BURFORD, DAVID
(1791-1864)
PAPERS
1810-1915

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INTRODUCTION

The David Burford Papers, 1810-1915, are centered around David Burford (1791-1864), army officer, businessman and state legislator from Smith County, Tennessee. The David Burford Papers were placed on deposit by Judge G. W. Allen, Dixon Springs, Tennessee. The collection occupies 1.26 linear feet of shelf space, and numbers approximately 450 items.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the David Burford Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The David Burford Papers, containing 450 items, span the period 1810-1915, although the bulk is largely concentrated in the years 1814-1840. The collection is composed of accounts, correspondence, court records, election records, genealogical data, horse records, land records, legal documents, lists, military records, passes, slave records and several miscellaneous items.

Over one half of the collection consists of correspondence addressed to David Burford while he and Colonel Robert Allen were engaged in a mercantile business in Carthage, Tennessee. Most of these letters were of a business nature and concerned payments on account, acceptance of bank drafts for collection and payment, selling of tobacco through various mercantile firms in New Orleans and other financial transactions. Following the financial panic of 1819 the contents of these business letters reflected the general anxiety in business circles. Several correspondents from New Orleans decried the general state of business including the depressed market for agricultural products, particularly tobacco, the inability to procure United States bank notes to remit for drafts left for collection, business failures in New York City, the dull slave market, and many bank failures in Baltimore.

After the War of 1812 Burford held the rank of Major in the Tennessee State Militia. While serving in this military capacity he kept in contact with correspondence to district Congressmen on such military matters as pension claims, claims for militia soldiers pay, widow's claims, enrollment of volunteers in the state militia and veterans' claims for property lost in the Seminole War.

As a representative of Smith and Sumner Counties in the Tennessee General Assembly during 1829-1835, Burford received letters from constituents seeking appointments to various state government positions, expressions of opinion upon the issue of recharting the United States Bank, the Democratic primary contest between John Eaton and Felix Grundy in 1832, and other political matters.

Probably the single most important letter in the Burford collection is a typed copy of a letter by Andrew Jackson to David Burford, dated July 28, 1831, concerning Jackson's reorganization of his Cabinet and his controversy with John C. Calhoun in regard to Jackson's conduct in Florida during the Seminole War [see Box 2, Folder 4].

Among the military records are annual returns for the 35th Regiment, Tennessee Militia in 1816 and for the 48th Regiment, Tennessee Militia in 1810. Also included are elections of officers in Smith County for the 15th, 16th, 41st and 59th Regiments of the Tennessee Militia for the years 1826-1828.

Those interested in slave records will find in the Burford Papers bills of sale for various years in the period 1821-1838. In addition, there are several references to slaves in some of the letters [see Name Index for citings in individual letters].
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David Burford

1791  November 5, born in North Carolina son of the Reverend Daniel and Elizabeth (Hawkins) Burford

Bef.  Removed with parents to Smith County, Tennessee

1799  Commissioned Second Lieutenant in 7th Regiment, United States Army during War of 1812

1812  Commanded the post and was acting Quartermaster at Fort Pickering; after war held rank of major in state militia

1814-1815  Established tanyard at Carthage; associated with Colonel Robert Allen in the mercantile business and with Colonel Robert I. Chester in tobacco trade; moved to his farm at Dixon Springs, Smith County, to devote time to agriculture and raising blooded stock

1815  September 16, married Elizabeth W. Alexander, daughter of Richard and Mary Alexander

1825  Sheriff of Smith County

1825-1829  Represented Smith and Sumner Counties in Tennessee General Assembly; Speaker of Senate in 20th Assembly

