

Void

RESTRICTED until 31 December 1977 or until  
county history is published.

Collection: TOTTEN, JOSEPH SILAS, PAPERS  
Yanceyville, Caswell County

P.C.Mf. P. 130

1832-1884, n.d.

Physical Description: 275 items; account books, receipts, correspondence, legal documents, etc.

Acquisition: Loaned by Mrs. William E. Taylor [Florence Totten Foster], [redacted]  
[redacted], Yanceyville, Caswell County, via M. Q. Plumblee,  
Caswell County Historical Association, [redacted] Burlington, N. C., 27215,  
July 13, 1972.

RESTRICTION LIFTED September 1, 1977. See When the Past Refused to Die:  
The History of Caswell County, North Carolina, 1777-1977, by William S.  
Powell, 1977

Description: Joseph Silas Totten (1806-1861), formerly of Granville County,  
married Catharine Amanda McAlpin of Caswell County, 1840; farmer, official  
in the Yanceyville Plank Road Company, and associated with Allen, William B.,  
and James Gunn in slave trading in Virginia, Mississippi, and Alabama.  
Totten's great-granddaughter, Florence Totten Foster, married William Clair  
Taylor [state legislator, 1971, Caswell County], a grandson of William W.  
Taylor, Caswell County farmer, merchant, and chairman of school board.

Correspondence, 1833-1876, 141 items: Letters are concentrated in the  
1830-1840 decades with many letters from Allen Gunn and others to Joseph  
Totten concerning slave and cotton prices, debts and suits, news of friends  
and relatives. The letters originate in Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia,  
and Caswell County. The balance of the correspondence from 1850-1876 is  
primarily personal with friends and members of the family commenting on the  
upheavals of the Civil War and Reconstruction on their lives in Illinois,  
Missouri, and Mississippi, and North Carolina.

Account Books: Three indexed account books, one unbound, and fragments.  
Mercantile Accounts, 1845-1865, 619 pp; Miscellaneous Accounts, 1833-1856,  
70 pp. [includes a number of lists of slaves by name, age, purchase price,  
and selling price; accounts of Yanceyville Plank Road, 1854-1857; tobacco  
crop, 1853-1860]; Account Book of William W. Taylor, 1851-1884, with frag-  
ments for 1863-1865.

Receipts and legal papers pertaining to slave trade, 1832-1860, 93  
items.

1832-1884, n.d.

Yanceyville Plank Road Accounts, 1854-1861, 16 items.

Miscellaneous items: indenture, tuition receipts, medical receipts,  
newspaper clippings, medical recipes, etc.

**Finding Aids:**

Main Entry Card

Geographic Card

Caswell County

Date Card

1832-1839

1840-1849

Subject Cards

NEGRO, Slave (Before 1865)

PLANK ROADS, Yanceyville

Note: A number of miscellaneous receipts in the original collection were  
not microfilmed.

Finding Aid completed 24 August 1972, by Ellen Z. McGrew.