



Guide to the John Rutherford Papers, 1754-1931, bulk 1781-1865

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
Background	4
Administrative Information	7
Names and Subjects	7
Collection Inventory	8

Summary

Collection Title:

John Rutherford papers, 1754-1931, 1781-1865

Creator:

Rutherford, John

Abstract:

Collection contains correspondence, travel journals, account books, memorandum books, farm records, legal records, commonplace books, class notes, and other papers (chiefly 1781-1865) of John Rutherford; of his son, John Coles Rutherford, lawyer, planter, and state legislator; and of other members of the family. The papers before 1818 are chiefly legal and business papers and include information on family investments in Kentucky lands and other ventures. The papers of John Rutherford relate to his career as governor, his agricultural and business affairs; Virginia and U.S. politics, the American Party; the return of fugitive slaves, secession and events preceding the Civil War, Confederate foreign relations; and family matters; and they include letters from Edward Coles, William Cabell Rives, and others of Rutherford's relatives by marriage, concerning agriculture and anti-slavery sentiment in Virginia and relations between the United States and France. John Coles Rutherford's papers relate to his attendance at Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) and the University of Virginia, his interests in politics and European travel, his legal activities, his work as a state legislator (1852-1865) and as manager of the family estates, westward expansion, and social life and customs in Virginia. Includes scattered correspondence of J.C. Rutherford's wife, Ann Seddon Roy Rutherford, referring to life in the South during and after the Civil War, and family matters.

Extent:

4.5 Linear Feet (6 Boxes (2,745 items))

Language:

Materials in English

Collection ID:

RL.10087

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1hh2v>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the John Rutherford Papers Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Background

Scope and Content

This collection contains family, business, personal, and political correspondence of John Rutherford (1792-1866), lawyer, merchant, and governor of Virginia, 1841-1842; of his son, John Coles Rutherford (1825-1866), lawyer, planter, and member of the House of Delegates; of Ann Seddon (Roy) Rutherford (1832-1906?), wife of John Coles Rutherford; and of Thomas Rutherford (1766-1852), father of John Rutherford, and Richmond merchant.

Early papers are those of Isaac Holmes, assistant quartermaster at Petersburg, Virginia, chiefly from Richard Claiborne concerning provisions for Revolutionary soldiers; and of James Webb, apparently a lawyer of Smithfield, Virginia, having connections with John Marshall, Spencer Roane, and John Wickham, consisting of legal correspondence and papers. The papers of Thomas Rutherford include a letter, 1810, expressing objections to the embargo; letters concerning family matters and Rutherford's ailments; correspondence dealing with business affairs, chiefly his large landholdings in Kentucky and Ohio, and the title and sale of those lands; and an article, 1812, on the necessity of a navy to protect the maritime rights of the United States. Personal correspondence of John Rutherford is primarily with relatives, including his son, John Coles Rutherford; his brothers, Samuel Rutherford, William Rutherford, and Alexander Rutherford, and their families; relatives of Emily (Coles), Rutherford, his wife, including Tucker Coles, Isaac A. Coles, Edward Coles, Andrew Stevenson, and William Cabell Rives; his brother-in-law, Hodijah Meade; and Jane (Rutherford) Meade. Letters discuss family news; business matters; agriculture and the operation of their various plantations; the painting of family portraits; the marketing of wheat produced at #Rock Castle,# home of John Coles Rutherford, during the 1840s and 1850s; visits to various springs in western Virginia; the insurance society headed by John Rutherford; family illnesses, including full descriptions of remedies and medicines; purchase of land; detailed accounts of the construction of a boat for use at "Rock Castle"; purchase of a buggy, including description of various types of buggies; purchase and price of guano; detailed accounts of shipping by freight boats on the James River; purchase of slaves to prevent the separation of families; sympathy for slaves; purchase of shoes and making of clothes for slaver at #Rock Castle#; details of household management, such as the making of candles and the slaughtering of sheep; Richmond social life; and current events. Also included are letters from relatives in Ireland; letters of advice from John Rutherford to his son, John Coles Rutherford, while the latter was a student at Washington College, Lexington, Virginia, and at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville,

