

Guide to the Mary Boykin Chesnut Diaries Collection

MS 1263



compiled by Lynn J. Stewart

May 1982

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
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beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 1263

CREATOR: Chesnut, Mary Boykin, 1823-1886

TITLE: Mary Boykin Chesnut diaries collection

DATES: 1817-1979

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 11 linear feet (15 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of photoduplicates of original Mary Chesnut manuscripts, from the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina and from private owners, collected by C. Vann Woodward for the preparation of his book, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1263>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1263>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of C. Vann Woodward, 1981.

Conditions Governing Access

The bulk of the collection is photocopies. No material in this collection may be photocopied without permission of the South Caroliniana Library and the owners of the Mary B. Chesnut manuscripts in that library. The only exception to this restriction is Prof. C. Vann Woodward.

Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Mary Boykin Chesnut Diaries Collection (MS 1263). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Scope and Contents

The Mary Boykin Chesnut Diaries Collection consists primarily of materials collected by C. Vann Woodward, Sterling Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University, for the preparation of his book, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981). The majority of the collection is photoduplicates of original Mary Chesnut manuscripts, from the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina and from private owners. These photoduplicates were deposited at Yale University Library by Woodward with the permission of both the South Caroliniana Library and the owners of the manuscripts. However, no photoduplication of the materials in the collection may be made without the express permission of the South Caroliniana Library and of the owners of the original manuscripts. The same restrictions apply to the typed transcripts of the 1860s JOURNAL and the 1880s VERSION.

For biographical information on Mary Boykin Chesnut, see pages xxx-xlv of *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, Elisabeth Muhlenfeld's *Mary Boykin Chesnut: A Biography*. (Louisiana State University Press, 1981) and pages 4-7 of this register. Woodward was awarded the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for History for *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*. Woodward and Muhlenfeld are currently editing Chesnut's 1860s diaries.

The collection is arranged in four series: The collection is arranged in four series: I. MATERIALS RELATING TO DIARIES, II. 1860s JOURNAL, III. 1870s VERSION, IV. 1880s VERSION.

Series I, MATERIALS RELATING TO DIARIES, contains *Correspondence, Writings by Others, Articles, Genealogical Material, Writings by Mary Chesnut, Legal Documents and Accounts and Photographs*. Virtually all of this is photoduplicates of Mary Chesnut material held in the South Caroliniana Library. A small amount is photoduplicates of Mary Chesnut material held by individuals, and there are a few original letters (Box 1 folders 29-32) from the 1970s pertaining to research on Mary Chesnut.

Series II, 1860s JOURNALS, consists of photoduplicates of the journals which Mary Chesnut wrote during the Civil War years or shortly thereafter and a typed transcript of those journals prepared by Elisabeth Muhlenfeld and Thomas E. Dasher. Series III, 1870s VERSION, consists of photoduplicates of an edition of the journals which Mary Chesnut prepared during the 1870s. Both the 1860s and 1870s materials have large chronological gaps. See Woodward, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, pages xv-xxix for a discussion of each version.

Series IV, 1880s VERSION, contains *Various Openings for the 1880s Version*, all of which are incomplete, a *Rough Draft of 1880s Version*, the *Manuscript of 1880s Version* and a *Typed Transcript of 1880s Version*. The originals of the photoduplicates in Series II, III and IV are held in the South Caroliniana Library.

The materials within each series are arranged in chronological order.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in four series: I. Materials Relating to Diaries. II. 1860s Journal. III. 1870s Version. IV. 1880s Version.

Collection Contents

Series I: MATERIALS RELATING TO DIARIES, 1817-(1860-1886)-1979

.75' (2 boxes)

Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1	Letter of S. D. Miller to his daughter, [Mary B. Miller (Chesnut)?]	1835 July 23
b. 1, f. 2	Letters from James Chesnut, Jr. to Mary B. Miller (Chesnut)	1839 May 9, June 28
b. 1, f. 3	Typescripts of letters to Mary B. Chesnut	1862-1863, 1869
b. 1, f. 4	Letter to Mary B. Chesnut from Marie [Bad Weather?]	1865 February 13
b. 1, f. 5	Letter to Mary B. Chesnut from her sister Kate [Katherine B. Williams]	1865 May 25
b. 1, f. 6	Typescript of letter to Mary B. Chesnut from Katherine B. Williams	1865 May 25
b. 1, f. 7	Letter to [Mary B. Chesnut from Mrs. Jefferson Davis]	1873 June 1
b. 1, f. 8	Letters to Mary B. Chesnut from Isabella D. [Martin?]	1874-1875
b. 1, f. 9	Typescripts of letters to Mary B. Chesnut	1876
b. 1, f. 10	Letterbook of Mary B. Chestnut	1862-1863, 1876, undated
b. 1, f. 11	Fragment of letter to Mary B. Chestnut from her mother	undated
b. 1, f. 12	Letter from Mary B. Chesnut	1850 May 28
b. 1, f. 13	Letters from Mary B. Chesnut to her husband, James Chesnut, Jr.	1862
b. 1, f. 14	Letters from Mary B. Chesnut to Miller Williams	1874, n. d.
b. 1, f. 15	Typescripts of letters from [Mary B. Chesnut?] to Miller Williams	[c. 1882-1883?]
b. 1, f. 16	Typescript of letter from Mary B. Chesnut to Mrs. S. Miller Williams	1886 February 2
b. 1, f. 17	Typescripts of letters from Mary B. Chesnut to members of Williams family	1875-1876, 1882, 1885
b. 1, f. 18	Letters from Mary B. Chesnut to Mary Kirkland	?March 31, June 15, n.d
b. 1, f. 19	Letter from James Chesnut, Jr. to President [Jefferson Davis]	1862 April 20
b. 1, f. 20	Typescript of letter to [John Chesnut] from James and Mary B. Chesnut	[1865 or 1866?]
b. 1, f. 21	Transcripts of letters to and from members of Chesnut, Williams, and Miller families, primarily to and from James Chesnut, Jr.	1817-1884
b. 1, f. 22	Letters to John L. Manning	1840-1841
b. 1, f. 23	Letters to General G. W. Canty from G. M. Butler	1841 June 23
b. 1, f. 24	Typescripts of letters to members of Williams family	1876, 1882, 1885

Correspondence (continued)

b. 1, f. 25	Typescript of letter to Mary Harrison	1885 January 30
b. 1, f. 26	Typescripts of letters to Miller Williams and his wife Jane Williams	1885-1886
b. 1, f. 27	Letter from Isabelle D. Martin to David [?]	1905 March 27
b. 1, f. 28	Letter from Harriet H. Ravenel to Mrs. Means	1907 November 7
b. 1, f. 29	Letter from Martha Williams Daniels to C. Vann Woodward, including reminiscences of Mary Withers Kirkland	1976 April 6
b. 1, f. 30	Letter from C. Vann Woodward to Martha Williams Daniels	1976 April 20
b. 1, f. 31	Notes by Elisabeth Muhlenfeld on various letters	1979 January 31
b. 1, f. 32	Letter to C. Vann Woodward from Martha Daniels, enclosing typescript of letter from Mary B. Chesnut	1979 February 8
<u>Writings by others</u>		
b. 1, f. 33	Speech by Senator James Chesnut, Jr. before U. S. Senate	1860 April 9
b. 1, f. 34	Chesnut family history by James Chesnut, Sr.	1919
b. 1, f. 35	Memoirs of Mary Williams	undated
b. 1, f. 36	Biographical sketch of James Chesnut, Jr.	undated
<u>Articles</u>		
b. 1, f. 37	Typescripts of articles in <i>The Charleston Daily Courier</i>	1861 September 26, 1862 March 10
b. 1, f. 38	Obituary for Isabelle D. Martin in <i>The State</i>	1913 March 5
<u>Genealogical material</u>		
b. 1, f. 39	Family genealogies for Chesnut Miller and Williams families	undated
b. 1, f. 40	Family genealogy for Whitaker family	undated
<u>Writings by Mary B. Chesnut</u>		
b. 1, f. 41	Transcription of biographical sketch of James Chesnut, Jr.	undated
b. 1, f. 42	Fragment of manuscript "Two Years"	undated
b. 1, f. 43-44	Copybooks	1838, 1848, 1850
b. 2, f. 45	Manuscript fragment referring to Isabelle D. Martin	undated
b. 2, f. 46	"The Bright-Side of Richmond, Winter of 1864-Scraps from A Diary" English	undated
b. 2, f. 47	"Let Sleeping Dogs Lie" [A family memoir and defense] English	undated

Writings by Mary B. Chesnut (continued)

b. 2, f. 48	"Let Sleeping Dogs Lie; We have an author among us ..." English	undated
b. 2, f. 49	Fragment of memoir of brother who died at seventeen	undated
b. 2, f. 50	Memoir of sister Kate	n.y.
<u>Legal documents and accounts</u>		
b. 2, f. 51	Typescript of will of James Chesnut, Sr.	1864 February 16
b. 2, f. 52	Typescript of letters testamentary, proving will of James Chesnut, Sr.	1866 March 1
b. 2, f. 53	Accounts of James Chesnut, Jr. as executor of estate of James Chesnut, Sr.	1866 February 4 - 1883 July 7
b. 2, f. 54	Will of Mary B, Chesnut	1886 January 28
b. 2, f. 55	Codicil to will of Mary B. Chesnut	1886 July 17
b. 2, f. 56	Will of Isabella Donaldson Martin; notes on the will and the disposition of the estate	1912 July 12; undated
b. 2, f. 57	Photograph	undated

Series II: 1860s JOURNAL

1.75' (2 Boxes)

