Sylvester Bailey Papers, 1823-1865

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:
Bailey, Sylvester, 1800-1864

Inclusive Dates:
1823-1865, bulk 1851-1859

Scope & Content:
Consists of 126 letters, three business statements, two miscellaneous items and an autograph album. The majority of the papers cover his time as a lawyer and judge in Memphis during the mid-1800s.

Bailey gave the illustrated autograph album to his daughter, Catharine M. Bailey. It contains hand-colored floral artwork and printed scriptures. Most of the personal entries are poems or short notes of love and friendship from friends and family to Catharine between 1852 and 1881.

Sylvester Bailey’s correspondence covers the period of his service as a lawyer and judge in Memphis from the 1840s to 1864. Most of the letters are written to Bailey and regard the settlement of legal cases he is representing or hearing in court. One letter of personal content is to Bailey’s daughter, Catharine, from her cousin, Mary Harris. She writes to clarify her opinion about a family member’s marriage proposal.

Remaining items include business statements, such as an expiration notice for a fire insurance policy and an invoice from Drugs, Dyes, Paints, Oils, Chemicals, &C. for sale by William A. Tyler, Ddruggist [sic]. The papers also include 2.5 pages of entries in a Shelby County registry book. The entries relate to the State of Tennessee and Shelby County, and most date to the 1830s. There is no explanation of why certain entries were copied and included in the papers.
Physical Description/Extent:
.5 cubic feet

Accession/Record Group Number:
Ac. No. 2014-027

Language:
English

Permanent Location:
X-B-3

Repository:
Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243-0312

Administrative/Biographical History

Sylvester Bailey was born in New York around 1800 and attended Hamilton College during the early 1820s. After graduation, he moved to Hardeman County, Tennessee, to begin training as a lawyer. On March 28, 1833, Bailey married Julia C. Tyler in Hardeman County. The following year, Julia gave birth to Catharine M. Bailey, the first of their ten children.

Bailey worked as an attorney at the Memphis branch of the Douglass & Moore Law Firm and served as a Shelby County court judge. In 1846, he was elected as the first mayor of South Memphis, and served a one-year term. He was appointed as a co-director of the Memphis branch of the Bank of Tennessee in 1859. He continued his work as a judge until his death in October 1864. He was buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis.

Organization/Arrangement of Materials

Sylvester Bailey’s incoming correspondence is arranged alphabetically by the sender, then chronologically if the sender wrote more than one letter. The miscellaneous correspondence consists of family correspondence and legal matters. These are arranged alphabetically by sender.
Conditions of Access and Use

Restrictions on Access:
None

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:
While the Tennessee State Library and Archives houses an item, it does not necessarily hold the copyright on the item, nor may it be able to determine if the item is still protected under current copyright law. Users are solely responsible for determining the existence of such instances and for obtaining any other permissions and paying associated fees that may be necessary for the intended use.

Index Terms

Personal/Family Names:
Bailey, Sylvester, 1800-1864

Corporate Names/Organizations/Government Bodies:
Tennessee. County Court (Shelby County)

Subjects:
 Judges -- Tennessee -- 19\textsuperscript{th} century -- Correspondence
 Lawyers -- Tennessee -- 19\textsuperscript{th} century -- Correspondence
 Legal opinions -- Tennessee -- 19\textsuperscript{th} century
 Practice of law -- Tennessee -- 19\textsuperscript{th} century

Geographic Names:
 Memphis (Tenn.) -- History -- 19\textsuperscript{th} century -- Sources
 Memphis (Tenn.) -- Social life and customs -- 19\textsuperscript{th} century -- Sources

Document Types:
 Accounts
 Autograph albums
 Financial statements
 Invoices
 Legal correspondence
 Personal correspondence
Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition:
The Sylvester Bailey Papers were a gift of Mauni Mitchel in May 2014.

Processing and Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:
Sylvester Bailey Papers, 1823-1865, Tennessee State Library and Archives

Processing Information:
Processing completed by Ellen Robison, November 2017.
## CONTAINER LIST

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<thead>
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<th>Contents/Item Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<td>Autograph Album -- Catherine Bailey</td>
<td>approximately 1852-1881</td>
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<td>Accounts -- Bills and receipts -- Sylvester Bailey</td>
<td>1849-1859</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence -- Incoming -- Abell-Cowan</td>
<td>1845-1863</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Correspondence -- Incoming -- Dawson-Johnson</td>
<td>1844-1857</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence -- Incoming -- Fowlkes-Prescott</td>
<td>1845-1859</td>
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<td>Correspondence -- Incoming -- Richardson-Yeatman</td>
<td>1845-1865</td>
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<td>Correspondence -- Outgoing -- Sylvester Bailey</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Correspondence -- Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>Envelopes</td>
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<td>Government Records -- Shelby County</td>
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