



Guide to the Bullock family papers, 1784-1940s and undated

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Summary

Collection Title:

Bullock family papers, 1784-1940s and undated

Creator:

Bullock family

Abstract:

Papers of several generations of a family of southern Virginia and central North Carolina, including Williamsboro, Granville County (now Vance), and southern Virginia. Fourteen photographs added at a later date represent bi-racial descendants of this family who lived in Nutbush and Manson, NC. The bulk is comprised of correspondence, 1820-1920, between John and William H. Bullock, a second John Bullock and his wife, Susan M. (Cobb) Bullock, their sons and daughters, and other children and grandchildren. Topics include family relationships and genealogy; illnesses and deaths; farming; enslaved persons and tenants (including lists with names of enslaved persons); campus life at the University of North Carolina, 1850s; plantation management; market prices, 1850s-1860s; secessionist and Union sentiments in Granville County; religious life; the Spanish-American War; and the Civil War in North Carolina and Virginia, with details on camp life, troop movements, and the Battle of Kinston and the siege of Petersburg. Volumes include two ledgers, a travel diary, 1848, from a business trip to Tennessee, and Susan Bullock's diary, 1869-1871. Included are legal and financial papers dating from 1784-1876.

Extent:

1.5 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Language:

English.

Collection ID:

RL.00173

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1dp4d>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Bullock family papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

Collection houses the papers of several generations of a family of southern Virginia and central North Carolina, including Williamsboro, Granville County (now Vance), and southern Virginia. Fourteen photographs added at a later date represent bi-racial descendants of this family who lived in Nutbush and Manson, NC.

The bulk of the collection is comprised of correspondence, 1820-1920, between John and William H. Bullock, a second John Bullock and his wife, Susan M. (Cobb) Bullock, their sons and daughters, and other children and grandchildren. Topics include family relationships and genealogy; illnesses and deaths; farming; enslaved persons and tenants (including some lists of enslaved persons); campus life at the University of North Carolina, 1850s; plantation management; market prices, 1850s-1860s; secessionist and Union sentiments in Granville County; and religious life. Of interest are 46 letters relating to the Civil War in North Carolina and Virginia, with details on camp life, troop movements, and the Battle of Kinston in 1862 and the siege of Petersburg in late 1864. A few letters are sent from Johnson Island, Ohio, and a few give some details on the final months of the war in North Carolina.

Volumes include two ledgers, a travel diary, 1848, from a business trip to Tennessee, and Susan Bullock's diary, 1869-1871. Also included are legal and financial papers dating from 1784-1876, and assorted other papers, including a list of about 40 names of enslaved persons from 1857, and medical receipts and accounts.

Biographical/Historical

There are two families represented in the papers: a white family of farm and plantation owners, and a bi-racial family whose members were enslaved by the Bullock family. The chief locations of both families were Williamsborough or -boro (Granville County, now part of Vance County), North Carolina, and the nearby towns of Nutbush, Henderson, Manson, and Bullocksville. Other locations where family members lived and moved to include Warrenton, Tarboro and Rocky Mount, NC; Clarksville and Soudan, Virginia; and Tennessee, and Mississippi, where the Bullocks owned land.

The majority of the papers were assembled by John Bullock (1799-1866) and Susan (Cobb) Bullock (1803-1875), who raised a large family of children in Williamsborough, NC. Their sons and daughters, and their spouses, are also well-represented in the correspondence to and from their parents, and there are many letters from their own children.

The influence of a large network of inter-related families from the same county and the same region is reflected in the correspondence and other papers: these names include Boyd, Eaton, Farrar, Goode, Hamilton, Tarry, and Taylor. Other names appearing are Harrison, Pearson, Martin, Morton, Paschall, Satterwhite, and Yancey.

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Arrangement

Materials are arranged in the following series: Correspondence, Diaries, Financial Papers, Legal Papers, Other Papers, and Photographic Materials.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

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URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research. The negatives are closed to general use; photographic prints are available.

