Guide to the Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr., letter and biographical sketch
MSS.0309

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December 19, 2012
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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## Summary Information

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Clay Jr., Clement Claiborne, 1816-1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr., letter and biographical sketch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>circa 1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>0.05 Linear feet (2 items, 4 pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Letter written from Tuscaloosa in 1834, to his aunt, Mrs. Robert W. Withers of Erie, Greene County, Alabama, and a biographical sketch, author and date unknown, which includes information on Clay's political career, wedding, and friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Preferred Citation note

Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr., letter and biographical sketch, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.
Biographical/Historical note

Clement Clairborne Clay, Jr., the oldest son of former Alabama senator and governor, Clement Comer Clay, was born on 13 December 1816, in Huntsville, Alabama. He graduated from the University of Alabama in 1834 and from the law department of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, in 1839. He was admitted to the bar in Alabama in 1840. He married Virginia Tunstall in 1843; the couple had several children.

Clay was elected to the Alabama State House of Representatives in 1842, 1844, and 1845, and then served as a county judge in Madison County, Alabama from 1848 to 1850. He ran for a seat in the United States Congress in 1850 but was not elected. Later, in 1853, the Alabama legislature elected him to serve in the United States Senate in the term beginning on 4 March 1853. However, because of the legislature's delay in filling the position, he actually only took office on 29 November 1853, and served until 21 January 1861, when Alabama seceded from the Union at the beginning of the Civil War. He was subsequently elected by the Alabama Confederate legislature as Senator in the First Confederate Congress, where he served from 1862 until 1864.

Although he declined the position of Confederate Secretary of War in Jefferson Davis' Cabinet, he and Jacob Thompson headed the Confederate secret agents. They had employed John Wilkes Booth for some services before Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln, and due to suspicions that Clay was involved in an assassination plot, Clay and his wife were arrested and imprisoned in Fortress Monroe in Washington, DC, in 1865; they were held for approximately one year.

When the Clays were released, they returned to his plantation in Jackson County, Alabama, and devoted himself to agricultural pursuits and to his law practice. Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr. died on 3 January 1882.

Scope and Contents note

The collection contains an 1834 letter written from Tuscaloosa to his aunt, Mrs. Robert W. Withers of Erie, Greene County, Alabama and a biographical sketch, author and date unknown, which includes information on Clay's political career, wedding, and friends.

Administrative Information
Publication Information
W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama February 2008

Revision Description
December 2012

Conditions Governing Access note
None

Conditions Governing Use note
None

Provenance
unknown

Processed by
unknown; updated by R. Rumstay, 2008; updated by Martha Bace, 2012

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Letters (correspondence)
- Memoir and Biography

Geographic Name(s)

- Tuscaloosa (Ala.)

Subject(s)
• Daily Life and Family
• Family
• Government, Law and Politics
• Southern Life and Culture
## Collection Inventory

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