1829-1835  Delegate to the Charleston Democratic Convention

1860  May 23, died at his home at Dixon Springs

Source: Dr. John W. Bowen's History of Smith County, Tennessee
# CONTAINER LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microfilm Reel #1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Box Number 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—n.d., 1814, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1820-1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1830-1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1840-1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Accounts—Bills, notes, receipts—1850-1859; 1860-1861; 1864; 1885; 1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Correspondence—Author unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Correspondence—Adams-Allen, Moses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Correspondence—Atkinson-Burford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Correspondence—Cartwright—Craighead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Box Number 2**  |
| 1. Dorsey-Duncan |
| 2. Erwin-Guild |
| 3. Hagner-Huntsman |
| 4. Jackson-Lord |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microfilm Reel #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. McConnell-Nisbet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Patterson-Richardson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Saunders-Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Wilkins-Worley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Box Number 3**  |
| 1. Court Records—Affidavit—Fletcher Taylor, 1822 |
| 3. Court Records—Decree for sale—Heirs of J.W. Sanders vs. Thos. T. Stribling, 1852 |
| 4. Court Records—Receipt money paid witnesses, 1826 |
| 5. Election Records—State and national officials—Smith County, Tenn., 1827-1835 |
| 6. Genealogical Data—Allen, Burford and Garrison families |
| 7. Horse Records—Certificates of Pedigree, etc. |
| 8. Land Records—Deed—Black, Thos. J. to David Burford, 1833 |
| 9. Land Records—Deed—Burford, David to Alexander Allison, 1829 |
| 10. Land Records—Deed—Burford, John H. to David Burford, 1834 |
| 12. Land Records—Deed—Cage, Wilson to David Burford, 1840 |
13. Land Records—Deed—Cochran, David to David Burford, 1840
14. Land Records—Deed—Goodall, Wm. To David Burford, 1829
15. Land Records—Deed—Hart, Wm. To David Burford, 1829
16. Land Records—Land Warrants, 1848
17. Land Records—Report—Walker’s boundary line, 1830
18. Land Records—Surveys—Miscellaneous
19. Legal Documents—Agreements—Burford, David and Nathan Williams, 1818
20. Legal Documents—Agreements—Robert I. Chester and Co. and David Burford, 1818
21. Legal Documents—Agreements—James Overton and David Burford, 1831
22. Legal Documents—Deed of trust—William Payne to David Burford, 1837
23. Legal Documents—Estate Papers—Cosby, Thos. W. 1841
24. Legal Documents—Estate Papers—Gifford, Francis 1816
25. Legal Documents—Estate Papers—Howard, George A., 1900
27. Legal Documents—Petition—John H. Eaton for U.S. Senate
28. Legal Documents—Petition—Justices of Peace, Smith County, Tennessee, 1831
29. Legal Documents—Power of attorney—David Burford, 1818
30. Legal Documents—Power of attorney—Daniel Morris, 1819
31. Lists—Prices—New Orleans, 1822-1823
32. Lists—Property sold—Thomas Phelps, 1838
33. Memorabilia
34. Military Records—Annual Return—35th Regiment, Tennessee Militia, 1816
35. Military Records—Annual Return—48th Regiment, Tennessee Militia, 1810
36. Military Records—Articles of Agreement—Lt. David Burford, 7th Regiment, and Mr. Joshua Fletcher, 1814
37. Military Records—Certificates of Discharge—1st Regiment, Tennessee Volunteers, 1846
38. Military Records—Correspondence—Re: abandonment of Ft. Pickering; Charles and Francis Jones of 39th Regiment Infantry
40. Military Records—Muster Roll—Smith a private servant to Lt. David Burford, 7th Regiment Tennessee Infantry, 1814-1815
41. Military Records—Proof of service—Gabriel Gregory, deceased, 1847
42. Minutes—Committee on Banks, n.d.
43. Passes—Travel authorization—David Burford and family, 1860
44. Pension Records—widow—Elizabeth W. Burford, 1878
45. Slavery—Sale of slaves, 1821, 1829, 1833, 1838
46. Miscellaneous—Envelopes, fragments, etc.
NAME INDEX

This is a name index of correspondence in the David Burford Papers, together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the box and folder in which the material is to be found.

Adams, (J.), Knox and Nixon (5) to R. Allen and Burford, 1819-1821, re: letter of introduction for Felix Kirk to be employed in the Allen and Burford store; payments on account, 1-7

Alexander, A. to David Burford, 1830, re: report on D.B.'s business while he is in Nashville; family news; trial of Judge Williams; reminder to bring money, 1-7

Alexander, W. S. (3) to D. Burford, 1831, 1833), re: accounting of money received; report that judgement against Hart and others had been lost; family news; house fire; horse races results; recording of mortgages, 1-7

Allen, Jos. W. (2) to David Burford, 1841 and 1845, re: land for sale by Joe Cochran; advice on the Chester debt, 1-7