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

All or portions of this collection may be housed off-site in Duke University's Library Service Center. The library may require up to 48 hours to retrieve these materials for research use.

Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library purchased the John Bullock papers in 1942; a gift addition was received in 1998, and the name changed to the Bullock family papers.

Processing Information

Processed by Don Sechler, April 1999; encoded by Lisa Stark.

Reprocessed and description expanded by Paula Jeannet, December 2017

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Names and Subjects

- Families -- North Carolina -- Granville County
- Family life -- North Carolina -- 19th century
- Plantations -- Mississippi
- Plantations -- North Carolina
- Racially mixed people -- North Carolina -- Photographs
- Racially mixed people -- North Carolina -- Vance County
- Slavery -- North Carolina
- Slaves -- North Carolina
- Granville County (N.C.) -- History
- North Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
- Vance County (N.C.) -- History
- Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
- Black-and-white photographs
- Negatives (photographs)
- University of North Carolina -- Faculty
- Taylor family
- Presbyterian Church

- Boyd family
- Bullock family
- Farrar family
- Goode family
- Hamilton family
- Pearson family

Collection Inventory

Correspondence, 1820-1920 and undated

Physical Description: 11 folders Approximately 600 items

Scope and Contents

About one third of the correspondence dates from the 1820s to 1865, and two-thirds dates from after the Civil War to the early 20th century. Included are 46 letters from the Civil War period to and from members of John and Susan Bullock's family, chiefly concerning their son Walter Bullock's service in the Confederate Army.

Topics in the correspondence typically include family matters such as schooling, illnesses, courtship and marriage, deaths in the family and in the community, farming, sales of agricultural crops, religious life, visitors and local events, and some business matters. There is also some mention of the Spanish-American War in later letters.

There are many letters from the daughters and sons of John and Susan Cobb, especially from William, James, Richard, Walter, Alfred, George, Sally, Lucy, and Beck. Grandchildren's letters and many letters from Beck to her mother Sally (Tarry) Hamilton make up the bulk of the late 19th and early 20th century letters.

Family names also appearing in the papers include: Boyd, Goode, Eaton, Farrar, Hamilton, Harrison, Tarry, Taylor, and Watkins. There are also frequent mention of Andersons, Grahams and Hendersons.

Place names associated with the Bullocks and their relatives are: Williamsborough (or -boro), Granville County, NC (now Vance County), the principal home place for the Bullocks; Wheatland, Tarboro, Warrenton and Rocky Mount, NC; Petersburg, Soudan, Boydton, and Skipwith, VA. There are some letters from Tennessee and Mississippi, where the Bullocks owned land. Other place names appearing include Grassy Creek and Oak Hill, Granville County.

The Civil War letters mostly were sent to and from Walter Bullock and his parents, but there are a few from his brothers, several of whom apparently

also served for a time, and other people. They give details about camp life, food and diet, health issues, weather, furloughs, troop movements, and rumors about events. There are frequent requests for supplies from home. One letter bears a long description of the battle of Kinston, NC, 1862; another from an encampment "near Norfolk" dated March 1862 mentions a major naval engagement at the mouth of the James River. A letter from June 1862 brings the news that a Bullock son was taken prisoner. Another letter from John Bullock to a friend announces that Walter was taken prisoner in June 1864, probably when Captain George W. Kirk and Union cavalry overran Camp Vance (Burke Cty.). There is one letter from Walter writing from Johnson's Island, Ohio, September 1864; he then writes several letters from Kenansville, NC in early 1865, and describes the last months of the war. Camp Vance (Burke County), figures most prominently in Walter's letters, who seems to have been by then in the 68th Regiment, and Camp Holmes, near Raleigh. Other place names include Camp Mangum, NC; Camp Arrington, VA, 1862; "in the trenches," Petersburg, VA, November 29, 1864; and Kenansville, NC, December 1864. There are a few letters relating to Captain William Wallace White, who also appears at the head of a militia roll in the Other Papers series.

