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ERSKINE-GORDON-LE CONTE PAPERS
1780-1940

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INTRODUCTION

The Erskine-Gordon-Le Conte Papers are centered around Dr. Alexander Erskine (1832-1913), noted physician and professor at the Memphis Hospital Medical College, his wife Margaret Louisa Gordon (1842-1914), and her sister, Mary Brown Gordon Le Conte (ca 1851-1902), wife of Dr. James N. Le Conte.

The materials in this collection measure 3.78 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Erskine-Gordon-Le Conte Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Erskine-Gordon-Le Conte Collection, containing approximately 1,000 items, covers the period from 1780 to 1940. The collection is composed of accounts, advertisements, announcements, cards, certificates, church records, correspondence, court records, financial documents, genealogical data, invitations, journals, land records, legal documents, licenses, obituaries, photographs, poetry, programs, recipes, remedies, school records, slave records, and writings.

The major portion of this collection consists of correspondence, spanning the period of the 1800's. The three main correspondents are: Dr. Alexander Erskine, a noted physician and professor of obstetrics and the diseases of children at Memphis Hospital Medical College, Memphis, Tennessee; Lou Gordon Erskine, his wife; and Mary Brown Gordon LeConte, wife of Dr. James N. LeConte and sister of Lou Gordon Erskine. Their letters reflect a genteel way of life in the 1800's, shared by the Erskines in Memphis and Mary LeConte in Columbia. Mrs. LeConte lived most of her life with her brother, George Washington ("Wash") Gordon, on the family farm called Boxwood. In reading their correspondence, one can relive the social whirl of life on Beale Street in Memphis, as well as the pastoral pleasures offered by the rural life in Columbia.

Other letters of particular interest are those written by George Washington Gordon, father of Lou Erskine, Mary LeConte and "Wash" Gordon, in the 1840's and 1850's. From his health resort in Gordon Springs, Georgia, George Washington Gordon relates his progress, as well as the difficulties of his business venture.

Of great interest to any researcher will be the journal of Margaret Erskine, grandmother of Dr. Alexander Erskine. Margaret was born on February 28, 1753, in Pennsylvania. In her journal, she describes her journey through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, her capture and subsequent account of her bravery and intelligence, which enabled her to survive the barbaric tortures of her captors. The closing page of the journal offers genealogical data on the Erskine family.

The land records offer an invaluable account of the acquisitions made by the Bradshaw family in the early 1800s, and would be of great interest to a family researcher. Likewise, the slave records and legal documents contain a detailed account of the business dealings of this prosperous family. However, the true value of this collection is the correspondence. A family's history is traced, event by event, year by year, and personalities bloom on the pages of these letters. The overall picture becomes one of a devoted family, sharing their lives through the only means of communication available to them.

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Alexander Erskine

- 1832 Born at Huntsville, Alabama, son of Alexander and Susan Catharine Erskine
- Graduated from the University of Virginia in the “Classical Course”
- Several years spent in hospital work in New York City
- 1858 Moved to Memphis and began the practice of medicine
- 1860 Married Mrs. Augusta Law White, daughter of Mrs. Sarah Gordon
- 1861-1865 Enlisted in the Confederate Army as a surgeon
- Served in the 15th Tennessee Infantry under Colonel Tyler
- Served in the 2nd Tennessee Infantry under Colonel Robertson
- Fought in the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky
- In charge of the army hospital at LaGrange, Georgia
- Paroled at Covington, Georgia
- 1868-1873 Dean of Memphis Hospital Medical College, Memphis, Tennessee
- 1872 Married Margaret Louisa Gordon, daughter of George Washington Gordon
- 1885-1906 Professor of Obstetrics and diseases of children at Memphis Hospital Medical College, Memphis, Tennessee
- 1902-1910 Served on the staff of Memphis Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee
- 1913 Died at the age of 81

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Account books – Farm, 1887
2. Accounts – Bills, notes, receipts – 1800-1839
3. Accounts – Bills, notes, receipts – 1840-1849
4. Accounts – Bills, notes, receipts – 1850-1859
5. Accounts – Bills, notes, receipts – 1860-1869
6. Advertisements – Miscellaneous
7. Announcements – Death
8. Cards – Greeting
9. Certificate – Voter registration – George W. Gordon, 1868
10. Church records – Letters
11. Correspondence – Alison - Anderson
12. Correspondence – Anderson, Sallie, 1867-1878
13. Correspondence – Armstrong - Avery
14. Correspondence – Balch - Byrd
15. Correspondence – Caldwell - Douglas

