

Collection: WHITFORD, JOHN D., PAPERS
New Bern, North Carolina

1770, 1812-1910

Physical Description: c. 1,500 items and 8 volumes, consisting of correspondence, telegrams, newspaper clippings, essays, reports, piece books, manuscript history, photograph, bills of sale, certificates, deeds, lease, receipts, accounts, promissory notes, requisitions, estate papers, apprentice papers, quit claim, power of attorney, blueprint, almanacs, pamphlets, circulars, advertisements, printed legislative bills; list of operatives and time sheets of Planters Manufacturing Company; documents, ~~Acquisitions~~ reports, and minutes of Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company; reports and miscellaneous items concerning the North Carolina Railroad Company, Danville and Richmond Railroad, Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, and railroads in general; and miscellaneous items.

Acquisition: July 13, 1959: Various reminiscences of Craven County, 351-page typed manuscript given by Miss Marybelle Delamar, Raleigh, North Carolina. The remainder of the collection was given by Whitford's son, Reid Whitford, Haverford, Pennsylvania. For a complete list of items given, see Biennial Report, 1926-1928, pages 18-19.

Description: John Dalton Whitford, born in New Bern, August 17, 1825, was particularly active in the internal improvements program of North Carolina. He was a director of the Neuse River Navigation Company and of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, becoming president of the latter in 1854. He remained as president until removed by military authority after the Civil War but again served in the position under the administration of Jonathan Worth. In 1865, he helped organize Whitford, Dill, & Co., which was one of the first shipping houses to run a line of steamers from New Bern to New York after the war. He was financial agent of the Raleigh and Augusta Airline Railway Company from 1867 to 1871 and was assistant engineer in charge of the government work on Contentnea Creek and Tar River, 1885-1888. Political positions held by Whitford include collector of customs at New Bern under the administration of President Zachary Tarylor, mayor of New Bern (1853-1854), and delegate from Craven county at the 1861 and 1865 Conventions and in the North Carolina Senate in 1865. During the war, he served as ordnance officer for a short time and later in the transportation department of the Confederate Government with the rank of major. Whitford was the author of several articles and pamphlets. He died in New Bern in 1910.

Although the bulk of the collection consists of the personal and business papers of John D. Whitford, there is a miscellaneous collection of documents (1770, 1812-1853) that belonged to his father, Hardy Whitford. According to the accession record, there were 109 pieces of the Hardy Whitford's papers; however, it is only possible to identify 99 items which belonged to him. Among these items are miscellaneous legal documents, including apprentice papers, two for shoemaker and one for hairdresser, deeds, bills of sale for slaves, and power of attorney; and there are various items concerning Whitford's business as a general merchant, mainly accounts. There are also four items of correspondence in the papers and a roster of the New Bern Grays, 1835. A ledger from Hardy Whitford's business papers, accessioned

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with this collection, is now in the collection of account books, A.B. 85.1. It is most likely that some of the pamphlets in the collection belonged to Hardy Whitford as well as most of the almanacs.

There are actually very few entirely personal papers of John D. Whitford in the collection. There is a letter concerning a request by Whitford for a salary increase in his position as customs official for New Bern (June 27, 1850); a letter from Thomas Jarvis (November 28, 1874) asking Whitford to come to Richmond for his wedding and another letter from Jarvis discussing the 1888 Democratic nomination for governor (August 3, 1888); and a letter (September 9, 1855) from a friend asking Whitford to investigate a runaway slave. There is also a letter discussing Otway Burns and the Snap Dragon (February 3, 1896), subjects which Whitford was interested in. In many cases, the personal papers are so closely linked with business affairs that it is very difficult to separate them by topic. This is particularly true in a series of letters from Francis Lister Hawks. Hawks talks about the increasing hostile feelings of the North for the South (March 3, 1855) and the necessity of perserving the Union (August 14, 1856); the need for a school of science or a polytechnic school for North Carolina (March 3, 1855 and June 3, 1857); the urgency of electing the Fillmore ticket (August 14, 1856); and his forthcoming history of North Carolina (September 22, 1856). On the other hand, in the same letters, Hawks talks about the advisability of New Bern and Fayetteville combining their resources in order to counteract the influence of Wilmington (March 3, 1855) and the various improvements needed in the town of New Bern (January, 1860). Both of these latter topics would be associated with Whitford's interest in internal improvements and railroads.