Allen, Moses and Thos. to David Burford, 1831, re: requesting D.B.'s influence in promoting their nephew's candidacy for the Office of Engrossing Clerk to the Senate, 1-7

Allen, Robert (31) to David Burford, n.d., 1819-1825, re: pension claims; promissory note; claims for militia soldiers pay and powers of attorney; denial of claim for a horse lost in Creek War; payment on account; selling of tobacco; Missouri bill in Congress; loss of the tobacco boat; money due Samuel Allen for services in the Georgia militia; contest for House Speakership decided; burial of Sen. Trimble of Ohio; affidavit for a claimant; business matters; enclosure of letters; tobacco prices; payment of debts; presidential contest between Jackson and Adams; Lafayette's reception by Congress; second marriage for Allen, 1-8

Allen, Robert to Thos. Owen, 1822, re: authorization for David Burford to receive for Allen any money collected by Owen as agent for the late firm of Allen and Jenkins, 1-8

Allen, Robert to James Tubbs, 1821, re: requesting power of attorney authority in order to collect money due Silas Brook's widow, 1-8

Atkinson, Henry H. (2) to David Burford, 1820, re: legal matters, 1-9

Baldwin, Joshua to David Burford, 1823, re: record of existing account; tobacco market, 1-9

Bennett, S. Britton (6) to R. Allen and Burford, 1822, re: announcement of a co-partnership firm of Bennett and Laidlaw; payment of notes on demand; business greatly suspended in New Orleans due to scarcity of shipping; slight improvement in tobacco market; unable to procure any U.S. bank notes to remit for the drafts left for collection; unable to sell Negro slave due to sore on leg; acceptance of drafts for collection and payment; stagnation in the tobacco and cotton markets; business almost totally suspended due to the existence of the [yellow] fever; Negro slave hired out has a very lame leg, 1-9

Boddie, Willis A. to David Burford, 1835, re: horse breeding matter, 1-9
Brackin, William to Charles Watkins, 1831, re: survey of the Kentucky line, 1-9
Breedlove, Bradford and Robinson (2) to David Burford, 1823, re: bill exchange; payment of bill on its maturity date, 1-9
Brown, Wm. R. to David Burford, 1837, re: horse selling matter, 1-9
Bryan, William to R. Allen and Burford, 1822, re: introduction of Mr. Wm. Tompkins who has authority to collect balance due the firm of Schlatten and Bryan on note, 1-9
Buchtel, John and Company to R. Allen and Burford, 1821, re: receipt of money due on notes of branch banks of the U.S.; sorry to learn of loss of boat; requesting balance due, 1-9
Bullock, W. S., et al to Capital Removal Association of St. Augustine, 1900, re: election to determine fate of proposal to remove the Capital from the city of Tallahassee, 1-9
Burford, D. to , 1836, re: announcing that 20 volunteers have been enrolled for a term of six months duty as mounted volunteers; departure date for Memphis, 1-9
Burford, D. to John S. Gant, 1841, re: decline to take tract of land, 1-9
Cartwright, John to Thomas Banks, 1822, re: apology for not paying debt sooner but assurance that it will be paid, 1-10
Cartwright, John (3) to David Burford, 1824 and 1826, re: hopes he will be able to repay entire debt in the fall; Negroses and other property will be sold from father-in-law's estate; possibility that note could be settled if D. B. would purchase any of the slaves; acknowledgement of power of attorney and willingness to accept what was owed from the Crutchfield Estate with balance payable to D.B.'s merchant in New Orleans; refusal of Mr. Crutchfield to pay money on the power of attorney sent, 1-10
Chester, Robert 1. (8) to David Burford, 1819-1821, re: market price of tobacco in New York; shipment of tobacco to European markets; business failures in NYC; business matters; sales of tobacco; depressed economic conditions in New Orleans, 1-10
Clark, J. P. to David Burford, 1824, re: receipt of note for collection drawn by the late firm of R. Allen and Burford, 1-10
Craighead, D. to David Burford, 1832, re: boats arrived but later than day contracted for, 1-10
Morgan, Dorsey and Co. (12) to R. Allen and Burford, 1819-1823, re: prospect of tobacco prices for the spring; receipt of bill of lading for 50 barrels of pork; cannot barter pork for sugar and coffee; tobacco prices dull; suit against Robert Wilborn by Allen and Burford; notes now in collection suit; price of Negroes dull; common field hands worth from $500.00 to $700.00; will delay sale of tobacco; increased demand for tobacco; notice of increase in commission charge for commodities assigned to their mercantile house for sale; storage charges for tobacco accurate, 2-1
Duncan, Thos. A. to David Burford, 1824, re: business matters, 2-1
Erwin, James (2) to David Burford, 1827, re: check protested for non-payment and other financial matters, 2-2
Fogg, G. M. to David Burford, 1832, re: financial matter, 2-2
Frye, Nathaniel, Jr. to David Burford, 1818, re: payment of widow's pension claims, 2-2
Fulton, (?), David M. to David Burford, 1831, re: people divided upon the issue of [recharting] the Bank; wants D. B. to make a speech on the subject of the remuneration law; change in the judiciary system; the question of having a Solicitor in every county; belief that D.B. "will beat the very tail off the Col.;" religious revival, 2-2