Correspondence, 1820-1849 (online item available)	Box 1
Digital Object: Correspondence, 1820-1849	
Correspondence, 1852-1860	Box 1
Correspondence, 1861-1865	Box 1
Correspondence, 1866-1878	Box 1
Correspondence, 1881-1889	Box 1
Correspondence, 1890-1892	Box 1
Correspondence, 1893-1894	Box 1
Correspondence, 1895-1898	Box 1
Correspondence, 1899	Box 2
Correspondence, 1900-1920	Box 2
Correspondence, undated and fragments	Box 2

Scope and Contents

From the names and handwriting, the undated letters (2 folders) seem to date almost entirely from the late 19th century. There are also some fragments in the form of single leaves or half-sheets.

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Diaries, 1839-1871

Physical Description: 2 Volumes

Scope and Contents

Two volumes: a travel diary by an unknown person, probably a Bullock family member, recounting a business trip in 1848 from Warrenton, North Carolina west to Knoxville, Tennessee; and a personal diary (1869-1871) kept by Susan Cobb Bullock, along with earlier entries (1839-1841) from a general store or other similar business, probably run by her husband John Bullock, whose name faintly appears on the cover of the volume.

Travel diary, November 27-December 23, 1848
and undated

Box 2

Physical Description: 1 Volumes 46 pages 6 1/4 x 4 1/8 inches

Scope and Contents

Travel diary by an unknown person, probably a Bullock family member, recounting a business trip from Warrenton, North Carolina west to Knoxville, Tennessee. The entries fill eleven pages and run from November 26 to December 23, 1848. They chiefly concern the weather, distances traveled, who he lodged with, landmarks noted (Pilot Mountain being one), rivers crossed, and the meals and expenses. He traveled until Sparta, Tennessee with a Dr. Cunningham, a Mr. Stamper, and a guide, a Mr. Ellis from Tennessee. They then took the Nashville road, and he the McMinnsville road. There are few if any details of the business that took him on this trip.

A list of county seats following the diary entries, and a separate chronology in the first few pages of the volume of miles covered and expenses for each leg (tolls, meals, and feed for the horses) appear to match the diary's entries. From the chronology, the traveler seems to have continued through Atlanta and then home to Warrenton, arriving the last days of December.

Diary and account book, 1839-1871

Box 2

Physical Description: 1 Volumes Approximately 150 pages Approximately 9x6 inches

Scope and Contents

A multi-purpose volume, initially begun as an account book owned by John Bullock, with entries from 1839 to 1841. The accounts, most likely from his general store, are listed by the names of individuals, men and women, local to Warrenton, NC, in what was formerly Granville County (now Vance).

About 140 pages of the same volume contain a diary kept by Susan M. Cobb Bullock, wife of John Bullock. From January 1, 1869 to January 6, 1871, she writes about daily life on the plantation and farm where the family lived. She mentions visitors, the weather, illnesses, and religious worship and related events. On February 28, 1869, she writes about her birthday and contemplates aging, her husband's death, and the eleven children she bore and her feelings about those who had passed away.

Other notes in the volume include about six pages of lists itemizing farm labor performed by enslaved people, referred to by first names, from 1839 to 1840, and a shorter list of work performed in 1869 perhaps by former enslaved persons, also with first names. "Sam" and "Orange" are among the names listed which recur in letters and other papers in the collection.

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Financial Papers, 1808-1876 and undated

Physical Description: 6 folders Approximately 500 items and two volumes.

Scope and Contents

Two account books, and loose receipts, bills, promissory notes, estate papers, and other financial records concerning the Bullock family, particularly John Bullock's general store in Granville County (now Vance), and the 19th century farms and small plantations of the Bullocks and other relations. Of particular note are two 1836 documents concerning the purchase by John Bullock from the Torrey or Toney family of an African American woman, Kitty, and her three children, Martha Ann, Mordecai, and Sally.