Virginia; letter, 1837, from Andrew Stevenson, U.S. minister to England, describing his and his wife's experiences in diplomatic circles in London, and papers relating to the settlement of the case of the U.S.S. Caroline, burned in 1837 by Canadian troops; a letter, 1832, from William Cabell Rives, while minister to France, concerning the instability of the French government, and Rives's conviction that slavery should be abolished; and letters discussing the activities of Thomas Ritchie (1778-1854), editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*, especially during 1849. Other papers relate to Rutherfoord's bank stocks, his legal practice, and mercantile affairs in Richmond, Virginia. The political correspondence includes correspondence between Rutherfoord and John Tyler concerning national politics, 1827-1831, Andrew Jackson and his policies, Henry Clay, political intrigue, "sectional cupidity," European affairs, and Tyler's concern for the welfare of the country; correspondence with Governor William H. Seward of New York while Rutherfoord was governor of Virginia pertaining to a controversy over fugitive slaves; letters from Rutherfoord to John Coles Rutherfoord commenting extensively on the American Party or Know-Nothings in Goochland County, Virginia; letters, 1860, from C. G. Memminger regarding national politics, secession, and the possibility of war; letter, 1860, from Rutherfoord to a cousin in London discussing the election of Abraham Lincoln, national politics, and his hatred of abolitionists, and protesting that the Prince of Wales had not been mistreated in Richmond; correspondence concerning the coming of the Civil War, the scarcity of food during the war, and refugees; letter, 1861, from John Brockenbrough describing the Washington Peace Convention and commenting on the compromise plan proposed by John Jordan Crittenden; letter, written under an assumed name, to Rutherfoord from Sir William Henry Gregory, member of the British Parliament with sympathies for the Confederate States of America, regarding the possibilities of recognition of the Confederate government by England and the means of communicating with Rutherfoord's nephew, who was attending a German university [published: Nannie M. Tilley (ed.), *England and the Confederacy*, *American Historical Review* 44 (October, 1938), 56-60]; and papers relating to Rutherfoord's service on a committee to assess damages made by the Confederate government in erecting defenses in Richmond.

The papers of John Coles Rutherfoord consist of his letters concerning literature, the activities of the Virginia House of Delegates, work on a banking bill in 1854, the Know-Nothing Party in Goochland County and their opposition to Rutherfoord's candidacy for a seat in the House of Delegates, visits to various springs in Virginia, trips to South Carolina to visit relatives, his courtship of Ann Seddon Roy, and his legal practice; correspondence regarding preparations for a European tour made by John Coles Rutherfoord and Charles Morris in 1851; letters to Rutherfoord discussing Virginia politics in the 1850s; letters from a former college mate, William M. Cooke, describing his legal practice in Saint Louis and Hannibal, Missouri, the slavery question, the growth of Saint Louis, emigrants to California and the sale of supplies to them, hunting grouse on the prairies, and the Know-Nothing Party in Missouri in 1855; letters from John D. Osborne and William Cabell Rives, Jr., containing descriptions of their travels

in the North and in Europe and conditions in Paris, France; scattered letters referring to the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, and to the Southern Literary Messenger and John R. Thompson; and letters from William P. Munford concerning the translation of Homer's Iliad by his father, William Munford, and his own plans to have it published.

Correspondence of Ann Seddon (Roy) Rutherford includes letters to her husband, John Coles Rutherford, concerning preparations and plans for her visits to her father, William H. Roy, household matters, and their children; letters from William H. Roy to Ann Seddon (Roy) Rutherford; papers pertaining to the settlement of William H. Roy's estate; letters from her sister, Sue (Roy) Carter, and from her aunt, Sarah (Seddon) Bruce, describing their children, accouchements, servants, household affairs, crops, care for slaves, and, during the Civil War, refugees, the scarcity of food, family members in the Confederate Army, and crowded conditions in Richmond, Virginia; letters of James A. Seddon regarding the business affairs of Ann Seddon (Roy) Rutherford after the death of her husband; letters from other friends and relatives chiefly concerning personal matters; and papers relating to the operation of "Rock Castle," including scattered accounts, contracts for labor, and inventories.