Box 2

Correspondence

1. Embry - Erskine, Albert R.
2. Erskine, Alexander, 1877-1905
3. Erskine, Alexander, 1873-1922
4. Erskine, Alexander, 1873-1885
5. Erskine, Alexander, 1891
6. Erskine, Alexander, 1892
7. Erskine, Alexander, 1893
8. Erskine, Alexander, 1894-1895
9. Erskine, Alexander, 1896
10. Erskine, Alexander, 1897
11. Erskine, Alexander, 1898
12. Erskine, Elizabeth
13. Erskine, John

Box 3

Correspondence

1. Erskine, Kate - Erskine, Laura
2. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1861
3. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1898-1901
4. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1908-1909
5. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1860-1896
6. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1894-1897
7. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1870-1876
8. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1877-1878
9. Erskine, Lou Gordon, 1874-1907

10. Erskine, Loulie G., 1878-1893
11. Erskine, Loulie G., 1892-1946
12. Erskine, Loulie G., 1896
13. Erskine, Loulie G., 1893-1898

Box 4

Correspondence

1. Erskine, S.C.
2. Erskine, Washington Gordon, 1891-1909
3. Erskine, Washington Gordon, 1895-1897
4. Erskine, Washington Gordon, 1897
5. Erskine, William
6. Ewing - Foster
7. Gardner - Gill
8. Gordon, A.G. - Gordon, C.P.
9. Gordon, Charles
10. Gordon, E.T. - Gordon, Fanny
11. Gordon, George Washington, 1856-1902
12. Gordon, George Washington, 1848-1857
13. Gordon, George Washington, 1844-1858
14. Gordon, Hiram
15. Gordon, Hugh T., 1869-1874
16. Gordon, Hugh T., 1866-1929
17. Gordon, Hugh T., 1890-1891

Box 5

Correspondence

1. Gordon, J.B. - Gordon, M.L.
2. Gordon, William Bradshaw, 1874-1897
3. Gordon, William Bradshaw, 1869-1870
4. Gordon, William Bradshaw, 1873-1877
5. Gordon, William Bradshaw, 1904-1912
6. Gordon, William Bradshaw, 1864-1878
7. Gordon, U.S.
8. Gordon, Z.H.
9. Grant, A.C. - Grant, L.M.
10. Hanner, Blanche
11. Haselhurst - Hull
12. Jackson - Jones
13. Ketchum - Law
14. LeConte, James - LeConte, Joseph
15. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon, 1866-1867
16. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon, 1865-1866
17. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon, 1870-1877

Box 6

Correspondence

1. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon (no dates)
2. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon (no dates)
3. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon, 1873-1902
4. LeConte, Mary Brown Gordon, 1861-1874
5. LeConte, Ophelia
6. LeConte, William
7. Marchetti - McCallum
8. Mayes - Myers, J.W.
9. Myers, William
10. Nisbet - Osborn
11. Parr - Rankin
12. Rankin, W. R.
13. Ransom - Robinson

Box 7

Correspondence

1. Russell & Whitehead - Street
2. Taylor - Walker
3. Weed, Jodie - Weed, Joseph E.
4. Weed, S.A.
5. White - Wright
6. Miscellaneous

Box 8

1. Court Records – Case – Matthew Walker, et al v. William Bradshaw
2. Court Records – Case – Miscellaneous, 1817
3. Court Records – Court Costs – George W. Gordon, 1844
4. Court Records – Court Costs – Miscellaneous, 1841-1848
5. Court Records – Decrees – Miscellaneous, 1817-1862
6. Court Records – Decrees – Miscellaneous, 1840-1848
7. Court Records – Deposition – James C. Mitchell, 1842
8. Court Records – Deposition – Lew Tobyns, 1810
9. Court Records – Judgment – heirs of James Brown, 1809
10. Court Records – Judgment – George W. Gordon, 1846
11. Court Records – Judgment – Maury County, 1814
12. Court Records – Judgment – Sale of Slave, 1847
13. Financial Documents – Checks, bank books
14. Genealogical Data – William Bradshaw family
15. Invitations – At home
16. Invitations – Commencement
17. Invitations – Dance
18. Invitations – Wedding
20. Journal – Margaret Erskine, born 28 February, 1753 (copied)