There is a large amount of material in the collection involving railroads. Concerning the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, there are several letters and pamphlets discussing the location of the eastern terminus of the railroad at Carolina City; letters from three officials concerning the construction of the railroad, discussing the quality of materials, the pay of workers, favoritism or corruption in the construction, and the road's future prospects; letters concerning the construction of the railroad and the money needed; and a letter concerning the directors of the company. The collection also contains a copy of the charter and by-laws of the railroad; "Communication to the General Assembly on the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company," 1856; proceedings of the stockholders meetings from 1854 to 1889 (1877 and 1878 missing); minutes of the Board of Directors meetings, 1855-1868; proxies for the 1864 meetings of the stockholders; notes concerning the make-up of trains; and the freight rates on the railroad.

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Other material on railroads includes an annual report of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, 1865; proceedings of the stockholders' meeting (1866), report of the board of directors (1864), charter, amendments, by-laws, mortgage, and lease of the North Carolina Railroad Company; proceedings of a convention of representatives of railroads between Richmond and Charleston and Augusta and Savannah; "Proceedings of a Convention of Rail Roads Connecting with the Wilmington & Weldon Rail Road, 1862"; "Manual of the Railroads of the United States for 1869-70"; and freight rates on the Wilmington and Weldon (1864) and on the North Carolina (n.d.).

There is a notebook in the collection containing articles about railroads that Whitford apparently copied from magazines or other sources. Some of the subjects discussed in the articles are depreciation of railroads, liability of towns in case of railroad accidents on unprotected crossings, expenses of running a locomotive and of Negro labor, miles traveled per cord of fuel, signals for railroads, and capital investment, profit, and percentage of profit of various railroads.

Quite a large amount of material connected with the Civil War is also in the collection. First there are printed copies of 80 legislative bills of the 1861 convention, May, June, September, and November sessions.

Next, there is a group of papers that were created as a result of Whitford's being ordnance officer of the state of North Carolina during the early part of the war. There are requests for arms and ammunition and reports of conditions from various places in eastern North Carolina, particularly Forts Macon, Hatteras, Ocracoke, and Caswell. Some of the more interesting items of correspondence include a letter from Governor Ellis on April 16, 1861, stating that the arsenal at Fayetteville would be taken that day; an order on July 30, 1861, from Governor Clark, to take arms from all people not in the service of the state; two letters of September 14, 1861, which discuss the Ocracoke expedition to recover property left on Beacon Island; a letter of September 18, 1861, from the C.S.S. "Albemarle" reporting the destruction of property at Fort Ocracoke by the Northern troops; a letter in October, 1861, from General R. C. Gatlin, stating that he is "illey prepared" to meet a rumored fleet coming down from New York; and a letter of March 16, 1862, telling of Burnside's attack on New Bern. Other items of interest include two accounts of the state of North Carolina with the Tredegar Iron Works, Richmond, Virginia.

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The last series of papers concerned with the war involve rail transportation in North Carolina. The greatest number (290) of these papers are requests for transportation in the spring of 1862. There are also numerous telegrams concerning transportation arrangements. Two letters in September, 1863, written by General H. A. Wise, describe the condition of the railroad in North Carolina, or at least the particular train he was on. The train was late, dirty, and too short, and the men who operated it were rude and incompetent. A letter of November 29, 1862, tells of several railroad cars of cotton burring. If the material on transportation reflects any one subject, it would be the importance of corn in the war. Numerous requests for corn are found in these papers, as are statements of its desperate need.