Volumes consist of a notebook on rhetoric by Emily (Coles) Rutherford; legal notebook of John Rutherford containing notes on Blackstone; personal account book, 1840-1841, of John Coles Rutherford; autographs and clippings collected by John Coles Rutherford, 1836-1850; commonplace book, 1839-1842, of John Coles Rutherford also containing copies of several letters; Index Rerum, 1842, kept by John Coles Rutherford while at the University of Virginia; notebooks of John Coles Rutherford while a student at Washington College, on various subjects including chemistry, mathematics, Greek history, natural and moral philosophy, political economy, Latin history, law, and the Constitution; case books, 1844-1852, and memorandum book, 1856-1862, containing records of the cases handled by John Coles Rutherford; memorandum book, 1846-1864, with notes on farming operations; letter book, 1857-1866, letterpress copybook, 1856-1866, and letter book and commonplace book, 1852-1858, of John Coles Rutherford; index, 1856-1865, of the letters received by John Coles Rutherford; indices to articles on politics and major events in the New York Herald, 1856-1859, and in the Richmond Examiner, 1862-1865; notebook on Rutherford family history; a scrapbook, 1843-1856, relating to the career of John Coles Rutherford in the Virginia House of Delegates; and a legal notebook, 1895-1916, of John Rutherford, son of John Coles Rutherford.

Biographical/Historical

John Rutherford (1792-1866) was a lawyer, merchant, and governor of Virginia from 1841 to 1842. His son, John Coles Rutherford (1825-1866), was a lawyer, planter, and member of the Virginia House of Delegates. Ann Seddon (Roy) Rutherford (1832-1906?), was the wife of John Coles Rutherford. Thomas

Rutherford (1766-1852), was the father of John Rutherford, and a Richmond merchant.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- United States -- Territorial expansion
- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Causes
- Governors -- Virginia
- Europe -- Description and travel -- 19th century

- Agriculture -- Virginia
- Virginia -- Social life and customs
- Virginia -- Politics and government -- 1775-1865
- Fugitive slaves -- Virginia
- United States -- Politics and government -- 1815-1861
- Universities and colleges -- Virginia
- Antislavery movements -- Virginia
- Real property -- Kentucky
- United States -- Foreign relations -- France
- France -- Foreign relations -- United States
- Confederate States of America -- Foreign relations
- Rutherford, John C. (John Coles)
- University of Virginia -- Students
- Washington and Lee University -- Students

Collection Inventory

Correspondence and papers, 1754-1843	Box 1
Physical Description: 8 folders	
Correspondence and papers, 1844-1848	Box 2
Physical Description: 4 folders	
Notebooks, 1842-1846, undated	Box 2
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Correspondence and papers, 1849-1854	Box 3
Physical Description: 6 folders	
Correspondence and papers, 1855-1860	Box 4
Physical Description: 7 folders	
Correspondence and papers, 1861-1931, undated	Box 5
Physical Description: 8 folders	
Correspondence and papers, undated	Box 6
Physical Description: 4 folders	
John Rutherford: Legal notebook, 1814	Volume S:3486

Scope and Contents

Study notes taken by John C. Rutherford on Blackstone.

John Rutherford: Legal notes, etc., 1895-1916	Volume M:3487
John Rutherford: Notebook on family history, undated	Volume M:3488
John Coles Rutherford: Personal account book, 1840-1841	Volume M:3489
John Coles Rutherford: Collection of autographs and clippings, 1836-1850	Volume L:3490
Scope and Contents	
Autographs, letters introducing Sidney Mason in Europe, and news clippings.	
John Coles Rutherford: Case book, 1844-1850	Volume M:3491
John Coles Rutherford: Case books, 1844-1852	Volume M:3492
John Coles Rutherford: Commonplace book, 1839-1842	Volume L:3493
John Coles Rutherford: Index of letters received, 1856-1865	Volume M:3494
John Coles Rutherford: Index Rerum, 1842	Volume M:3495
John Coles Rutherford: Letterpress copybook, 1856-1866	Volume L:3499
John Coles Rutherford: Memorandum book, 1846-1864	Volume M:3501
Scope and Contents	
Includes notes on farming operations.	
John Coles Rutherford: Notebook, 1842-1843	Volume M:3506
John Coles Rutherford: Notebook on Greek History, 1841	Volume M:3510
John Coles Rutherford: Notebook, 1930	Volume M:3513
John Coles Rutherford: Scrapbook, 1843-1856	Volume M:3514