Box 9

1. Land Records – Agreement – Samuel Polk, Gideon Pillow, William Bradshaw, 1817
2. Land Records – Deed – William T. Avery, 1866
3. Land Records – Deed – Thomas Bradshaw to Edward Bradshaw, 1842
4. Land Records – Deed – Isaac Cook to James B. Cook and Green B. Cook, 1830
5. Land Records – Deed – William Cowden to the heirs of John Goldmon, 1839
6. Land Records – Deed – David C. Cross to William T. Avery, 1859
7. Land Records – Deed – James Hamilton to William Bradshaw, 1807
8. Land Records – Deed – John Leonard to the heirs of Gideon Pillow and William Bradshaw, 1833
9. Land Records – Deed – William Martin to William and Edward Bradshaw, 1842
10. Land Records – Deed – Charles D. McLean to Samuel Donaldson, 1845
11. Land Records – Deed – Thomas T. Napier to George W. Gordon, 1838
12. Land Records – Deed – Benjamin Trotter to William Bradshaw, 1819
13. Land Records – Grant – William Fulton, 1787 and Joseph Banner, 1794
14. Land Records – Grant – William Gee, 1835
15. Land Records – Grant – Gideon Pillow and William Bradshaw, 1823
16. Land Records – Grant – Abner Pillow (?), 1830
17. Land Records – Indenture – James Gray and South Memphis Co., 1846
18. Land Records – Transfer of Claim – John Fleming to Lemuel F. Doughty, 1832
19. Legal Document – Agreement – Bond & Cartwright, 1842
20. Legal Document – Agreement – Campbell, et al and Bradshaw, 1814
21. Legal Document – Agreement – Crofford & Bradshaw, 1848
22. Legal Document – Agreement – Gordon & Gordon, 1856
23. Legal Document – Agreement – Gordon & Gordon, 1866
24. Legal Document – Agreement – LeConte and Rogers, 1885
25. Legal Document – Bail Bond – Goodlow, 1816
26. Legal Document – Bail Bond – Guest, Cheatham, Nelson, 1819
27. Legal Document – Bill of Sale – H. Bradshaw, 1787
28. Legal Document – Bill of Sale – William Bradshaw, 1826
29. Legal Document – Bill of Sale – Thomas and Hugh Bradshaw, 1842
30. Legal Document – Bond – Voorhies to Bradshaw, n.d.
31. Legal Document – Commission – William T. Avery, 1857
32. Legal Document – Indenture – Harris to Lundy, 1835
33. Legal Document – Power of Attorney – heirs of Hyde T. Avery, 1866
34. Legal Document – Power of Attorney – Love, 1821
35. Legal Document – Will – Hugh Bradshaw, 1800
36. License – Attorney – George W. Gordon, 1827
37. License – Attorney – George W. Gordon, 1835
38. Obituaries – Hamilton, 1913 and Louis LeConte
39. Photographs – Miscellaneous unidentified
40. Photographs, drawings, etc. – Drawing – Plans for barn
41. Poetry – Miscellaneous
42. Programs – Miscellaneous
43. Recipes – Miscellaneous
44. Remedies – Miscellaneous
45. School Records – Report, receipts for tuition, 1831, 1857

46. Slave Records – Account books
47. Slave Records – Advertisements
48. Slave Records – Bills of Sale
49. Writings – Gold & Silver, M.B. Gordon

NAME INDEX

This is a name index of the correspondence only in the Erskine-Gordon-LeConte Collection 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.

- Alison, Octavia to Mary G. Le Conte, 1872, re: invitation to a wedding, 1-11
Anderson, Clifford, Jr. to Mary G. Le Conte, 1872, re: birth of his brother, 1-11
Anderson, Clifford (3) to Mary G. Le Conte, 1870-1889, re: family news, business, 1-11
Anderson, Sallie (10) to Mary G. Le Conte, 1867-1878, re: family news
Anderson, Sallie to William B. Gordon, 1878, re: Lou Erskine's sickness, 1-12
Armstrong, J.W. to _____ Bradshaw, 1819, re: business, 1-13
Avery, Amanda to William T. Avery, n.d., re: family news, 1-13
Avery, Chastie (2) to William T. Avery, 1859, 1887, re: family news, 1-13
Avery, Nathan (3) to William T. Avery, 1840-1842, re: sister Rebecca's death; family news, 1-13
Avery, R.J. (2) to William T. Avery, 184_, re: trip to Nashville on steamboat Paragon, 1-13
Avery, W.T. (2) to Mrs. W.T. Avery, 1909, re: Christmas, 1-13
Balch, Alfred (2) to William Bradshaw, 1816, 1824, re: loans, 1-14
Boggs, William E to Dr. Erskine, 1901, re: family news, 1-14
Bradshaw, Charles to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1877, re: death of Dr.'s daughter Mary, 1-14
Brown, N.T. (?) to Major George W. Gordon, 1847, re: politics, 1-14
Byrd, Dr. to Laura E. Erskine, 1922, re: his visit to Memphis, 1-14
Caldwell, S.G. to W.B. Gordon, 1866, re: inquiries into the reputation of E. B. McKinnon and Y.S.P., 1-15
Calhoun, Adams, et al to G.W. Gordon, 189_, re: bill before legislature, 1-15
Churchill, Clarissa to Nathan Avery, 1829, re: family news, 1-15
Coleman, Thomas to William Bradshaw, 1841, re: receipt of money from estate of Thomas Brown, 1-15
Coleman, Thomas to William Bradshaw, 1842, re: Tennessee Bank notes, 1-15
Converse, F.B. to W.B. Gordon, 1867, re: collection of debts, 1-15
Cook, C.H. to Mrs. M. LeConte, 1892, re: selling her farm, 1-15
Cook, P.H. to Mrs. M. G. LeConte, 1892, re: selling her farm, 1-15
Cooper, Jessie to Bessie Erskine, 1892, re: friends news, 1-15
Crenshaw, John to Mrs. Mary G. LeConte, 1879, re: requesting her to take her name off church roll if she has moved permanently from Macon, 1-15
Currie, A.E. to M.L. Gordon, 1866, re: death of her husband, inquiries, 5-1
Dimond, Y. (?) to William Bradshaw, 184_, re: accusing Sheriff William Bradshaw of telling lies about him, 1-15
Douglas, B. to Thomas Bradshaw, 1841, re: money deposited for land bought from Mr. Bradshaw, 1-15
Embry, W.J. to G.W. Gordon, 1902, re: business, 1-15
Erskine, Albert (3) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1891-1896, re: family news, 2-1

