Sugar Planter's Journal*.

**Series III. Miscellaneous Items**, dates (2 folders)

Miscellaneous items include recipes, handwriting samples, notices of General George Mathews's and Judge George Mathews's deaths, and genealogical information for the Mathews family.

**Series IV. Financial Papers**, 1776-1917, undated (0.6 linear feet)

Early financial papers include Richard Carpenter's account statements with John Falconer & Co. of Pensacola, Florida (1770s) and account records for General George Mathews (1790s). From the 1810-1840 period, materials include account records of the Mathews estate with William Flower, a New Orleans cotton factor, and records of debts incurred by and owed to Judge George Mathews.

The collection also contains approximately thirty items from the period of 1840-1860. These center on Harriet Flower Mathews, widow of Judge George Mathews, and her son Charles L. Mathews. The financial papers include correspondence and statements from William Flower and A. D. Kelly, two New Orleans cotton factors, as well as promissory notes signed by Harriet Mathews. For additional material from this period, see the MATHEWS (CHARLES L.) AND FAMILY PAPERS, Mss 910.

Financial papers from the Civil War period include records of accounts between Charles L. Mathews and his brother-in-law, William Chase; account records between Harriet Mathews and G. B. Bevans, a cotton factor; promissory notes and receipts; and Confederate bonds.

From the post-war period, financial papers include account records relating to Harriet Flower Mathews; records of W. D. Winter's legal work for Penelope Stewart Mathews; records for the succession of Charles L. Mathews's estate; and account records for Dr. James Selby and Penelope Stewart Mathews with J. I. Adams & Co., a New Orleans cotton factor. Also included are receipts for state and local taxes throughout the period.

Oversized financial papers include financial accounts for Judge George Mathews and for the Mathews-Selby partnership.

**Series V. Legal Documents**, 1796-1877, undated (0.4 linear feet)

Early legal papers include several court documents documenting financial disputes relating to General George Mathews. Legal documents from the 1830s include court materials relating to Judge Mathews's role as legal guardian for Samuel and John Falkner and Eliza Hampton. Also included are Judge Mathews's will and materials relating to the succession of Mrs. Mary Constance Beauvois Lejenne's estate.



Legal papers from the post-war period document the succession of Charles L. Mathews's estate and the following lawsuits: John I. Adams & Co. vs. the Mathews-Selby partnership; David Williams vs. the Mathews-Selby partnership; Thomas R. Jennings vs. Harriet Flower Mathews; L. Y. Jessup vs. Penelope Stewart Mathews; and Penelope Stewart Mathews vs. Harriet Flower Mathews.

Oversized legal papers include deeds of sale for the purchase of land by Judge George Mathews and Harriet Mathews and documents relating to the succession of Charles L. Mathews's estate.

**Subgroup 2. Ventress-Lawrason Family Papers, 1890-1933, undated (ca.1 linear foot)**

**Series I. Correspondence, 1890-1933, undated (0.1 linear feet)**

Correspondence is primarily addressed to Sallie Mathews Ventress. Included is a series of letters from Ventress's cousin, Mrs. M. M. Slaughter, that details family news and ongoing genealogical efforts. Letters from her brother-in-law, Lawrence T. Ventress, describe estate finances and additional family news, including family members' participation in World War I. Also included are a series of letters from Douglas M. Kilpatrick, husband of Sallie Ventress's niece Helen Stewart Lawrason, concerning the business operations of the Ventress-Lawrason Investment Company, and several letters from Ventress's nephews T. Butler Lawrason, Levering Lawrason, and George Lawrason referring to economic hardships relating to the Depression.

**Series II. Printed Items, 1901-1924, undated (2 folders)**

Printed items include newspaper clippings and other printed materials relating to the Ventress and Lawrason families. Newsclippings include obituaries for Harriet Mathews Lawrason and Samuel McCutcheon Lawrason; obituaries for members of the Stewart family; an announcement for George C. Lawrason's marriage to Blanche Buchanan Powell; and numerous recipes and articles about beauty and health tips. Other printed materials include undated business and calling cards; marriage and death announcements; and a centenary program for the Supreme Court of Louisiana.

