

BOWMAN-TURNBULL FAMILY PAPERS

Mss. 5059

Inventory

Compiled by
Luana Henderson

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

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SUMMARY

Size	1.5 linear ft.
Geographic Locations	West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana.
Inclusive Dates	1777-1972.
Bulk Dates	1777-1829, 1854-1858, 1887-1903.
Languages	English, French.
Summary	Papers contain correspondence, financial and legal papers, and printed items reflecting the business activities and, to a lesser degree, the personal lives of the Turnbull and Bowman families.
Access Restrictions	None.
Reproduction Note	May be reproduced.
Copyright	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
Related Collections	James P. Bowman Family Papers, Mss. 1372, 1382, Turnbull-Allain Family Papers, Mss. 4261, Daniel Turnbull Family Papers, Mss. 4973, Turnbull-Bowman Family Papers, Mss. 4452, Turnbull-Bowman-Lyons Family Papers, Mss. 4026.
Citation	Bowman-Turnbull Family Papers, Mss. 5059, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location	T:53, OS:B

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

The Turnbull and Bowman families were planters of West Feliciana, Iberville, and Pointe Coupee parishes in Louisiana.

John Turnbull (1741-1799) and his brother, Walter, immigrated to Louisiana in the 1770s. They traded furs, provisions, slaves, livestock, and agricultural produce including indigo and tobacco as partners in the firms Turnbull & Co., Turnbolls & Frazer, Turnbolls & Hood & Co., and Turnbull & Joyce. These companies traded goods in New Orleans, Natchez, Mobile, Pensacola, and London.

By the 19th century, John Turnbull shifted his financial interests to planting. He settled with his wife, Catherine Rucker Turnbull (1768-1832), and their children at Bayou Sara, West Feliciana Parish. Their children were Isabelle (1785-1873) who married Robert Semple, John (1787-1829), Sarah (1789-1875) who married Lewis Stirling, Susannah (b. 1793) who married John Towles, Walter (1794-1838) and Daniel (1796-1861). Catherine managed many of her own business affairs. She jointly owned a plantation in St. Mary Parish with her son-in-law, John Towles. After John Turnbull's death, she managed the family business affairs with the assistance of Charles Norwood, a relative to the Turnbull family by marriage. She also rented a house in New Orleans to Norwood, who assisted her in the settlement of John Turnbull's estate.

Catherine's son, Daniel, became a successful planter. He produced cotton and sugar; however, his main crop was cotton. He married Martha Hilliard Barrow (1809-1896), the daughter of William Barrow (1765-1823) and Pheraby Hilliard Barrow (1775-1827) of Highland Plantation in West Feliciana Parish. In 1835, Daniel established Rosedown Plantation, where he and Martha resided with their three children, William B. (1829-1856), Sarah (1831-1914) and James Daniel (1836-1843). An avid horticulturist, Martha assembled a large collection of botanical specimens, which she had planted in the extensive gardens at Rosedown. Many of the plants she introduced survive in the gardens today. Daniel Turnbull also operated Styopa, Catalpa, Middleplace, Hazelwood, Grove, Inheritance, Woodlawn, and De Soto plantations. He sold cotton through factors in New Orleans, including his nephew, A. M. Turnbull, who was member of the factorage A. M. Turnbull & Co.

The Bowman and Turnbull families were connected by the marriage of Sarah Turnbull and James Pirrie Bowman (1832-1927). James was the son of Eliza Pirrie (1805-1851) and her second husband, William R. Bowman (1800-1835), rector of Grace Episcopal Church in St. Francisville. Eliza and William also had a daughter, Isabel (1876-1951) who married William Wilson Matthews.

Eliza Pirrie was the daughter of Lucretia (Lucy) Alston (1772-1833) and James Pirrie (1769-1824) of Oakley Plantation, La.

Eliza's first marriage to her cousin, Robert Hilliard Barrow (1795-1823) of Greenwood Plantation, produced a son, Robert H. Barrow, Jr. (b. 1824). Their time together was short

for Robert Hilliard Barrow died six weeks after the marriage. In 1840, Eliza married her third husband, Henry Lyons, a lawyer from Philadelphia. They had three children, Cora, Lucie, and Eliza. The children's half-sister, Isabel, cared for them after their mother's death in 1851. Lyons became a partner in a law practice with F. A. Boyle of West Feliciana Parish. In the 1850s, Henry Lyons traveled to California where he speculated in real estate and other financial ventures. He lived in San Francisco and became one of three men to serve on the first Supreme Court of California.