Erskine, Albert (7) to G.W. Gordon, 1902-1903, re: news from college, University of Virginia, 2-1

Erskine, Dr. Alexander to Charles Gordon, 1877, re: the death of his daughter Mary from scarlet fever, 2-2

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (2) to Willie Erskine, 1893, 1898, re: family news, 2-2

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (4) to Gordon Erskine, 1893-1895, re: family news, 2-2

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (2) to G.W. Gordon, 1903, 1905, re: treatment of Mary, 2-2

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (3) to Albert Erskine, 1892-1893, re: family news, 2-2

Erskine, Dr. Alexander to Laura Erskine, 1922, re: thank you for poem, 2-2

Erskine, Dr. Alexander to Bess Erskine, 1898, re: family news, 2-3

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (2) to Willie B. Gordon, 1873, re: Lou's illness, 2-3

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (6) to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1873-1885, re: family news, his wife Lou's illnesses, pregnancies; [letter dated September 12, 1885 establishes approximate birthdate of "Bess,"] [letter dated January 3, 1878 establishes approximate birthdate of "Loulie"], 2-4

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (13) to Mary G. Le Conte, 1891-, re: family news, 2-5

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (10) to Mary Le Conte, 1892, re: family news, 2-6

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (8) to Mary G. Le Conte, 1893, re: family news, 2-7

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (9) to Mary Le Conte, 1894-1895, re: family news, 2-8

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (10) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1896-, re: family news, 2-9

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (9) to Mary Le Conte, 1897, re: family news, 2-10

Erskine, Dr. Alexander (8) to Mary Le Conte, 1898, re: family news, 2-11

Erskine, Elizabeth (8) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1893-1897, re: family news, 2-12

Erskine, John (4) to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1879, re: family news, 2-13

Erskine, Laura (3) to Mrs. Mary Le Conte, 1873-1902, re: family news; moving to Nashville, 3-1

Erskine, Kate to Lou Erskine, n.d., re: family news, 3-1

Erskine, Kate to Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Erskine, 1876, re: death of Mary Le Conte Erskine, 3-1

Erskine, Kate to Dr. John Erskine, 1876, re: family business, 3-1

Erskine, Kate to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1874, re: sewing machine needles and bobbins, 3-1

Erskine, Lou Gordon (11) to Mary Le Conte, 1866, re: family news, 3-2

Erskine, Mrs. Lou (11) to Miss Bess Erskine, 1908, re: family news, 3-3

Erskine, Mrs. Lou to Gordon Erskine, 1891, re: family news, 3-3

Erskine, Mrs. Lou (10) to Bess Erskine, 1908-1909, re: family news, 3-4

Erskine, Lou Gordon (8) to Marnie (Mary) Brown Gordon Le Conte, 1881-1894, re: family news, 3-5

Erskine, Lou Gordon (2) to William B. Gordon, 1860, 1896, re: family news, 3-5

Erskine, Lou Gordon (10) to Mary Le Conte, 1894-1897, re: family news, 3-6

Erskine, Lou Gordon (9) to Marnie (Mary) Brown Gordon Le Conte, 1870-1876, re: family news; births of babies, 3-7