**Series III. Miscellaneous Items, dates (2 folders)**

Miscellaneous items include a copy of Sarah Stewart Mathews's wedding certificate to James Alexander Ventress and genealogical information for the Stewart, Cary, and Randolph families.

**Series IV. Financial Papers, 1903-1933, undated (0.4 linear feet)**

Financial papers include several stock and bond certificates; tax returns and receipts; bank receipts; a copy of Charles S. Mathews's will; bulletins from the Ventress-Lawrason Investment Company; and records of the Santa Maria Apartments in New Orleans.

**Series V. Legal Documents, 1908-1917 (6 volumes)**

Oversized legal documents include surveys and deeds of sale for land purchased by Mrs. Sallie Mathews Ventress.

**Series VI. Manuscript Volumes, 1914-1933, undated**

Manuscript volumes are comprised of a cashbook (1914-1915) and memorandum book of investments (1925) of Sallie Mathews Ventress; two memorandum books (1926-1929, 1926-1933) and two notebooks (1929-1932, undated) listing municipal bonds for New Orleans and Baton Rouge and shares in various New Orleans and Shreveport banks and utility companies.

**INDEX TERMS**

Geographic Locations\*

Baton Rouge (La.)	1.I
Bayou Boeuf (La.)	1.I, 1.IV
Lafourche Bayou (La.)	1.IV, 1.V
Bayou Sara (La.)	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Coco Bend Plantation (La.)	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Georgia Plantation (La.)	1.II, 1.III, IV, 2.I, 2.IV
Greenwood Plantation (La.)	1.I, 1.IV, 2.IV
LaGrange Plantation (Miss.)	2.I
New Orleans (La.)	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V, 2.IV

\* Index of geographic locations prominent in the collection, NOT all locations in the collection.

People\*

Adams, John I. & Co.	1.IV, 1.V
Carpenter, Richard	1.I, 1.II, 1.IV, 1.V
Chase, Anne Paul (1809-1863)	1.I
Chase, William Henry (1798-1870)	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Flower, Richard	1.I
Jennings, Thomas R.	1.V
Jessup, L. Y.	1.V
Kelly, A. D. & Co.	1.I, 1.IV
Key, Philip B.	1.I
Kilpatrick, Douglas	2.I, 2.IV
Lawrason, Harriet Mathews (1856-1921)	1.I, 2.II
Lawrason, Samuel McCutchon (1852-1924)	1.IV, 2.II, 2.IV
Mathews, Charles Lewis (1824-1864)	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Mathews, Charles S.	1.I, 1.II, 1.III, 1.IV, 2.II, 2.IV
Mathews, George (1739-1812)(General)	1.I, 1.II, 1.III, 1.IV, 1.V

**MATHEWS-VENTRESS-LAWRASON FAMILY PAPERS****Mss 4358**

1772-1934

LSU Libraries Special Collections

Mathews, George (1774-1836)	1.I, 1.II, 1.III, 1.IV, 1.V
Mathews, Harriet Flower (1793-1873)	1.I, 1.II, 1.III, 1.IV, 1.V
Mathews, Penelope Stewart (1828-1897)	1.I, 1.II, 1.IV, IV
Randolph, Peter	1.I
Renshaw, Cammack & Co.	1.I, 1.IV
Selby, James	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Slaughter, M. M.	2.I
Ventress, James Alexander (1853-1912)	1.V, 2.I, 2.II, 2.III
Ventress, L. T.	2.I, 2.IV
Ventress, Sarah (Sallie) Mathews (1859-1934)	2.I, 2.II, 2.III, 2.IV
Winter, W. D.	1.I, 1.IV

\* Index of people prominent in the collection, NOT all people in the collection.