Eliza's son, James P. Bowman served as 1st Lieutenant of the 3rd Louisiana Cavalry, CSA, during the Civil War while his wife, Sarah remained at Rosedown with her mother, Martha Turnbull. After the war, he returned to Louisiana to manage affairs at Rosedown Plantation and Frogmoor and Bayou Grosse Tete plantations in Pointe Coupee Parish. James and Sarah settled at Rosedown, where they raised their children, Martha (b. 1858), Eliza "Lillie," (1859-1907), Sarah "Sadie" (1869-1952), Anna K. (1864-1887) married Mr. Fort, Daniel T. (1862-1900), Nina (1869-1955), James P. Bowman, Jr. (b. 1869), Corrie (1872-1929) and Isabel "Belle" (1876-1951). Sarah inherited the plantation in 1896. Upon her death in 1914, she left the plantations and assets to her four daughters, Corrie, Isabel, Sarah and Nina. In 1956, after the death of the last Bowman sister, Milton and Catherine Underwood purchased and restored Rosedown Plantation home and gardens. The Louisiana Office of State Parks currently preserves the property as a historic site.

Note: For more biographical information, see inventories for the Turnbull-Bowman Family, Papers, Mss. 4452; Turnbull-Allain Family Papers, Mss. 4261; Turnbull-Bowman-Lyons, Family Papers, Mss. 4026, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Papers contain correspondence, and personal, financial and legal papers pertaining to the business activities and, to a lesser degree, lives of the Turnbull and Bowman families. Business correspondence reflects involvement in the cotton and sugar trade, and personal letters discuss family matters and health. Papers also contain genealogy and biographical information, as well as printed material featuring the plantation houses of West Feliciana Parish, particularly Rosedown Plantation. Additionally, a collection of photocopied 17th and 18th century accounts invoices, and correspondence can be found in *Book of Remembrance* (1788-1857).

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

- Series I. Bowman Family Papers, 1829-1972, undated.**
Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1854-1868, 1875-1922, undated.
Subseries 2. General papers, 1829-1859, undated.
- Series II. Printed Items, 1841-1972, undated.**
- Series III. Turnbull Family Papers, 1777-1903, undated.**
Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1796-1903, undated.
Subseries 2. Financial papers, 1777-1829, undated.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**Series I. Bowman Family Papers, 1829-1972, undated.****Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1854-1868, 1875-1922, undated. (0.3 linear ft.)**

This series is comprised of business and personal correspondence of the Bowman family. Business correspondence (1854-1858) reflects James Bowman's involvement in the cotton and sugar trade, with the majority written by a New Orleans, La., commission merchant firm of W. & D. Urquhart reporting on the sale and shipment of cotton and sugar. They discuss the prices and quantity of cotton shipments. Many of the letters are written on the reverse side of the *New Orleans Price Current, Commercial Intelligencer and Merchants' Transcript* (1851-1858). An early letter reports an incident involving the punishment of slaves (Sept. 16, 1854). In a letter to Wilson Mathews, husband of Isabel Bowman, James Bowman discusses ordering pipe in New Orleans (Sept. 5, 1857). Additionally, a letter to Robert H. Barrow complains about the behavior of an insubordinate plantation employee (Sept. 27, 1857). In his response, Barrow suggests how to settle the affair (Sept. 28, 1857).

Personal letters report on the activities and health of family and friends. A letter from Sarah Turnbull Bowman to Eliza Bowman concerns family matters (Oct. 6, 1875). In his letters to Lila Bowman, William A. Perry expresses his affection for her, and he shares news about mutual friends (1887-1888). He mentions the wages of farm workers and severe winter weather (March 18, 1888). He comments on presidential elections, prohibition, women's rights, and encourages Lila to study these issues (June 20, July 8, 1888). In a letter to her mother, Corrie Bowman describes her visit to the World's Fair in Chicago (Aug. 13, 1890). Joseph Moore Soniat du Fossat describes events at a rowing competition (June 11, 1893). Margaret Mary states that a strike by railroad workers has resulted in high prices and a shortage of coal (Dec. 17, 1922). Several picture postcards sent to Sadie Turnbull depict public buildings and street scenes in Montgomery, Ala., and Virginia (1906).

Subseries 2. General papers, 1829-1859, undated. (0.3 linear ft.)

