

Finding Aid to the William Gibbons Letters MS 0305

Finding aid prepared by Unknown; revised by L. Spracher and S. Dick, 2001.

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Georgia Historical Society
501 Whitaker Street
Savannah, Georgia, 31401
912.651.2125
ghslib@georgiahistory.com

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Summary Information

Repository	Georgia Historical Society
Creator	Gibbons, William, -1852.
Title	William Gibbons letters
Date [inclusive]	1820, 1835
Extent	0.05 cubic feet (1 folder)
Language	English

Preferred Citation

[item identification], William Gibbons letters, MS 305, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Biographical Information

William Gibbons (d. 1852) inherited his vast fortune from his father, Thomas Gibbons (1757-1826). Thomas Gibbons was a former mayor of Savannah, Georgia (1791-1792, 1794-1795, 1799-1801), and an attorney and rice planter. His Savannah plantation was called "Whitehall." In addition to his plantation holdings, Thomas Gibbons held a half interest in the New York-New Jersey ferry rights. In 1802, Thomas and William left Georgia to buy up portions of the Elizabethtown, New Jersey waterfront, amassing a large interest in the ferry rights. In 1824, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Gibbons' favor in the *Ogden vs. Gibbons* case, a decision which ended steamboat monopoly in all states and one which continues to influence decisions regulating public transport. Following Thomas' death in 1826, William sold this interest and began breeding thoroughbred race horses in New Jersey. In 1832, he started buying land for his horses and by 1851 he owned 1,000 acres in New Jersey. Between 1833 and 1836, William Gibbons built the Greek Revival house he named "The Mansion" on the family estate, "The Forest" in Morris County, New Jersey.

Scope and Content Note

The William Gibbons letters include correspondence between William Gibbons and his father, Thomas regarding business in Savannah and two letters from John Lamar Jr. to William Gibbons regarding the breeding of horses. Of particular interest are references to the sale of Swamp Plantation, the widening of Bay Lane, the erection of new buildings in Savannah, and the loss of Matthew McAllister's buildings to fire in 1820.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Georgia Historical Society

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Custodial History

Unknown.

Accruals

No accruals are expected.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Symmachus Trading Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1950.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Letters (correspondence)

Geographic Name(s)

- Savannah (Ga.)--History--19th century.
- Swamp Plantation (Ga.)

Personal Name(s)

- Gibbons, Thomas, 1757-1826.
- Gibbons, William, -1852.
- Lamar, J. B., (John Basil), 1812-1862.

- McAllister, Matthew Hall, 1800-1865.

Subject(s)

- Animal breeding.
- Building sites.
- Roads--Widening.

Physical and Technical Access Restrictions

None.

Collection Inventory

Item 1: From William Gibbons to Thomas Gibbons in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Savannah, Georgia 1820 March 23 3.0 p.

Scope and Content Note

Buildings being erected in Savannah.

Item 2: From William Gibbons to Thomas Gibbons in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Savannah, Georgia 1820 May 7 3.0 p.

Scope and Content Note

Contains report of City Recorder concerning widening of Bay Lane; talks about plan of George Jones and Matthew McAllister to have Bay Lane widened and losses McAllister sustained in a fire.

Item 3: From John Lamar, Jr. to William Gibbons in New York. Macon, Georgia 1835 June 3 3.0 p.

Scope and Content Note

Breeding and raising horses; tells about making speech to literary society at Franklin College.

Item 4: From John Lamar, Jr. to William Gibbons in New York. Macon, Georgia 1835 June 3 3.0 p.

Scope and Content Note

Regarding the buying and selling of horses.

Item 5: From William Gibbons to Thomas Gibbons in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Savannah, Georgia 1820 June 25 3.0 p.

Scope and Content Note

Freight receipts for title and sale of Swamp Plantation.