Among the miscellaneous items pertaining to the Civil War are several circulars from Headquarters, the War Department (Adjutant and Inspector General's Office), Quartermaster General's Office, and Inspector General, Field Transportation, 1862-64. Miscellaneous letters include one on desertions (February 10, 1864); a letter (November 4, 1864) from Jonathan Worth expressing his strong disapproval of the fact that the state had turned over to the Confederate Government the conduct of the war; a copy of a letter from Whitford to Vance concerning the riots in Raleigh in September, 1863; and a letter (February 8, 1864) from Stephen Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, commenting on the decrease in shipbuilding due to the lack of iron.

One of the largest and most interesting miscellaneous items in the collection is, according to Whitford's title, "The Home Story of a Walking Stick--Early History of the Biblical Recorder and Baptist Church at New Bern, N. C. told in everyday talk." The collection includes both a 351-page typescript and the manuscript written by Whitford. In fact, however, the history is really a history of the city of New Bern, with some sidelights into the history of the entire state of North Carolina. Statements are made about the early Baptists in New Bern, the establishment of the Biblical Recorder, and the early days of Wake Forest College [University]; but there is no detailed history of these subjects, and no emphasis is given to the statements that are made.

Whitford used several sources to write his history, but mainly his own knowledge of and association with the town and people of New Bern. Whitford was a prominent man in North Carolina, and he knew prominent people--the Stanlys, Badgers, Zebulon Vance, William Graham, William Gaston, and Francis Lister Hawks, to name a few. Thus he was able to make first hand observations about all of these men and about many historical events with which they were connected. He knew other people who had been present at events of historical significance--he was acquainted with a witness of the Richard Dobbs Spaight--John Stanly duel; he talked with people who had seen George Washington on his visit to New Bern; he knew people who had seen the Canova statue of George Washington in the capitol, and he had the journal of a man who had visited Canova's studio in Italy. While very young, Whitford had met Otway Burns,

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and of course he was able to talk to people who had been associated with Burns. Whitford especially knew the people of New Bern—who had married whom, who had lived where and when, and the ancestors and descendants of various people.

For some of his history, Whitford used published sources—such as his account of Christopher DeGraffenried and John Lawson. His information on early Wake Forest College [University] came mostly from newspapers. And it would appear that most of his information on Tryon Palace was from published or secondary sources.

Whitford was apparently very interested in the history of North Carolina and of the New Bern area in particular. There are numerous notes taken by him concerning various subjects; and there are also rough drafts of historical articles that he wrote—one being "A Few Hours at Poplar Mount," an article concerning Francis Lister Hawks. There is one interesting letter received by Whitford concerning some iron pieces from bolts that were supposed to have chained Columbus to a dungeon wall in Santa Domingo. A New Bern resident had found the bolts and they had been brought to North Carolina.

Among the miscellaneous items in the collection is a group of pamphlets, almanacs, broadsides, tracts, advertisements, and newspaper clippings; a volume which includes a list of operatives and time sheets for the employees of the Planters Manufacturing Company; a photograph of Whitford, and certificates that he received; a piece book containing poetry, obituaries, and miscellaneous notes; copies of the advertisement to contract the building of the Episcopal Church in New Bern (November 15, 1820) and of the subscribers and number of shares for the National Bank at New Bern (August 9, 1865). Transferred from the collection were 258 issues of various newspapers.

Arrangement of Papers

- 89.1 Hardy Whitford Papers, 1770, 1812-1853
- 89.2 Correspondence, personal and business, 1850-1896, n.d.
Miscellaneous
- 89.3 Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1861
- 89.4 Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1862-1865
- 89.5 Government Requisitions for Transportation in North Carolina, 1862
- 89.6 Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company,
Proceedings of Stockholders' Meetings, 1854-1872,
1873, 1884
Other Reports, 1854-1869
- 89.7 Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company,
Proceedings of Stockholders' Meetings, 1873-1889
(1877 and 1878 missing)
- 89.8 Miscellaneous material concerning Railroads
- 89.9 Planters Manufacturing Company
List of Operatives and Time Sheets