Manuscript

b. 3, f. 1-8	1860 November – 1861 Jul, 1861 February 18, 1861 February 25 – March 27, 1861 August 6 – 25, 1861 March 27 – June 27, 1861 August 25 – September 9, 1861 June 27 – August 3, 1861 September 15 – October 1, 1861 October 3 – December 8, 1865 February 4 – 23,	1860 November – 1861 Jul, 1861 February 18, 1861 February 25 – March 27, 1861 August 6 – 25, 1861 March 27 – June 27, 1861 August 25 – September 9, 1861 June 27 – August 3, 1861 September 15 – October 1, 1861 October 3 – December 8, 1865 February 4 – 23,
b. 2, f. 9	1865 May 7 - June 26	1865 May 7 - June 26
b. 2, f. 9	Typed transcript by Elisabeth Muhlenfeld and Thomas E. Dasher	
b. 4, f. 10	Part I	1861 February 18
b. 4, f. 10	Part II	1861 February 19-20
b. 4, f. 11	Part III	1861 February 25 - August 3
b. 4, f. 12	Part IV	1861 August 3 - September 9
b. 4, f. 13	Part V	1861 September 14 - October 1
b. 4, f. 14	Part VI	1861 October 3 - December 8
b. 4, f. 15	Part VII	1865 January – February 23
b. 4, f. 16	Part VIII	1865 May 7 - June 26
b. 4, f. 16	Appendix	1861 February 25 – 26

Series III: 1870s VERSION
0.25 linear feet (1 box)

b. 5, f. 1-2	1861 March - August	1861 March - August
b. 5, f. 3-5	1864 Jan, 1864 September 21- December 8	1864 Jan, 1864 September 21- December 8

Series IV: 1880s VERSION

8' (10 boxes)

Various Openings for the 1880s Version

b. 6, f. 1-3	Incomplete drafts of opening [original in purple pencil]
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b. 6, f. 4-5	Typescripts of incomplete drafts of opening
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b. 6, f. 6	Incomplete draft of opening
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Rough Draft of 1880s Version

b. 7, f. 7-14	1861 September 9 – 1862 July 23, 1864 January 1 – February 6, 1864 March 14 – June 28	1861 September 9 – 1862 July 23, 1864 January 1 – February 6, 1864 March 14 – June 28
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b. 7, f. 7-17	1864 July 6 - 1865 February 27	1864 July 6 - 1865 February 27
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b. 8, f. 18	1865 February 27 - April 15	1865 February 27 - April 15
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Manuscript of 1880s Version

b. 9, f. 19-26	1861 March 3–22, 1861 March 25 – April 15, 1861 April 26 – June 4, 1861 June 10 – July 19, 1861 July 22 – August 1, 1861 August 3 – September 19	1861 March 3–22, 1861 March 25 – April 15, 1861 April 26 – June 4, 1861 June 10 – July 19, 1861 July 22 – August 1, 1861 August 3 – September 19
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b. 10, f. 27-36	1861 September 19 – November 25, 1861 November 27 – 1862 June 6	1861 September 19 – November 25, 1861 November 27 – 1862 June 6
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b. 11, f. 37-40	1862 June 7 – July 10, 1862 July 12 – August 1	1862 June 7 – July 10, 1862 July 12 – August 1
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b. 11, f. 41-45	1862–1863 narrative	1862–1863 narrative
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b. 11, f. 46-48	1863 October 27 – November 30, 1863 December 2 – 1864 January 1	1863 October 27 – November 30, 1863 December 2 – 1864 January 1
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b. 12, f. 49-50	1864 January 1 – 31	1864 January 1 – 31
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Manuscript of 1880s Version (continued)

b. 12, f. 51-53	1864 February 5 - May 8	1864 February 5 - May 8
b. 12, f. 54-58	1864 May - sep 21, 1864 sep 29 - November 25, 1864 November 20 - 1865 January 16	1864 May - sep 21, 1864 sep 29 - November 25, 1864 November 20 - 1865 January 16
b. 13, f. 59-66	1865 January 16 - February 27, 1865 February 29 - April 15, 1865 April 19 - July 26	1865 January 16 - February 27, 1865 February 29 - April 15, 1865 April 19 - July 26
<u>Typed Transcript of 1880s Version</u>		
b. 14, f. 67-84	1861 March 3 - 1862 August	1861 March 3 - 1862 August
b. 14, f. 85	1862-1863 narrative	1862-1863 narrative
b. 15, f. 86-103	1863 September - 1865 July	1863 September - 1865 July

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Editing
History -- Sources -- Publishing
Women

Geographic Names

Confederate States of America -- Biography
Confederate States of America -- Politics and government
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
-- Personal narratives

Genres / Formats

Diaries

Names

Chesnut, Mary Boykin, 1823-1886
Woodward, C. Vann (Comer Vann), 1908-1999