Ledgers, 1808, 1818-1819 (online item available)

Box 3

Digital Object: [Ledger, 1808](#)

Scope and Contents

Two bound volumes, missing covers, listing accounts from John Bullock's general merchandise store in rural Granville County (now Vance), North Carolina; the smaller volume is from 1808, while the larger volume dates from 1818-1819. The entries are listed by personal name. Several Bullocks are regular customers. Total approximately 200 pages.

Financial records, 1818-1825	Box 3
Financial records, 1825-1829	Box 3
Financial records, 1830-1835	Box 3
Financial records, 1835-1847	Box 3
Financial records, 1850-1876 and undated	Box 3

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Legal Papers, 1784-1845

Scope and Contents

Series contains legal papers mainly recorded in Granville County, including a handful of indentures and deeds for land, several summons initiated by John Bullock for non-payment, a record relating to William Anderson's estate, an estate trial for Dennis Royster with William Bullock as administrator, as well as a few records pertaining to community disputes.

Legal records	Box 3
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Other Papers, 1834-1920

Scope and Contents

Includes a folder of medical receipts and treatments by local doctors, 1834-1837, chiefly for family members but also mentions enslaved people and servants. Other papers of note in the series include a list of enslaved persons initialed by John Bullock, 1857; 19th century commodities price sheets from Virginia; and school grades and comportment reports, with a few antebellum from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for the sons of John Bullock.

Medical receipts and notes, 1834-1837	Box 3
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Various papers, 1829-1899 and undated	Box 3
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Scope and Contents

Folder houses an assortment of small items from the Bullock family papers outside the scope of the other series. Items of special interest: a sheet of paper initialed by John Bullock with several lists naming approximately 40 enslaved individuals, 1857; school grade and comportment reports from UNC

(1850s); a militia roll, circa 1862, for the Nutbush, NC 37th regiment, with first and last names of 43 men from the area, led by Captain William Wallace White (1825-1911), with Richard Bullock, Jr. appearing as a private; and several published commodities price sheets from Virginia, 1857-1858.

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Photographic Materials, circa 1900-1940s

Scope and Contents

Acquired in the 1990s as an addition to the Bullock family papers collection, this group of images represents African American and bi-racial descendants of the Bullock family of Granville (Vance) County, NC. The earliest image is a head and shoulders portrait of a toddler-aged child, from around 1900-1910 or earlier. Individuals photographed circa 1930s and 1940s are the donor's great-grandfather and great-grandmother Thomas S. Bullock (born ca. 1869) and Eliza Hendricks Bullock (born ca. 1875); grandfather and grandmother George Bullock and Winnie Russell; and aunts Alice and Sally. Other names are Elnora "Noda" Bullock, the donor's mother, as a child. The portrait of Thomas S. Bullock as a middle-age man was taken by the Flushing Photo Studio in Flushing, N.Y. Sally Bullock's photo at age 16 gives the location of Manson, NC, near the Bullock family's original homeplace. Thomas S. Bullock and Eliza Hendricks Bullock are listed in the 1910 census as a mulatto married couple in Nutbush, Vance County, NC. In other censuses and records, they are identified as African Americans ("Negro" or "Black").

The original photographs were loaned to the library in the 1990s, and staff created these negatives and photographic copies. A set of paper photocopies of some of the prints are labeled with individual's names.

Photographs (modern copies), circa 1900,
1930s-1940s

Box 3

Physical Description: 14 photographs

1 folder 14 modern black-and-white photographic prints; 5 paper sheets with photocopies of images, with names added.

Scope and Contents

Dates represent original date when the photographs were taken. The copies were made in the 1990s.

Negatives (modern)

Box 3

Physical Description: 14 items

1 folder 14 negatives 4x5 inches

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