

Abiel Leonard and Odon Guitar Papers

This collection covers a large span of years and includes items related to the Abiel Leonard family and to Leonard's son-in-law Odon Guitar. Both were noted Missourians during the 19th century.

Descriptive Summary

Creators: Abiel Leonard
Odon Guitar
Title: Abiel Leonard and Odon Guitar papers
Dates: 1809-1959, bulk 1850-1890
Size: 3 boxes, 79 folders
Location: SC15-6

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Related collections in other repositories: Abiel Leonard papers (C1013), Odon Guitar collection (C1007), Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia, Mo.

Acquisition information: Unknown.

Citation note: Abiel Leonard and Odon Guitar papers (SC15-6), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

Abiel Leonard was born in Vermont on May 16, 1797 and died on March 28, 1863. He was a schoolteacher, lawyer, Missouri Supreme Court justice, landowner, and political figure in the early days of Missouri statehood. He came to Missouri in 1819 and settled in Franklin, located in the center of the state. In 1824 he was appointed the prosecuting attorney for the First Judicial District of Missouri and at this time he became involved in a duel with Taylor Berry who publicly humiliated him. Leonard killed Berry on the duel's first fire, thus demonstrating publicly his courage.

With a growing statewide law practice, Leonard became an active Whig politician and was elected to the Missouri state legislature in 1834. Shortly before this in 1833 Leonard and his wife Jeanette and family had moved to Fayette in Howard County. In 1855 he was appointed to a seat on the Missouri Supreme Court and served one two-year term. He was noted for having a great legal mind and an excellent understanding of the law. He did own slaves. The family home named Oakwood was built in 1835-36 and is still standing and on the National Register of Historic Places.

Odon Guitar was born on August 31, 1825 in Madison County, Kentucky and died in 1908. His father was a French emigrant. He moved with his family to Boone County, Missouri in 1827. He enrolled in the first session of the University of Missouri in 1842 and graduated 4 years later only to miss his graduation because of going to serve in the Mexican War with Alexander Doniphan. After

returning, he studied law with his uncle and was admitted to the bar. After a short venture to the California gold fields he settled down in Columbia, Missouri to practice law.

He served as a Whig in the General Assembly from 1854 to 1856 and from 1858 to 1860. Although he had at one time owned slaves, Guitar was a Unionist and during the Civil War he helped form the Ninth Cavalry Missouri State Militia attaining the rank of brigadier general. After the war he returned to his law practice serving at times as county and city attorney. In 1865 he married Kate the youngest daughter of Abiel and Jeanette Leonard. He retired from his law practice in 1882 but remained active in community affairs and business ventures.

Biographical information obtained from *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, c1999, edited by Lawrence O. Christensen, William E. Foley, Gary R. Kremer, and Kenneth H. Winn.

Scope and content note

Although this collection of papers has been placed in the Civil War special collections series, it actually covers a span of several years before and after the war and most of the items do not pertain directly to the Civil War. There are some things that do relate to Odon Guitar during his participation in the Civil War in Missouri. Those papers pertaining to Abiel Leonard primarily involve family matters and correspondence while the papers of Odon Guitar include these plus papers related to his profession as a lawyer. The collection is divided into: Group I – Miscellaneous items arranged by date; Group II – 26 photographs, mainly Guitar related; Group III – Publications, Correspondence, Legal papers, Miscellaneous in no special arrangement.

This collection contains a variety of items including correspondence, with the majority of it handwritten; legal documents both handwritten and printed including deeds, contracts and legislative bills; single issues of some primarily 19th century Missouri newspapers; photographs; certificates; reports; newspaper clippings; family records; pamphlets; manuscripts; receipts; and other miscellaneous items. The papers are directly related primarily to Abiel Leonard and to his son-in-law Odon Guitar with the majority of items being associated with Mr. Guitar.

The collection is not an all-inclusive set of papers but rather appears to be a portion of family papers. Both men were prominent in Missouri history and undoubtedly had large collections of papers. Many of the letters in SC 15-6 appear to be original, although some things are typewritten copies and typescripts. How the Kansas City Public Library acquired this collection is unknown at this time but it is presumed that some member of the family had in their possession these items and donated them directly to the library or they came by some other acquisition the library acquired over the years.

Of interest concerning Abiel Leonard is a handwritten duel contract between him and Taylor Berry (includes typescript) as well as the newspaper account of the duel. There are also a few letters between Leonard and his wife and brother as well as a copy of a speech by J.V.C. Karnes. Items of interest for Guitar include papers related to his California Gold Rush venture, French family correspondence, his Mexican War claim, and Civil War related things. Other Civil War related items include a Battle of Boonville cartoon, various papers in Group I between the dates 1860-1864, etc.

Arrangement Note

Organized into three groups: (1) Correspondence, certificates, clippings, documents, arranged by date, (2) Photographs, (3) Publications, correspondence, legal papers, miscellaneous

Collection Inventory**Group I – Correspondence, certificates, clippings, documents**