Erskine, Lou Gordon (12) to Mary Le Conte, 1877-1878, re: family news, 3-8

Erskine, Lou to W. Gordon Erskine, 1907, re: sending him a razor, 3-9

Erskine, Lou (3) to Wash Gordon, 1874-1903, re: family news, 3-9

Erskine, Lou to Laura Erskine, n.d., re: family news, 3-9

Erskine, Miss Loulie (6) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1878-1893, re: family, personal and social news, 3-10

Erskine, Loulie G. (3) to Gordon Erskine, 1892, 1894, re: family news, 3-11

Erskine, Loulie G. to Albert Erskine, 1894, re: family news, 3-11

Erskine, Loulie G. to W.B. Gordon, 1896, re: family news, 3-11

Erskine, Loulie G. to Bess and Laura Erskine, n.d., re: personal news, 3-11

Erskine, Loulie G. (3) to Laura Erskine, n.d., re: personal news, 3-11

Erskine, Loulie G. (3) to Laura Erskine, 1933-1946, re: personal news, 3-11

Erskine, Miss Loulie (12) to Mary Le Conte, 1896, re: family news, 3-12

Erskine, Loulie G. (2) to Mr. Gordon Erskine, 1894, re: family news, 3-13

Erskine, Loulie (9) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1893-1898, re: family, personal news, 3-13

Erskine, S.C. (3) to Mrs. Alexander (Lou) Erskine, 1872-1875, re: family news, 4-1

Erskine, S.C. (5) to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1875-1882, re: family news, 4-1

Erskine, S.C. to Dr. John Erskine, 1877, re: family news, 4-1

Erskine, W. Gordon (3) to Mary G. Le Conte, 1891-1898, re: family news, 4-2

Erskine, Washington Gordon (3) to George Washington Gordon, 1909, re: family reunion, 4-2

Erskine, Washington Gordon (10) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1895-1897, re: family news, 4-3

Erskine, Washington Gordon (10) to Mrs. Mary Le Conte, 1897, re: family news, 4-4

Erskine, Willie (3) to Mrs. Mary G. Le Conte, 1887, 1893, re: family news, 4-5

Ethridge, Emerson to Mr. Avery ?, 1843, re: Whig candidates for General Assembly, 4-6

Ewing, Andrew (3) to Nimrod Porter, 1842, re: debts owed and failure of Sheriff to attain payment, 4-6

Ewing, S.L. to Mr. M.G. Le Conte, 1877, re: advertising, 4-6

Felloon, W. to Wm. Bradshaw, 1844, re: personal news, 4-6

Finley, J.J. to D.J. Fowkles, 1846, re: Finley's visit to Georgia, 4-6

Flurnoy, Mary to William B. Gordon, 1878, re: personal news, 4-6

Fogg, Foster to W.H. Stephens, 1849, re: receipt of bank draft, 4-6

Fogg, G.M. to George W. Gordon, 1845, re: loan of money, 4-6

Foster, R.C. to Captain William Bradshaw, 1843, re: military encampment, 4-6

Gardner, Anna to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1866, re: family news, 4-7

Gardner, C.H.P. to Mary G. Le Conte, 1870, re: sale of her property, 4-7

Gill, Bess Erskine (5) to Laura Erskine, 1940-1943, re: family news, 4-7

Gill, Bess Erskine to Mrs. Mary G. Le Conte, 1898, re: family news, 4-7

Gordon, A.G. to George W. Gordon, 1848, re: nephew is asking Uncle G.W. Gordon to buy livestock for him, 4-8

Gordon, Betsy (3) to Lou Gordon Erskine, n.d., re: family news, 4-8

Gordon, C.P. to George W. Gordon, 1836, re: Indian wars in Georgia and Alabama; prospects of moving to Middle Tennessee, 4-8

Gordon, Charles (7) to Lou Gordon Erskine, 1869-1874, re: family news, 4-9

Gordon, Charles (3) to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1870-1896, re: family news, 4-9

Gordon, Charles P. (2) to Mary Le Conte, 1866, 1893, re: her impending visit; family news, 4-8

Gordon, E.T. (2) to G.W. Gordon, 1886, 1902, re: family news, 4-10

Gordon, E.T. (2) to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1896, re: family news, 4-10

(Gordon), Fanny to Mrs. Mary Le Conte, 187?, re: family news, 4-10

Gordon, G.W. to Hugh Bradshaw, 1857, re: sending boys home because he needed their help on the farm, 4-13

Gordon, G.W. (5) to William B. Gordon, 1844-1857, re: family name, 4-13

Gordon, G.W. (5) to Edward Bradshaw, 1849-1858, re: death of William Bradshaw, family and business news, 4-13

