

C Machir, John, Papers, 1791-1899
2893 .6 linear feet

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of John Machir, a businessman and landowner who lived in St. Louis and Columbia, Missouri, consist of the legal papers of his father, Henry Machir, business correspondence, slave bills of sale, deeds, tax bills, surveys, personal correspondence, and account books.

DONOR INFORMATION

The John Machir papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Mrs. E.E. Evans on 23 July 1966 (Accession No. 412) and by Andrew W. Bass.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Machir was born in Kentucky, probably in the town of Maysville in Mason County. His father Henry was a lawyer who had land holdings in Kentucky, Virginia, and Ohio. Machir was related to the January family, whose farmland near St. Louis, Missouri, would later become part of Ferguson, Missouri. Members of the January family were also partners in many of Machir's business dealings which consisted mostly of the purchase and renting out of lands in Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri.

Machir moved to St. Louis, Missouri, around 1840 and then to Columbia, Missouri, in the early 1850s. His wife Maria died in 1890. They had four children, a son who died in 1860, and three daughters.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The John Machir Papers consist of the legal papers of his father, business correspondence, slave bills of sale, deeds, tax bills, surveys, account books, and personal correspondence. The papers are divided into four series, which are arranged chronologically within each series: **Legal Documents**, **Business Documents**, **Personal Correspondence**, and **Account Books**.

The **Legal Documents** series consists mainly of the papers of Machir's father, Henry, a lawyer from Mason County, Kentucky. They include deeds, wills, and court actions Henry worked on for his clients. This series also contains contracts and deeds for John's business and documents concerning Henry's estate after his death in 1829.

The **Business Documents** series contains correspondence written by members of the January family and other business associates of Machir's in Missouri, Ohio, and Kentucky and concerns his land holdings in these states. Receipts for goods and services, IOU's, and tax bills for improvements made to his St. Louis properties, such as curbs, gutters, and sidewalk pavings, are also included in this series.

There are a few bills of sale for slaves in this series as well as correspondence mentioning the sale of slaves. One letter contains a detailed description of each of the slaves up for sale.

Land surveys and correspondence related to the subdivision and sale of the January family farm in the 1880s are also included in this series.

The **Personal Correspondence** series contains letters written to Machir from friends and family members in Kentucky and later, in California. These letters detail courtships and mar-

riages in addition to other family matters. One of Machir's daughters moved to California and her husband's letters to Machir describe the conditions there in the 1880s and 1890s. Also, two undated letters describe Colorado Springs and the health benefits of the area in great detail.

One letter, presumably written at the beginning of the Civil War in Kentucky, explains how most "Unionists" in that state viewed the conflict. It is an interesting commentary on the ambivalent attitudes of people living in border states toward the war.

The **Account Books** series consists of twelve bank account books, a memorandum account book, and a diary. All the books, including the diary contain accounts of Machir's rental properties. These records were kept on the inside and back covers of these books. The memorandum book was issued in the 1880s by Dr. Pierce's Standard Medicines, also known as the World's Dispensary Medical Association, and contains comments on the symptoms and cures for various chronic ailments. It helps document some of the medical practices and advertising ploys of the era.

FOLDER LIST

Legal Documents Series

- f. 1 1791-1828
- f. 2 1830-1860
- f. 3 1870-1892

Business Documents Series

- f. 4 1818-1833
- f. 5 1835-1841
- f. 6 1842
- f. 7 1843-1845
- f. 8 1847-1855
- f. 9 1856-1859
- f. 10 1860-1861
- f. 11 1862-1865
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- f. 14 1870-1871
- f. 15 1872-1874
- f. 16 1875-1878
- f. 17 1879-1884
- f. 18 1885-1887
- f. 19 1888-1891
- f. 20 1892-1894
- f. 21 1896-1899; n.d.

Personal Correspondence Series

- f. 22 1839-1853

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f. 24 1890-1899; n.d.

Account Books Series

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f. 26 Volumes 6-11

f. 27 Volumes 12-14

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