This group is comprised of financial records, a mortgage document, and personal papers. Financial papers make up a large component of this subseries. They include promissory notes, bank drafts, receipts, invoices and accounts reflecting the sale of cotton and sugar. Of special note is a mortgage pertaining to liens against the property of Andrew Skillman. This document lists slaves by name and age (Dec. 12, 1844). In addition, this group contains genealogy notes, a notepad and biographical sketches. The notepad contains a description of Filhiol House and references to members of the Filhiol family (undated). Biographical sketches are those of Juan Baptiste Filhiol and members of the Pirrie family (undated).

Series II. Printed Items, 1841-1972, undated. (0.25 linear ft.)

Printed items consist of newspapers, newspapers clippings, and biographical sketches (undated). There is also the tourist booklet, *Louisiana Plantation Homes* published by the Louisiana Dept. of Commerce and Industry (ca. 1966) and a textbook, *Grammar Simplified; or an Ocular Analysis of the English Language* by J. Greenleaf (1841). The

newspapers *The Daily True Delta*, New Orleans, La. (Sept. 7, 1861) and the *Richmond Enquirer*, Richmond, Va. (Dec. 10, 1861) report on the Civil War and Confederate troops. *The Daily Picayune*, New Orleans (Aug. 6, 1904) reports on the war between Russia and Japan. Newspapers clippings feature the steamboat, *J. M. White* (Aug. 19, 1951) and West Feliciana Parish plantation houses, with an emphasis on the history and preservation of Rosedown Plantation. Also found in this group is a printed drawing of the extensive gardens at Rosedown (1964). There are also illustrations of 19th century gowns (ca. 1856), an issue of the *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (Oct. 1856) and a broadside announcing a Fourth of July celebration (June 18, 1888).

Series III. Turnbull Family Papers, 1777-1903, undated.

Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1796-1903. (0.25 linear ft.)

Correspondence written primarily to John and Catherine Turnbull and their son Daniel, reflects the business affairs of the Turnbull family. In his letters to John Turnbull, Frederick Kimball writes about his poor cotton crop and his inability to pay a debt owed to Turnbull (1796-1797). James Fletcher, a New Orleans merchant, comments on the cotton market, and mentions the arrival of Walter Turnbull and family in New Orleans (July 9, 1799). Correspondence from New Orleans commission merchants, Charles Norwood (1801-1810) and Nathan Cox (1819-1822) to Catherine and Daniel Turnbull, comprises a large part of this group. They relate to the plantation operations in West Feliciana Parish, including Inheritance Plantation. Their letters reflect cotton production, prices, and shipments, as well as Turnbull financial accounts. Other recipients include Henry Lyons, who is informed of the outstanding debts against the estate of Edmond Randolph (Sept. 13, 1841). Letters on slavery concern the French governor's order prohibiting the transport of slaves from the U.S. [in French] (April 24, 1801), the sale of a female slave, Madeleine (June 5, 1801), and W. Turnbull's instructions regarding the transfer of slaves to another plantation (Feb. 2, 1856). Turnbull comments on the need to prepare them for such a move, and he includes a list of their names. Later correspondence concerns an order for a carriage for Martha Turnbull (June 10, 1873) and family matters (April 12, 1895, June 22, 1903).

Subseries 2. Financial papers, 1777-1829, undated. (0.3 linear ft.)

This subseries relates to the business affairs of John Turnbull, Catherine Turnbull and their son, Daniel Turnbull. Financial papers reflect business affairs and plantation operations in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Papers contain accounts, notes and invoices noting the amount of cotton sold, price, and the transporting steamer. They also contain promissory notes, and accounts, invoices and receipts for general merchandise, clothing, food and services. Of particular note is a receipt for thirty pairs of shoes for slaves (Oct. 31, 1817). *Book of Remembrance* consists of photocopies of accounts, invoices and business correspondence with original dates of 1788-1857. Included is a contract between Catherine Turnbull and Joseph Dunbar in a joint agriculture venture to cultivate cotton (photocopy, Feb. 10, 1807).

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CONTAINER LIST

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T:53	2	1-8	Subseries 2. General papers, 1829-1859.
OS:B	--	1	Accounts, 1806, 1851, undated.
T:53	2	9-12	Series II. Printed Items, 1841-1972, undated.
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	--	3	Newspapers and clippings, 1951-1966, undated.
			Series III. Turnbull Family Papers, 1777-1829, undated.
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OS:B	--	1	Letter, July 9, 1799.
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