Guild, J. C. to David Burford, 1834, re: urges D.B. to make one general circuit [through the District] before the election; would like a letter drafted to Maj. Eaton or the President [Jackson] describing J.C.G.'s qualifications for Office of Attorney for the District of West Tennessee, 2-2

Hagner, Peter to Robert Allen, 1823, re: statement of Absalom Bradford claim for lost horse in Seminole War, 2-3

Hagner, Peter (4) to David Burford, 1817-1824, re: claim for transportation of baggage and extra pay as Quartermaster at Chickasaw Bluffs in 1814 will not be admitted until evidence is forwarded to prove outstanding accounts are settled; need duplicate copies of vouchers; papers necessary for filing widow claim of Peggy Goad, 2-3

Hall, Allen A. (3) to David Burford, 1836-1838, re: calculation of amount of corn; financial matter; may have the corn on terms mentioned, 2-3

Hall, W. (3) to David Burford, 1832-1833, re: charges for the telegraph use; discussion of the tariff issue, the sale of public lands and rechartering the U.S. Bank in the present session of Congress; comments on the Southern reaction, particularly S.C., to the Tariff of 1832 and speculation on the outcome of this regional protest; Congressional movement to reduce the tariff in order to pacify the South, 2-3

Lindenberger and Hibbs (7) to Allen and Burford, 1820, re: repeated requests for remittance on account, 2-4

Little, L. B. (2) to David Burford, 1820, 1824, re: description of trip aboard the steamship "Robert Fulton" from New Orleans to New York with a stop in Havana, Cuba; sale of tobacco in New Orleans; collection of note, 2-4

Logan, David (2) to Allen and Burford, 1819, re: boat receipt for goods shipped from Pittsburgh; receipt of draft, 2-4

Lord, John W. to David Burford, 1831, re: soliciting support of the Office of Register of Grants for the Mountain District, 2-4

McConnell, Richard to David Burford, 1830, re: inquiry whether Parsons' note was deposited in Yeatman Woods and Company's Bank for collection, 2-5

McDaniel, Clement P., to David Burford, 1832, re: strong support among the populace for Eaton over Grundy, 2-5

McGhee, John (2) to David Burford, n.d., 1817, re: military services rendered at Fort; forwarding first half of an one hundred dollar bill, 2-5

McKoin, James L. to David Burford, 1832, re: large majority of county in favor of the election of Eaton over Grundy, for U. A. Senator, 2-5

Maberry, Giller and Watkins Co. to David Burford, 1838, re: collection of a note, 2-5

