



State of Tennessee
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Tennessee State Library and Archives
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**TALBOT-FENTRESS
FAMILY PAPERS
1817-1953**

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INTRODUCTION

The Talbot–Fentress Family Papers, 1817-1953, deals primarily with the family of James Fentress (1763-1843) of Montgomery and Hardeman Counties, Tennessee and Chicago, Illinois.

The Talbot–Fentress Family Papers were given to the Manuscript Division of the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. Fentress Ott of Chicago, Illinois.

Materials in this collection measure 1.26 linear feet. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Talbot–Fentress Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Talbot–Fentress Family Papers, containing approximately 230 items and nine volumes, span the period 1817-1953. Included in the collection are account books, clippings, correspondence, diaries and memoirs, genealogical data, legal documents, obituaries, photographs, printed materials, resolutions, sketches, writings, and miscellaneous items.

The collection is centered on the descendants of Colonel James Fentress (1763-1843) of Montgomery County, Tennessee, a Revolutionary War soldier, Legislator, Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives (1815-1823), friend of Andrew Jackson; his son David Fentress (1794-1855), pioneer and Legislator of Bolivar, Tennessee; and his grandson, James Fentress (1837-1903), Civil War soldier, planter, lawyer, Legislator, and delegate to the 1870 Tennessee Constitutional Convention; and his great-grandson Calvin Fentress (1879-1957), banker, investment counselor, and genealogist of Chicago, Illinois.

Included in the correspondence are seventeen letters written by James Fentress to his wife between 1860 - 1870 and eleven letters by Eli Talbot to his wife from 1817-1818. Persons mentioned include the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Baltimore, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Andrew Jackson, Light Horse Harry Lee, William Byrd, Abraham Lincoln, and Generals Polk, Pillow, Smith, and Buckner.

The diary included in the collection was kept by Sally Wendel Fentress for the period August 1863-February 1866. Among the persons mentioned are Gladstone, Lord Aberdeen, Generals Forrest, Lee, Sherman, Grant, and Johnston, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, John Wilkes Booth, Andrew Jackson, William Seward, E. M. Stanton and John C. Breckenridge.

Genealogical data is included for members of the Byrd, Cantrell, Charters, Farrar, Fields, Fentress, Henderson, Hughes, Lyon, Rice, Talbot, and Wendel families.

Photographs include a portrait of Delia Waters Talbot ca. 1840, Mary Tate Perkins Fentress (1842-1933), James Fentress (1837-1903), and six pictures of the Fentress Family Vault at Polk Cemetery in Hardeman County, Tennessee.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Fentress **(1763-1843)**

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1763 | February 16 – born in New Hanover County, North Carolina |
| 1779 | April – Joined Volunteer Light Cavalry under Colonel Diars |
| 1780 | Married Barbara Wells of New Hanover County, North Carolina |
| 1787 | Moved to Montgomery County, Tennessee, near Yellow Creek |
| 1800 | Became Justice of the Peace |
| 1807 | Barbara Wells Fentress died |
| 1809 | Entered the State House of Representatives, Tennessee General Assembly |
| 1810 | Married Ann Read of Montgomery County, Tennessee |
| 1815 | Became Speaker of the House, Tennessee General Assembly |
| 1817 | Ann Read Fentress died |
| 1823 | Retired as Speaker of the House
Fentress County created and named for James Fentress |
| 1836 | Presidential elector |
| 1843 | June 26 – died at home in Montgomery County, Tennessee |

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Fentress **(1837-1903)**

- 1837 July 27 – Born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee at the home of his grandfather, David Deaderick Wendel
- 1853 Entered University of Virginia
- 1858 Began practicing law at Bolivar (Hardeman County, Tennessee)
- 1859 August 22 – Married Mary Tate Perkins of Hardeman County, Tennessee
- 1861 Enlisted in Confederate Army as Captain of 4th Tennessee Infantry
- 1864 Transferred to Forrest's 7th Tennessee Cavalry
- 1870 Elected to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention
- 1871 Elected Judge of the Tenth Chancery Division
- 1876 Became counsel for Mississippi Central Railroad
- 1889 Moved to Chicago, Illinois; became Head of Legal Department, Illinois Central Railroad
- 1903 January 27 – Died at home in Chicago, Illinois

