This collection is available at <u>The State Historical Society of Missouri</u>. If you would like more information, please contact us at <u>shsresearch@umsystem.edu</u>.

INTRODUCTION

Papers of a prominent Cape Girardeau, MO, family including family and professional correspondence, patriotic organizations materials, legal firm records, family financial and legal records, speeches and writings, genealogical materials, information on Missouri State Normal School and First Presbyterian Church of Cape Girardeau, photographs, and miscellany.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Allen L. Oliver on 19 June 1969 (Accession No. 626). Additions were made on 20 October 1978 by Elizabeth P. Oliver (Accession No. 2197), 15 June 1984, by John W. Oliver, Jr. (Accession No. 2527) and 1 August 1985 by John W. Oliver, Jr. (Accession No. 2569).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Burett Oliver was born at "Pleasant Gardens" in Cape Girardeau County, 23 January 1850, and received his preparatory education at home and later at Pleasant Hill Academy. In 1877 he graduated from the Law Department of the University of Missouri, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Psi. He began his career as an attorney in Jackson, Missouri, and was elected prosecuting attorney for Cape Girardeau County in 1878.

In 1882 he was elected to the state senate where he was appointed to committees on criminal jurisprudence, the University of Missouri, and normal schools. Later, in 1902, he was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives. He also served on the University Of Missouri Board Of Curators from 1889 until 1905. In 1905 Oliver was retained by a group of the largest holders of "swamp lands" in southeast Missouri and was the author of the drainage laws of Missouri. He helped organize the Little River Drainage District, an area covering parts of seven southeast Missouri counties which was converted from swamp to f arm land. He served as counsel for the district until his death in 1934.

Robert Oliver married Marie Elizabeth Watkins of Ray County, Missouri, on 10 December 1879. Marie Watkins was born on 11 January 1854 and was educated at Richmond College, Richmond, Missouri. Throughout her life Marie Oliver was active in civic, historical, patriotic, and church work as well as being a wife and the mother of six children. She was state vice regent (1909-1910) and state regent (1911-1912) of the Daughters of the American Revolution and president of the Cape Girardeau Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. She also held memberships in the Colonial Dames of Missouri, the Huguenot Society, and the Cape Girardeau Wednesday Club. Her major contribution, however, was the promotion, design, and creation of the State Flag of Missouri. She was also largely responsible for having it adopted by the General Assembly as the official flag of the state. Oliver Heights was the home in Cape Girardeau

Marie and Robert Oliver shared with their children: Robert Burett, Jr., Charles Watkins, John Byrd, Allen Laws, William Palmer, and Marguerite Marie. Later, two of their sons served as officers of the Missouri Bar Association. Robert B. Oliver, Jr. was its vice president and Allen Laws Oliver its president at the time the Missouri Bar Association was transformed into the integrated Missouri Bar. In the early 1930s Marie Oliver retired with her husband to winter in Delray Beach, Florida. She died in Cape Girardeau in 1944.

Additional biographical information on the Oliver family can be found in *Missouri and Missourians*, 1943, by Floyd C. Shoemaker and *Missouri, Mother of the West*, 1930, by Walter Williams and Floyd C. Shoemaker.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Oliver Family Papers center around the legal and legislative career of Robert Burett Oliver of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and his personal life with his wife, Marie Elizabeth Watkins Oliver of Ray County, and their family. Information on both the Oliver and Watkins families exists in the collection, with the strength of the collection lying in the personal correspondence. Since the Olivers were avid genealogists, the genealogy section is important as well. Information on Oliver's career as an attorney is found in the legal firm's correspondence section. Another area of note is Allen Laws Oliver's research on the history of the Missouri Bar Association.

FOLDER LIST

f. 1-196	Family and Professional Correspondence. Letters of a			
1. 1-170	family, professional, or business nature; however, personal			
	correspondence forms the bulk of this series. Of note is a series			
	1			
	of letters from Luella Oliver Baldridge to her brother Robert			
	Oliver when he was a student at the University of Missouri in			
	1870s. Also, frequent correspondence between Marie E.			
	Watkins and Robert Oliver prior to their 1879 marriage is			
	noteworthy. The professional correspondence is political in			
	nature, coexisting with Oliver's tenure as a state senator in the			
	1880s, and reflects his relationships with his peers and his			
	constituency. Correspondence is arranged in chronological			
	order.			
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	social events, religion, student life at the University of Missouri, and			
	marriage.			
f. 17	Letters of condolence upon the death of Charles A. Watkins.			
f. 25-71	Love letters between Robert B. Oliver and Marie Watkins prior to			
	their marriage in 1879.			
f. 26	Letter from older woman encouraging Marie Watkins to study			
	medicine.			
f. 77	Description of Oliver house and outbuildings in Jackson, Missouri.			
f. 79-82	Letters include endorsements for Oliver's candidacy for state senator			
	and information on the Democratic Central Committee of Missouri			
	meetings and local politics. Also includes letters from people seeking			