Gordon, George W. (2) to Miss Lou Gordon, 1870, re: family news, 4-11

Gordon, George Washington (6) to Mary G. Le Conte, 1856-1891, re: family news, 4-11

Gordon, George W. to Gordon Erskine, 1902, re: loans, 4-11

Gordon, George Washington (17) to Mrs. G.W. Gordon, his wife, 1848-1857, re: love letters; business in Gordon Springs, Georgia, 4-12

Gordon, Hiram (2) to Miss Lou Gordon, 1870, re: family news, 4-14

Gordon, Hugh (10) to Lou Gordon (Mrs. Alexander Erskine), 1869-1874, re: family news; one letter (dated December 19, 1874) tells of visiting Vicksburg, searching for their father's grave, 4-15

Gordon, Hugh (10) to Mary Brown Gordon Le Conte, 1866-1874, re: family news, 4-16

Gordon, Hugh to G.W. Gordon, 1903, re: the death of their sister, 4-16

Gordon, Hugh to Laura Erskine, 1929, re: failing health, 4-16

Gordon, Hugh (6) to Mary Brown Le Conte, 1890-1891, re: family news, 4-17

Gordon, J.B. to Mrs. Mary G. Le Conte, 1897, re: tracing grandmother's pension, 5-1

Gordon, John C. to Mary G. Le Conte, 1866, re: her visit to Macon, 5-1

Gordon, J.C. to George Washington Gordon, 1881, re: business, 5-1

Gordon, Lou to Mademoiselle Monaghan, 1861, re: lesson in French, 3-2

Gordon, M.L. to Mrs. William Currie, n.d., re: death of her husband of pneumonia at the Gordon home in Columbia, 5-1

Gordon, Mattie to William B. Gordon, 1858, re: family news, 5-1

Gordon, Mattie to Minnie Le Conte (Mrs. James N. Le Conte), 1858, re: family news, 5-1

Gordon, Mary G. to Mrs. Le Conte (Mary Gordon Le Conte), 1888, re: thank you note for a Christmas present, 5-1

Gordon, U.S. to Laura Erskine, 1914, re: family news, 5-1

Gordon, William Bradshaw (12) to Mrs. Mary Brown Gordon Le Conte, 1874-1897, re: family news; [there is a picture of William Bradshaw Gordon in this file. See letter dated January 6, 1877], 5-2

Gordon, Wm. Bradshaw (6) to Lou Gordon, 1869-1907, re: family news, 5-3

Gordon, William Bradshaw (3) to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1876-1877, re: illness of Lou Erskine; news from Washington, 5-4

Gordon, William Bradshaw (8) to Mrs. Lou Erskine, 1873-1877, re: family news; business about farms in Columbia, 5-4

Gordon, William Bradshaw (10) to Lou Gordon Erskine, 1904-1910, re: family news, 5-5

Gordon, William Bradshaw to Wash Gordon, 1912, re: family news, 5-5

Gordon, William Bradshaw (8) to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1864-1878, re: family news, 5-6

Gordon, William Bradshaw to Lou Gordon Erskine, 1866, re: family news, 5-6

Gordon, Z.H. (8) to George W. Gordon (Sr.), 1848-1853, re: family news from Gordon Springs, Georgia; both brothers investment in mineral springs, copper mine, farmland, 5-8

Grant, A.C. to Mary Le Conte, 1878, re: sale of her farm, 5-9

Grant, L.M. (3) to Mary Brown Le Conte, 1867-1871, re: news of friends and family, 5-9

Hanner, Blanche (8) to Miss Lou Gordon, 1866-1869, re: personal news between friends, 5-10

Hanner, Blanche (7) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1868-1870, re: personal news between friends, 5-10

Hasbhurst (or Haslehurst) to Mary (Le Conte?), 1870, re: letter of recommendation written by Mary for her cousin Russell, 5-11

Hinkley, Rebecca to Mary Le Conte, 1867, re: her move to Ohio, 5-11

Hopkins and McKnight to G.W. Gordon, 1902, re: business, 5-11

Horsley to Cousin Wash, 1896, re: farm business, 5-11

Hull, Cornelia A. to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, June 24, ?, re: invitation, 5-11

Jackson, I.A. (4) to George W. Gordon, 1847-1848, re: politics, 5-12

Johnson, R.M. to Mr. Milliford, Circuit Court Clerk, 1866, re: suit filed by Ephraim Gordon against Robert Brink concerning the removal of a small frame house from Gordon's property, 5-12