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Calvin Fentress

- 1879 May 22 – Born at Bolivar (Hardeman County, Tennessee)
- 1890 Moved to Chicago, Illinois
- 1897 Entered Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey
- 1903 January 14 – Married Pauline Stearns Lyon of Chicago, Illinois
- Treasurer and Director of Lyon, Gary Company
- Treasurer and Director of Chicago Tubing and Braiding Company
- Secretary Treasurer and Director of Bagdad Land and Lumber Company
- Treasurer of Lyons Cypress Lumber Company
- President of Consolidated Tidewater Pine Company
- President and Director of the Great Northern Lumber Company
- President of the Naval Stores Company of Florida
- President of Baker-Fentress Investment Company
- Founder of the Chicago Galleries Association
- 1957 Died in Chicago, Illinois

CONTAINER LIST

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4. Correspondence – Fentress, James
5. Correspondence – Hogue - Perkins
6. Correspondence – Talbot - Miscellaneous
7. Diaries, memoirs, etc. – Sally Wendel Fentress, 1863-1866
8. Diaries, memoirs, etc. – Memoirs – Mary Tate (Perkins) Fentress, 1913
9. Genealogical data – Bond family
10. Genealogical data – Cantrell, Carter, Deaderick, and Wendel families
11. Genealogical data – Deaderick family
12. Genealogical data – Fentress family
13. Genealogical data – Hill family

Box 2

1. Genealogical data – Lyon family
2. Genealogical data – Lyon, Kellogg, Rice, and Wade families
3. Genealogical data – Perkins family
4. Genealogical data – Searcy family
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7. Legal documents – Contract – Lyon family, 1878
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9. Obituaries – Lyon, Mrs. Harriet R., 1856-1936
10. Photographs, drawings, etc. – Photograph – Fentress, James
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14. Photographs, drawings, etc. – Photograph – Thompson, J. Walter
15. Printed materials – Documents – Tennessee Legislature, 1815
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17. Recipes – Mary T. Perkins
18. Resolutions – James Fentress, 1837-1903
19. Sketches – Biographical – James Fentress, 1763-1843
20. Sketches – Historical – Fentress County, Tennessee
21. Writings – Mary Fentress – “Life on a Southern Plantation”
22. Writings – Miscellaneous

NAME INDEX CORRESPONDENCE

This is a name index for the correspondence in the Talbot – Fentress Family Papers, together with dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The numbers in parentheses immediately following the name denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refers to the folder in which the material is to be found.

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Fentress, Calvin (3) to T. J. Wertenberges, 1932, re: autograph book of James Fentress donated to University of Virginia, 1-3
Fentress, James to Louisa Coleman, 1878, re: extending sympathy on death [of her husband]; enclosure of small sum of money, 1-4
Fentress, James (2) to Calvin Fentress, 1898, re: urging Calvin not to quit college and enlist in the Spanish – American War, 1-4
Fentress, James (17) to Mary Fentress, 1860-1870, re: Civil War letters; love letters; battles and campaigns; family news; opinions of General Polk and Pillow (August 31, 1861); request for return of slave named Elijah to act as cook; drunkenness of Colonel Neeley and promotion of Colonel Scott (November 11, 1861); death of Captain Pickett and Captain Cryder (November 11, 1861) illness and general lack of supplies described; Fort Donelson and Fort Henry (February 12 and 25, 1862); opinion of the war; Generals Buckner, Floyd, Pillow, and Smith at the fall of Fort Donelson; camp news; international response to the war (February 28, 1865); E. G. Coleman debt repaid; opinions of various churches in Bolivar, Tennessee (April 30, 1865); letter from the constitutional convention of 1870, 1-4
Hogue, A. R. to Calvin Fentress, 1940, re: thank you note, 1-5
Illinois Society, Sons of the American Revolution to Calvin Fentress, 1919, re: invitation to become a member of the S. A. R., 1-5
L'engle, E. J. to Calvin Fentress, 1930, re: search for will in North Carolina, 1-5
Miller, Mary (Talbot) Perkins (3) to Mary L. Farrar, n. d., re: Calvin's visit and telling him of his Perkins kinship; relating story of her marriages; personal news; area news, 1-5
Perkins, Mary Ridgeley (Talbot) to Delia Talbot, 1847, re: reports the death of her husband after a long and severe illness, 1-5
Talbot, Eli (11) to Delia Waters Talbot, 1817-1818, re: letters written on an extended business trip; travel news; road conditions; conduct of his slave; family news; business contacts; description of Pittsburg; love letters; the Boswell – Durand duel (April 30, 1818), 1-6