	Oliver's endorsement for political office and letters of congratulation on Oliver's senatorial victory. Still others are concerned with the completion and furnishing of the State Normal School in Cape Girardeau as well as appropriations for the school.			
f. 83-88	1883. Letters to Senator Oliver from his constituents concerning the problems of southeast Missouri swamp lands and road maintenance. Others are concerned with Missouri Bar Association meetings and bills before the Senate.			
f. 89-96	1884-1885. Letters concerning a U.S. Senate bill to establish a court of appeals in southeast Missouri and letters requesting Oliver's support for political candidates.			
f. 97-101	1885			
f. 102	Letter from Vinita, Indian Territory, describing social customs of American Indians.			
f. 106	Letters of recommendation for a successor to Professor A.F. Fleet, Department of Greek, University of Missouri.			
f. 109-111	Letters of recommendation for a successor to Professor A.F. Fleet, Department of Greek, University of Missouri.			
f. 113	Letters of recommendation for a successor to Professor A.F. Fleet, Department of Greek, University of Missouri.			
f. 114	Letter describing student unrest at the University of Missouri.			
f. 116-119	Correspondence and papers concerned with building the Oliver house in Cape Girardeau, John Madden, contractor.			
f. 121-135	Letters to Allen Laws Oliver when he was a student at the University of Missouri, discussing school life, friendship, family, and financial matters.			
f. 136	Correspondence discussing land near Neely's Landing, Missouri.			
f. 137	Letters from Allen Laws Oliver on board the U.S.M.S. St. Paul.			
f. 139-146	Letters from Robert Oliver seeking support for his candidacy as U.S. District Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri.			
f. 149	Letter discussing equality for blacks.			
f. 153-155	Correspondence between Robert Oliver and family members containing reminiscences of the Oliver family as well as genealogical material.			
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f. 185	Letters from Jack L. Oliver at camp in Colorado to his parents in			
	Missouri.			
f. 189	Letters from Jack L. Oliver at camp in Colorado to his parents in Missouri.			
f. 190-196	Correspondence either undated or fragments.			
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f. 197	American War Mothers and Colonial Dames of America.			
f. 198	Colonial Dames of America.			
f. 199	Daughters of the American Colonists.			
f. 200-206	Daughters of the American Revolution. Correspondence.			

f. 207-209	Daughters of the American Revolution. Reports and speeches.			
f. 210-211	Daughters of the American Revolution. History and designs for the			
	Missouri State Flag.			
f. 212-213	Daughters of the American Revolution. Biographical sketch of Marie			
	Watkins Oliver, state regent, and miscellaneous notes.			
f. 214-218	Daughters of the American Revolution. Applications for			
	membership, financial records, printed material, and clippings.			
f. 219	Huguenot Society of America.			
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	chronologically, beginning in 1876 when Robert Burett Oliver began			
	practicing law in Jackson, Missouri, and including his tenure as			
	prosecuting attorney for Cape Girardeau County (1878-1882). In			
	1881 he and Jefferson Limbaugh became partners under the name of			
	Oliver and Limbaugh. Later, R.B. Oliver and his eldest son, Robert,			
	formed the firm of Oliver and Oliver. In 1909 another son, Allen			
	Laws Oliver, joined the firm.			
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f. 796-808	president and faculty of the Missouri State University establishing the Rollins Society. Student notebook, 1872-1875. "Hamlet" composition, 1872. English course notebook, 1873. Oration, McClean's Chapel, 1874. Notebook, 1875. Essay, "Mortgage," 1876. Address to students a t Fruitland Institute, 1876. Essays, 1877. Addresses: Gravel Hill, Missouri, 1877; class reunion, Fruitland and Pleasant Hill Institute and Academy, 1880; and presentation of Judge William Ranney portrait to Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas, 1893. Obituaries for Sally Hunter Byrd, Henry Laurens Caldwell, and Samuel McKnight Green. Address, 1930. Address, Courthouse, Jackson, Missouri, 1932. Notebook, 1932. Speeches and Writings			
f. 796-808 f. 796-802	president and faculty of the Missouri State University establishing the Rollins Society. Student notebook, 1872-1875. "Hamlet" composition, 1872. English course notebook, 1873. Oration, McClean's Chapel, 1874. Notebook, 1875. Essay, "Mortgage," 1876. Address to students a t Fruitland Institute, 1876. Essays, 1877. Addresses: Gravel Hill, Missouri, 1877; class reunion, Fruitland and Pleasant Hill Institute and Academy, 1880; and presentation of Judge William Ranney portrait to Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas, 1893. Obituaries for Sally Hunter Byrd, Henry Laurens Caldwell, and Samuel McKnight Green. Address, 1930. Address, Courthouse, Jackson, Missouri, 1932. Notebook, 1932. Speeches and Writings Oliver, Robert B., Jr. School papers and examinations, 1898-1899.			
f. 796-808 f. 796-802 f. 803	president and faculty of the Missouri State University establishing the Rollins Society. Student notebook, 1872-1875. "Hamlet" composition, 1872. English course notebook, 1873. Oration, McClean's Chapel, 1874. Notebook, 1875. Essay, "Mortgage," 1876. Address to students a t Fruitland Institute, 1876. Essays, 1877. Addresses: Gravel Hill, Missouri, 1877; class reunion, Fruitland and Pleasant Hill Institute and Academy, 1880; and presentation of Judge William Ranney portrait to Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas, 1893. Obituaries for Sally Hunter Byrd, Henry Laurens Caldwell, and Samuel McKnight Green. Address, 1930. Address, Courthouse, Jackson, Missouri, 1932. Notebook, 1932. Speeches and Writings Oliver, Robert B., Jr. School papers and examinations, 1898-1899. Watkins, Ben R. Composition book, 1873.			
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