Martin, William to David Burford, 1831, re: announcing that he is a candidate for re-appointment as an Engrossing Clerk in the Senate, 2-5
Maunsel White and Co. (2) to R. Allen and Burford, 1822, re: agrees that it would be well to wait until fall to sell tobacco; slow tobacco sales, 2-5
Menefee, James N. to David Burford, 1831, re: offering his name as a candidate for appointment as Doorkeeper to the Senate, 2-5
Morgan, Allen and Co. to David Burford, 1840, re: bill posted to account for tomb slabs, 2-5
Morris, Eastin to David Burford, 1831, re: announcing his candidacy for the Office of Secretary of State, 2-5
Nelson, P. to David Burford, 1831, re: candidate for Engraving Clerk in Tennessee Senate, 2-5
Nisbet, F. H. to Allen and Burford, 1820, re: unable to pay draft as requested, 2-5
Patterson, R. and Lambden to R. Allen and Burford, 1822, re: thanks for payment, 2-6
Patton, John to R. Allen and Burford, 1821, re: [duplicate attached] shipment of tobacco, 2-6
Peyton, Balie (2) to David Burford, 1832, 1833, re: voters prefer Eaton over Grundy; the contested election between L. P. Moore and R. P. Letcher in Kentucky; organized attempt, headed by Clay and Calhoun to break down Jackson's popularity; discussion of the "Deposit" [of federal funds] question in Congress, 2-6
Polk, Lucius J. to David Burford, 1832, re: horse racing, 2-6
Poor, John F. to R. Allen and Burford, 1819, re: sending Wm. Keen for purpose of collecting money from the Allen and Burford firm, 2-6
Porterfield, F. to David Burford, 1830, re: proceeds of discounted note, 2-6
Preston, John M. to David Burford, 1819, re: receipt of payment of note, 2-6
Price, C. and Morgan (3) to Robert Allen, 1819-1820, re: overseas market reports; unable to accept draft; tobacco sold; business matter, 2-6
R. Allen to Burford to Alex Henry, Jr. and Co., 1820, re: unable to make remittance at this time; will make payment as soon as tobacco is sold in New Orleans, 2-6
Rawlings, James, Jr. to David Burford, 1818, re: prospect of selling whiskey on the Red and Arkansas Rivers; acquiring the land of the Chickasaws; neighborhood news, 2-6
Record, James C. to David Burford, 1840, re: apology for not writing earlier; discussion of a military matter, 2-6
Richardson, Worrell and Company to Robert Allen, 1819, re: draft not accepted due to unsold tobacco in Amsterdam; urges need to make necessary funds available so draft may be cashed, 2-6
Saunders, D. M. to David Burford, 1832, re: chances for Eaton to be elected as U.S. Senator, 2-7
Saunders, Ethelburt, W. (3) to David Burford, 1840-1841, re: sale of slaves; enclosure of $200.00 in Alabama money to cover deficiency in exchange rate of value of note requests D.B. to check on the affairs of his son who is attending school, se in up his son's affairs and sending him home; death of youngest child, 2-7
Saunders, Jourdan M. to David Burford, n.d., re: bill of sale for Negro slaves; erection of a monument as a memorial to deceased father and mother, 2-7
Saunders, L. (2) to David Burford, 1840, re: power of attorney to represent him in the "partition of the Negroes at Bledsoesborough;" death of mother; agreement to let Ethelburt [his brother] to have Phillis and her children; preference to have John sent, if he is willing to leave his children; wants to buy " a first rate boy of any age from 12 to 25," 2-7
Saunders, R. M. (2) to David Burford, 1835, 1841, re: to send his share of the first payment from the sale of the Saunders family land; request to send a draft to Jourdan Saunders at Clinton, [Louisiana], 2-7
Sawyer, S. T. to David Burford, n.d., re: public officials abusing the public trust entrusted in them; popularity of camp meetings; purchasing a note as a favor, 2-7
Settle, Whitley and Smith (3) to David Burford, 1819-1821, re: payment of notes, 2-7
Smartt, William C. to David Burford, 1816, re: request to forward the return of the strength and condition of the different Regiments in the [8th] Brigade of the Tennessee Militia, 2-7
Smith, John G. to David Burford, 1840, re: arrangements for impending horse race, 2-7
Smith, Sam (2) to David Burford, 1823, 1834, re: tobacco sale and other business matters; legislative business; regret to learn that D.B. has declined a seat in the convention, 2-7
Wilkins, James to David Burford, 1845, re: financial matter, 2-8
Williams, Daniel to David Burford, 1824, re: buying a cloth; describes the power and influence of Darby over the bar and court, 2-8
Winbourn, Henry K. (2) to David Burford, 1833, 1834, re: urging D.B. to be a candidate for the convention; happy to learn that he will be, 2-8
Woods, Joseph and Robert Woods (7) to David Burford, n.d. and 1834, re: sinking of Allen's boat unavailable with description of events of same; status of account; bill of lading; notes sent were unacceptable; credit to account, 2-8
Worley, T. to Allen and Burford, 1820, re: sending money by the bearer, 2-8