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- 89.9 Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company
(Cont'd) Minutes of Board of Directors, 1855-1868
- 89.10 Convention of 1861--Printed Bills
- 89.11 Miscellaneous pamphlets, 1816-1908
- 89.12 Miscellaneous, Notes, rough drafts and newspapers clippings
- 89.13 Manuscript of a history of the Biblical Recorder and Baptists
of New Bern
- 89.14 Manuscript of a history of the Biblical Recorder and Baptists
of New Bern
- 89.15 Typescript of a history of the Biblical Recorder and Baptists
of New Bern
- 89.16 Carbon copy of a history of the Biblical Recorder and Baptists
of New Bern

Finding Aids

Main Entry Card

Geographic Card

New Bern, North Carolina

Date Card

1861-1865

Autograph Cards

- Bragg, Th[oma]s (4) (1855-1858)
- Branch, L[awrence] O'B[ryan] (1862)
- Clark, Henry T[ooole] (6) (1861)
- Coleman, [Charles] T[haddeus] (9) (1861, n.d.)
- Ellis, John W[illiam] (1861)
- Fisher, Cha[rles] F. (4) (1855)
- Gatlin, R[ichard] C. (9) (1861-1862)
- Gilmer, John A. (1862)
- Graham, W[illiam] A[lexander] (1866)
- Hawks, Francis L[ister] (4) (1855-57, 1862)
- Hoke, R[obert] F[rederick] (4) (1864)
- Holt, W[illiam] R. (1855)
- Jarvis, Tho[mas] J[ordan] (5) (1874-1888)
- Mallory, S[tephen] R[ussell] (1864)
- Manly, Cha[rles] (1867)
- Manly, M[atthias] E[vans] (2) (1854, 1864)
- Martin, J[ames] G. (1861)
- Meredith, W[illiam] M. (1850)
- Pearson, R[obert] C[aldwell] (1857)
- Ransom, M[at]t W[hitaker] (1880)
- Seddon, J[ames] A[lexander] (1863)
- Stanly, Edw[ard] (1850)
- Vance, Z[ebulon] B[aird] (8) (1862-1867)
- Winslow, Warren (7) (1861)
- Worth, Jonathan (5) (1862, 1864, 1866)
- Wise, Henry A[lexander] (2) (1863)

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Subject Cards

- AGRICULTURE--Almanacs, 1816-1861 (broken series)
--Truck farming--Quantity along route of Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, June, 1885
- ARTS AND ARTISTS--"The Velazquez." A Description of the Celebrated Historical Picture of Charles the First, by the Great Velazquez
- BADGER, GEORGE E.--Mentions of Badger and father, Thomas Badger
- BURNS, OTWAY--Letter (February 13, 1896) concerning him and Snap Dragon
- CAROLINA CITY--Establishment of terminus of Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company
- COMMERCE AND BUSINESS--Planters Manufacturing Company--List of operatives and time sheets, 1854-1855
- CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA--Constitution of
- EDUCATION--The Student and Schoolmate, A Monthly Reader for School and Home Institutions, August, 1856
--COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES--School of Science or polytechnic school for North Carolina--letters, March 3, 1855 and June 3, 1857
- ELECTIONS--1856, Presidential election of--Letter, August 14, 1856
- EVERETT, EDWARD--Speaking engagements in North Carolina, 1859
- GRAHAM, GOV. WILLIAM A.--Message to Legislature, 1846-47 Session
- HAWKS, FRANCIS LISTER--Descriptions of, letters from, and copy of speech made by Hawks.
- JACKSON, ANDREW--Proclamation by, 1832 (Broadside)
- LEGAL DOCUMENTS--Apprentice papers, power of attorney, miscellaneous other papers
- N. C.--GENERAL ASSEMBLY--Printed bills of the 1861 sessions
--GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY--Adoption of flag in 1861
- NEGROES--BEFORE 1865--Slavery--Escaped slave with "forged free papers," September 9, 1855, letter
--Free--The African Repository, and Colonial Journal, September, 1846
- NEW BERN--History of
--Report of the Intendant to the Commissioners of New-Berne, made in accordance with a resolution, passed the 17th of March, 1854
- ORGANIZATIONS--American Colonization Society--The African Repository and Colonial Journal, September, 1846
--St. John's Lodge, New Bern--Accounts
- POLITICS--1888--Democratic nomination for Governor
- PUBLICATIONS--BOOKS AND AUTHORS--Francis Lister Hawks' history of North Carolina
--PERIODICALS--History of the Biblical Recorder
- RELIGION--Baptists--History of the Biblical Recorder
--Baptists of New Bern
--Methodist-Episcopal Church--A Defense of "Our Fathers," and of the Original Organization of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, Against the Rev. Alexander M'Caine, and others. . . .