Johnston, George W. to G.W. Gordon, 1848, re: payment of a debt, 5-12

Jones, Emma Chaslett to W. T. Avery, n.d., re: personal news, 5-12

Jones, Thomas (M.) to G.W. Gordon, 1847, re: political appointment, 5-12

Ketcham, C.M. to Mrs. M. Le Conte, 1867, re: payment of taxes on land in Jasper, Tennessee, 5-13

Killern, Anderson to William Bradshaw, 1844, re: deed to trust, 5-13

Law, J. _____ to Mary Le Conte, 1893, re: family news, 5-13

Law, S.C. (2) to Mary Le Conte, 1873, 1890, re: family news, 5-13

Law, W. to Mr. Maxwell, n.d., re: collection of note, 5-13

Le Conte, J. Nisbet to Mrs. Mary Le Conte, 1896, re: school in Adairsville, Georgia, 5-14

Le Conte, James to J.C. Gordon, 1859, re: business, 5-14

Le Conte, Jennie (2) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1867, 1895, re: family news; visits to Expo in Atlanta, 5-14

Le Conte, Joseph E. to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1867, re: school news from Athens, Georgia, 5-14

Le Conte, M.G. to Mr. W.R. Rankin, 1885, re: debts, the collecting thereof, 6-3

Le Conte, Mary to Lutie Lou Erskine, 1893, re: regards on her sixteenth birthday, 6-3

Le Conte, Mary Gordon (13) to Lou Gordon, 1866-1867, re: family news, 5-15

Le Conte, Mary Gordon (10) to Lou Gordon (Mrs. Alexander Erskine), 1865-1866, re: family news, 5-16

Le Conte, Mary Brown Gordon (16) to Lou Gordon Erskine, 1870-1877, re: family news, 5-17

Le Conte, Mary Gordon (13) to Lou Gordon Erskine, n.d., re: family news, 6-1

Le Conte, Mary Gordon (14) to Lou Gordon Erskine, n.d., re: family news, 6-2

Le Conte, Mary (7) to Wash Gordon, 1867, 1902, re: family news, 6-3

Le Conte, Mary (2) to M.L. Gordon, n.d., re: family news, 6-3

Le Conte, Mary (4) to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1873, re: yellow fever; power of attorney, 6-3

Le Conte, Mary B. Gordon (6) to Wm. B. Gordon, 1861-, re: secession of state of Georgia; re-marriage of their father, 6-4

Le Conte, Mary B. Gordon to Sarah C. Law, 1874, re: family misunderstanding, 6-4

Le Conte, Ophelia to Mary Le Conte, 1858, re: her recent wedding to Ophelia's brother,
 Dr. James N. Le Conte, 6-5
 Le Conte, William (15) to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1867-1902, re: family news, 6-6
 McCallum, James to George W. Gordon, 1845, re: business, 6-7
 Marchetti, E. to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1906, re: birth certificate, 6-7
 Martin, M.J. to Mrs. Lou Erskine, 1873, re: personal news; best wishes on marriage, 6-7
 Martin, W.P. to Hugh Bradshaw, 1829, re: division of slaves, 6-7
 Martin and McAlister (5) to George W. Gordon, 1845-1847, re: business; sale of cotton,
 6-7
 Mayes, ____ to Wm. Bradshaw, 1844, re: personal news; election in Columbia, 6-8
 Mays, J.M. to Wash Gordon, 1892, re: sale of livestock, 6-8
 Metcalfe, John to Dr. John H. Erskine, n.d., re: an argument against moving his (Dr.
 John's) medical practice to New York, 6-8
 Mills, Thos. R. to G.W. Gordon, 1830, re: hiring a pastry cook, 6-8
 Moore, Frank to Charles Gordon, 1876, re: possible employment for Charles with the
 Cincinnati Southern Railway, 6-8
 Moore, I.S. to W.T. Avery, 1847, re: friends; LaGrange College news, 6-8
 Myers, Bernard (2) to G.W. Gordon, 1849, re: family news, 6-8
 Myers, Bernard to William Bradshaw, 1843, re: business, 6-8
 Myers, J.W. to Hiran Titcomb, 1901, re: catalogue, 6-8
 Myers, William (2) to Charles Gordon, 1876, re: personal news, 6-9
 Myers, William (3) to George W. Gordon, 1878-1902, re: personal news, 6-9
 Myers, William (4) to Mary Le Conte, 1893-1896, re: personal news, 6-9
 Nesbet, Sallie to Mrs. Mary Le Conte, 1873, re: family news, 6-10
 Nisbet, Emmie D. to Sarah Weed, n.d., re: family news, 6-10
 Nully, Robert to William Bradshaw, 1822, re: business, 6-10
 Osborn, Ned to Wash Gordon, n.d., re: bail out of jail, 6-10
 Parr, J.F. (2) to Mr. T.W. Kitterell, 1868, re: lumber, 6-11
 Patterson, John to Stockholders of Decatur Land Company, 1920, re: sale of land of
 Decatur Land Company, 6-11
 Porter, James B. to William Bradshaw, 1842, re: business, 6-11
 Prescott, Arthur T. to Mrs. G.B. Morton, 1901, re: recommendation of her son, 6-11
 Prescott, Arthur T. to Dr. B.F. Turner, 1901, re: recommendation of Dr. Baxter Morton, 6-
 11
 Randolph, M.A. to General G.W. Gordon, 1857, re: her marriage to him, 6-11
 Rankin, Albert to W.B. Gordon, 1912, re: sale of farm, 6-11
 Rankin, Albert (2) to William Le Conte, 1902, re: rental of farm
 Rankin, W.R. (21) to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1874-1902, re: rental of her farm, 6-12
 Rankin, W.R. to Colonel W.B. Gordon, 1883, re: rental of sister's farm, 6-12
 Ransom, T. to Nimrod Porter, 1837, re: horse business, breeding, selling, 6-13
 Reeves, J.H. to C.C. Burke, 1868, re: settlement of an estate, 6-13
 Reynolds, Robert to Laura E. Erskine, 1910, re: his love for her, 6-13
 Richardson, E.L. to Major S.P. Dendy, 1903, re: lawsuit by Dr. Alexander Erskine, 6-13
 [Dendy, S.P. to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1903, re: letter from Richardson, (6-13)],
 6-13
 Rivers, R.L. (2) to William T. Avery, 1850, re: love Mary McNeill, 6-13