Subject Heading\*

African American agricultural laborers—Louisiana	1.I, 1.II, 1.III, 1.IV
African-Americans—Colonization	1.I
Banks and Banking—Louisiana	2.IV, 2.VI
Cotton growing—Louisiana—West Feliciana Parish	1.I, 1.IV, 2.IV
Cotton trade—Louisiana	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V, 2.I
Depressions—1929—United States	2.I, 2.VI
Freedmen—Louisiana	1.I, 1.IV
Fugitive slaves—Louisiana	1.I, 1.IV
Investments—Louisiana	2.VI
Judges—Louisiana	1.I
Louisiana—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Claims	1.I, 1.IV
Louisiana, Supreme Court—History—19 <sup>th</sup> Century	1.I, 2.II
Plantation life—Louisiana	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Reconstruction—Louisiana	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V
Slaveholders—Louisiana—West Feliciana Parish	1.I

**MATHEWS-VENTRESS-LAWRASON FAMILY PAPERS**  
1772-1934

**Mss 4358**  
LSU Libraries Special Collections

Slaveholders—Louisiana—Lafourche Parish	1.I
Slaveholders—Louisiana—Rapides Parish	1.I
Slavery—Condition of slaves	1.I, 1.II, 1.IV
Slavery—Emancipation	1.I
Slavery—Insurrections, etc.	1.I
Sugar growing—Louisiana—Lafourche Parish	1.I, 1.IV, 1.V, 2.I, 2.IV
Ventress-Lawrason Investment Co.	2.I, 2.IV
World War, 1914-1918	2.I

\*Index of subjects prominent in the collection, NOT all subjects in the collection.

CONTAINER LIST

Stack

Location      Box      Folders      Contents

**Subgroup 1. Mathews Family Papers**

			<b>Series I. Correspondence (1772-1879, undated)</b>
UU:255	1	1-8	(1772-1826)
	2	1-15	(1827-1864)
UU:256	3	1-15	(1865-1879, undated)
	3	16-17	<b>Series II. Printed Items</b> (1812-1923, undated)
OS:M	--	1	<i>Sugar Planters' Journal</i> (1906)
UU:256	3	18-19	<b>Series III. Miscellaneous Items</b>
			<b>Series IV. Financial Papers (1776-1933)</b>
	4	1-16	(1776-1870)
	5	1-6	(1871-1876)
	6	1-6	(1877-1917, undated)
OS:M	--	1	(1836, 1868-1870)
			<b>Series V. Legal Papers (1796-1877)</b>
UU:256	6	7-13	(1796-1873)
UU:257	7	1-2	(1874-1877, undated)
		3-4	Jennings vs. Mathews (1866-1873, undated)
		5-8	Jessup vs. Mathews (1864-1876, undated)
		9-10	Mathews vs. Mathews (1866-1871, undated)
OS:M	--	1	(1830, 1833, 1846, 1866)

<u>Stack</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
<b>Subgroup 2. Ventress-Lawrason Family Papers</b>			
<b>Series I. Correspondence</b>			
U:257	8	1-8	(1890-1933, undated)
	9	1-2	<b>Series II. Printed Items</b> (1901-1924, undated)
	9	3-4	<b>Series III. Miscellaneous Items</b>
<b>Series IV. Financial Papers</b>			
UU:258	10	1-7	(1903-1927)
	11	1-6	(1928-1934, undated)
	11	7-8	Tax receipts (1910-1933)
OS:M	--	1	<b>Series IV. Legal</b> (1908-1917)
UU:258	12	1-6	<b>Series V. Manuscript Volumes</b> (1914-1933, undated)
		v. 1	cashbook (1914-1915)
		v. 2	memorandum book (1925) Stack
		v. 3	memorandum book (1926-1929)
		v. 4	memorandum book (1926-1933)
		v. 5	notebook (1929-1932)
		v. 6	notebook (undated)