Allen Family Papers, 1844-1900

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:
Allen family

Inclusive Dates:
1844-1900

Scope & Content:
The Allen Family Papers, 1844-1900, consist of four letters, two postcards, one framed photograph, one cabinet card, three diaries, five newspapers, family estate records, receipts from Samuel Allen, business cards and a commemorative tea towel.

The letters and postcards include various notes written between family members. The postcards depict St. Augustine, Florida, and the Arlington House Estate, the site originally selected for the National Cemetery during the Civil War. One letter from Ellenora Allen’s cousin, Marian Spain, mentions the “untimely departure” of her cousin, George Allen, in 1864. There is also a letter from George to Ellenora in which he describes his time with the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment at Hot Springs, Bath County, Virginia.

According to the donor, the framed photograph is of Ellenora Foley Allen. The donor’s grandmother was given the same name in honor of Ellenora Foley Allen (II). The cabinet card shows Alphonso S. Allen wearing his military uniform in 1889. He was a member of the 44th Consolidated Regiment, Tennessee Infantry (CSA), during the Civil War.

The two diaries cover 1861-1862 and 1864. Both contain detailed accounts of Ellenora’s daily life and activities. In the first volume she says she is a student at the “N.F.A.” (Nashville Female Academy) and later writes of the school converting to a hospital after the fall of Fort Donelson. Her family lived near the eastern border of Nashville. She writes that her father would visit Edgefield almost daily to bring back news of the war.
He also picked up Ellenora at school regularly and took her home for the weekends, until Fort Donelson surrendered in February 1862.

Ellenora notes her 16th birthday as being on January 16, 1862. She mentions both her parents, as well as brothers George, Jim (James) and Fonse (Alphonso). She also writes of an Aunt Mary and Uncle Shadrack.

Another small ledger accompanied these diaries, but it is mostly blank. An inscription in the front reads “Miss C. Smythe at Nashville, Christmas 1860,” and shows that her cousin Samuel gave it to her. It contains entries written to “Kitty” or “Kate” from friends at a school in Lowndesville, South Carolina, in 1861. Additional entries by friends and family were made in Nashville in 1870 and 1876-1877. It is not clear how Miss Smythe was connected to the Allen family.

The donation originally included five sets of newspapers. Four of the five are available on microfilm at the Tennessee State Library and Archives: one issue of The Nashville Tennessean, two issues of The Nashville Dispatch, and one issue of the Nashville Union and American. The Nashville Tennessean is the Armistice Day issue from November 11, 1918. Both of The Nashville Dispatch issues are dated 1863 and the Nashville Union and American issue is from 1874. The other newspaper is the 1896 “Battle Abbey Edition” of The Daily Statesman, New Orleans. All newspapers have been transferred to the Library Technical Services Department.

Other documents include receipts, including one for direct taxes; a land deed signed by Samuel M. Allen; and ledgers tallying purchases of goods and supplies such as shoes and wagon wheels.

Finally, there is a commemorative tea towel celebrating the Confederate Reunion in Nashville in 1897.

Physical Description/Extent:
.25 cubic feet
1 flat box

Accession/Record Group Number:
Ac. No. 2014-070

Language:
English

Permanent Location:
X-G-1
Administrative/Biographical History

Samuel M. Allen, (1807-1854) and his wife Kittie (Catherine) Doughty (1804-1885) married in 1833 and made their living farming. They had five children: James Henry Allen (1834-1874), Helen Ann Foley Allen (1838-1839), George Benjamin Allen (1841-1864), Alphonso Shadrack Allen (1843 -1921), and Ellenora Foley Allen (1846-1882).

James Henry Allen became a civil engineer and lived in Nashville with his wife Sallie. Samuel and Kittie’s second child Helen Ann Foley, who died at just over a year old, is buried in the Nashville City Cemetery.

George B. Allen worked as a druggist until he enlisted in 1861. Private Allen served as a dispenser with the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment while stationed at Hot Springs, Bath County, Virginia. He mentions Colonel Forbes of the 14th Tennessee Infantry Regiment and others from the 6th North Carolina Regiment in an 1861 letter to Ellenora. According to an 1863 hospital muster roll from Scottsville, Virginia, it appears he was wounded. Ellenora’s cousin, Marian, speaks of his death in an 1864 letter.

Alphonso Shadrack Allen (presumably named after an Uncle Shadrack mentioned in one of Ellenora’s diaries) was the fourth child of Samuel and Kittie. He enlisted in Company J, 44th (Consolidated) Infantry Regiment of Tennessee in 1861. Alfonso suffered a compound fracture in his left leg the day before the Battle of Chickamauga (1863). He fought at Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Knoxville, and Petersburg (Virginia). He was captured later and confined at Elmira Prison, New York. (Due to the harsh conditions at this Union prison, Confederate veterans often called it “Hellmira.”) He was released on June 12, 1865. Shadrack and his wife Mary wedded in 1881. He worked the rest of his life as a clerk and bookkeeper for a lumber yard. He is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville.

Ellenora was the youngest daughter. We know from her diaries that she was a student at Nashville Female Academy until it was converted into a Civil War hospital. Ellenora died of consumption and is also buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

According to the donor, exactly one month after Ellenora’s death, Alphonso and Mary had a daughter whom they named Ellenora Foley (II). This Ellenora (Miss Wood’s grandmother) was eventually entrusted with the diaries and a portrait of her aunt and namesake. Ellenora (II) lived with her parents in an 1820s house on 18th Avenue, Nashville, until 1906 when she married William Arlington Thompson. They lived in several places but eventually returned to Nashville. Ellenora Allen Thompson worked as a teacher. She died in 1965 in Nashville.
Organization/Arrangement of Materials

Items are organized by type alphabetically.

Conditions of Access and Use

Restrictions on Access:
No restrictions

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:
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Index Terms

Personal Names:
Allen, Alphonso Shadrack
Allen, Ellenora Foley
Allen, Samuel M.

Corporate Names/Organizations/Government Bodies:
Nashville Female Academy (Tenn.) -- History

Subjects:
Women -- Tennessee -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
Families -- Tennessee -- Social life and customs

Geographic Names:
Nashville (Tenn.) -- History -- 19th century -- Sources
Tennessee -- History -- 19th century
Tennessee -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Document Types:
Advertisements
Business cards
Cabinet photographs
Correspondence
Diaries
Estate records
Ledgers (account books)
Memorabilia
Receipts (financial records)

Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition:
The collection was donated by Miss Ann Carolyn Wood and acquired at a Tennessee
Historical Commission meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, on June 6, 2014.

Processing and Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:
Allen Family Papers, 1844-1900, Tennessee State Library and Archives

Processing Information:
Processing completed by Sara Horne in July 2015.
## CONTAINER LIST

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