Roberts, W.C. to William Bradshaw, 1841, re: payment of a debt, 6-13
 Robinson, A.H. to Mary Le Conte, 1895, re: train tickets, 6-13
 Russell and Whitehead (3) to George W. Gordon, 1851, re: business, 7-1
 Rutherford, C.S. to Wm. Bradshaw, 1841, re: sale of land, 7-1
 Rutter, Thomas to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1892, re: buying of stock in Decatur Land Company, 7-1
 Sansom, Dick to Captain William Bradshaw, 1843, re: unpaid debt, 7-1
 Smith, Charles to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1867, re: sale of her land, 7-1
 Smith and Branham to Mrs. M.G. Le Conte, 1874, re: rental of her farm, 7-1
 Smith, Thos. J. to Willie _____, 1865, re: trip to Nashville and New Orleans, 7-1
 Stevens, J.P. to Mary Le Conte, 1867, re: photographs, 7-1
 Street, J.P. to G.W. Gordon, 1902, re: payment of old debt, 7-1
 Taylor, Sophia to Edward Taylor, 1843, re: family news, 7-2
 Todd, J.D. to William Bradshaw, 1839, re: personal news, 7-2
 Trezevant, N .M. to Chastie _____, 1880, re: death of her husband, 7-2
 Turgess, John D. to General Gordon, 185-, re: the death of General Gordon's wife, 7-2
 Van Buren, William to Dr. John H. Erskine, 1873, re: Dr. Erskine's professional opportunities in New York City, 7-2
 Walker, John C., *et al.* to G.W. Gordon, 1847, re: invitation to political meeting, 7-2
 Weed, Jodie E. (6) to Mrs. Mary G. Le Conte, 1868-1896, re: family news, 7-3
 Weed, Joseph E. to Mary Gordon Le Conte, 1868, re: family news; establishes birthdate of Joseph E. Weed (March 3, 1849), 7-3
 Weed, S.A. (17) to Mary B. Le Conte, n.d., re: family news, 7-4
 White, C.G. to Dr. Alexander Erskine, 1878, re: an invitation, 7-5
 Wilkerson, Katie (2) to Lou Erskine, 1878, re: family news, 7-5
 Williamson, Hooker to William Bradshaw, 1840, re: loan by Mr. Lorimer, 7-5
 Williamson, Hooker to Mr. Nimrod Porter, 1840, re: loan by Mr. Lorimer, 7-5
 Wilson, Mrs. E.A. to G.W. Gordon, 1886, re: right of way on land, 7-5
 Wilson, W.B. to Wm. Bradshaw, 1841, re: collection of money, 7-5
 Wilson, Mr. W.B. to Mary Gordon Le Conte, n.d., re: accompanying gift, 7-5
 Wilson, William *et al.* to Tennessee General Assembly, 1843, re: proposed change in boundary of Shelby County to which the signers were opposed, 7-5
 Wright, A. to George W. Gordon, 1844, re: buying land, 7-5

Correspondence – Miscellaneous, 7-6