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Subject Cards

RELIGION (Cont'd)

--Presbyterians--Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Session of
the Synod of North Carolina. . . .
October, 1851

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SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS--New Bern, 19th Century

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--Richard Dobbs Spaight--John Stanly duel

SPORTS--United States Sporting Magazine, December, 1835

STANLY, EDWARD--Mention of

STANLY, JOHN--Mention of

STATES RIGHTS--Nullification--Proclamation by Andrew Jackson,
1832 (Broadside)

TRANSPORTATION--Railroads--Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad,
1854-1889

--Advertisement--Baker's Patent Car-
Warmer (1868)

--Broadside--None Such!--By C. Louis Suther-
land, and Asso-
ciates [1859]

--Freight rates--1864 and n.d.

--General Topics such as depreciation,
liability for accidents, expenses,
amount of fuel needed, etc.

--Internal Improvements--1854-1889

--North Carolina Railroad Company--1855,
1864, 1866

--Piedmont Railroad Company, November,
1861

--Western North Carolina Railroad Company,
1855, 1861

--Wilmington & Weldon--1864 Freight rates
--Convention of rail-
roads connected
with, April 1,
1862

--RIVERS--Internal Improvements--Map and description
of rivers of South and North Carolina
under process of improvement--1893

WAR--CIVIL--Letters, 1861-1865

--Battles--Burnside at New Bern--Letter, March 16, 1862

--C.S.S. "Albemarle"--Letter concerning activities,
September 18, 1861

--Defense of eastern North Carolina--1861

--Desertions--Letter, February 10, 1864

--Railroad transportation in North Carolina, 1861-1865

--Ordnance Officer of North Carolina, 1861

--Salt making on the North Carolina coast--Letters,
March 11 and 12, 1862

--REVOLUTION--Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution by Benson J.
Lossing. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850
[pages 537-584]

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Pamphlet Cards (By Title)

Message of His Excellency, Gov. Graham, to the Legislature of North Carolina, at the session of 1846-'47. Raleigh: W.R.Gales, Printer to the Legislature, 1846.

Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution by Benson J. Lossing. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1850 [pages 537-584]

Proclamation by Andrew Jackson President of the United States [1832 Broadside]

Reply of John Nichols, Esq. To John D. Whitford, Esq., President of the A. & N. C. R. R. Co., Respecting the Construction of the Atlantic & North Carolina Rail Road, January 30, 1858. Kinston, N. C.: "American Advocate" Office, 1858.

Report of the Commissioner upon Blockade Accounts, &c. Legislative Document No. 13, 1864-'65 session.

Statement of the Attempted Rescue of General Lafayette from "Olmutz." Charleston S. C.: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, n.d.

Pamphlet Cards (By Author)

Lossing, Benson. Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1850 [page 537-584]

Graham, William A. Message of His Excellency, Gov. Graham, to the Legislature of North Carolina, at the session of 1846-'47. Raleigh: W. R. Gales, Printer to the Legislature, 1846.

Finding Aid completed 7 August, 1968, by Betty H. Carter