- **Folder 1** – 1814-1839, Swiss military certificate, correspondence both Guitar and Leonard families
- **Folder 2** – 1846-1848, Correspondence (including to A. Leonard), pension claim (Guitar)
- **Folder 3** – 1850, Correspondence, unsigned
- **Folder 4** – 1851, Correspondence, California, Guitar
- **Folder 5** – 1852-1855, Correspondence, A. Leonard and legal papers
- **Folder 6** – 1856-1859, Correspondence, Mexican War Claim document (Guitar)
- **Folder 7** – 1860-1861, Correspondence (mostly typewritten transcripts) - A. Leonard; legal papers; Battle of Booneville cartoon
- **Folder 8** – 1862-1863, Civil War related documents, orders, handwritten newspaper editorial
- **Folder 9** – Feb. - March, 1864, Correspondence, reports (Guitar)
- **Folder 10** – April - August, 1864
Photocopied newspaper clippings, General Orders No. 32 (Guitar)
- **Folder 11** – 1872, 1873-74, Correspondence, legal paper, certificate of election
- **Folder 12** – April - June, 1891, Correspondence primarily between Guitar and French descendents
- **Folder 13** – June, 1891 - 1899, Correspondence primarily to Odon Guitar, marriage invitation of Mary Guitar to Robert Alexander Brown, 1891
- **Folder 14** – 1901-1902, Correspondence, Guitar family members including Odon, Leonard, Abiel
- **Folder 15** – 1904-1905, Correspondence, Guitar family
- **Folder 16** – 1908, Correspondence, one letter addressed to R. P. Spencer from Leonard Everett law office
- **Folder 17** – 1918-1959, Military papers for Abiel Guitar, various certificates for family members, article correction letter to A. Leonard Guitar from Hugh P. Williamson
- **Folder 18** – Miscellaneous material, undated including some Guitar family correspondence
- **Folder 19** – 1928-1947, Photocopied newspaper clippings
- **Folder 20** – 1950-1958, Photocopied newspaper clippings
- **Folder 21** – Miscellaneous items including book pages and undated photocopied newspaper clippings
- **Folder 22** – “Brief Darby Family Record” manuscript, 5p.

Group II – Photographs

- **Folder 1** – 5 photographs, varying sizes, ca1890s–1950s, all of unidentified women
- **Folder 2** – 1 5x 7 mounted group photograph, ca1920s–1930s. People dressed in costumes and primarily identified by one name only. Includes the name “Guitar”

- **Folder 3** – 3 photographs, varying sizes, 19th century including portrait of 3 children, school pose, and group of adults posed outside
- **Folder 4** – 1 photograph, identified by processor as Mary Guitar, n.d., 4 x 5 1/2 mounted
- **Folder 5** – 5 photographs, all small with varying sizes, portraits and full length, all of Odon Guitar and some with wife Mary in wedding attire, includes Guitar in uniform
- **Folder 6** – 6 photographs, varying sizes, including Odon Guitar, Abiel Leonard, and other unidentified men from 20th century photographs
- **Folder 7** – 4 photographs of home at 417 North 9th St., St. Joseph, Mo., photo of a painting of a castle, and 2 postcard photos of Missouri Valley Trust Co., St. Joseph, Missouri
- **Folder 8** – 1 photograph, 3 ½ x 3 ½ mounted of unidentified residence, 19th century
- **Folder 9** – 48 star American Flag, 12” x 17”

Group III – Publications, correspondence, legal papers, miscellaneous

- **Folder 1** – Missouri Advocate newspaper, December 24, 1824, V.1, #1
- **Folder 2** – Missouri Intelligencer newspaper, September 18, 1824, V.6, #6 – Contains account of Abiel Leonard duel on p. 2. (See Folder 26 for duel contract and Folder 30)
- **Folder 3** – Pamphlet – Address Before the Alumni Association of the University of Missouri, By James H. Moss, Delivered on the Third of July, 1854. 1 c., 10 p.
- **Folder 4** – Pamphlet – Inaugural Address of Jno. Aug. Williams, A. M., President of Christian Female College, Delivered Before the Board of Trustees, At His Installation, In the Town of Columbia, Boone County, Missouri, April 7th, 1851. 1 c., 26 p.
- **Folder 5** – Pamphlet – In the Supreme Court, At St. Louis, Mo. – The State of Missouri, Versus Peter Ambs. Argument For Appellant., St. Louis, 1854, 1 c., 23 p.
- **Folder 6** – Newspaper, Weekly Missouri Statesman, Columbia, Mo., July 23, 1858, V.16, #29 – includes an article “Mr. Guitar–Instructions” and other mentions of Guitar on p.2.
- **Folder 7** – Pamphlet – Address Before the Alumni Association of the University of the State of Missouri, Delivered 3d July, 1856, by Odon Guitar, of Columbia. 20p. 2 c.
- **Folder 8** – Plat of Guitar’s Subdivision and Park Addition to the City of Columbia, 1 sheet, n.d.
- **Folder 9** – Statesman—Extra, 2 c., election returns for Boone County, one undated and the other dated 1852.
- **Folder 10** – Partial letter addressed to “Sir”, dated June 28th, 1824, from Franklin, Missouri. Name “Leonard” on address side.
- **Folder 11** – Manuscript – “Tom Platt’s Protégé. A Story by Franklin B. Darby”, 8 p., typewritten.
- **Folder 12** – One sheet flyer, “To the Republican Voters of Missouri....”, 1884, 2 c. – concerning Anti–Bourbon ticket.
- **Folder 13** – Short, typewritten biography of Odon Guitar, 3 p., n.d., ca1890s.
- **Folder 14** – Handwritten letter, Rocheport, June 22, 1863 to Genl O Guitar from M M Payne
- **Folder 15** – One page, various records of receipts, 1850s–60s
- **Folder 16** – One page letter to Abiel Leonard from his sister M Baily, Palestine, Mo., Dec. 8, n.d. Includes birth and death information in the family.
- **Folder 17** – Letter, Boonville, Christmas night, Dec., 1849, to my dear wife (Jeanette Leonard) from A.Leonard (Abiel Leonard)

- **Folder 18** – Promissory note, April 5, 1858, to Charles H. Hardin, from Horace Everett and A. Leonard
- **Folder 19** – Incomplete 2 p. letter, n.d., from Odon Guitar
- **Folder 20** – Two page deed, Feb. 15, 1870 between Charlotte Foalson and James P. Wade
- **Folder 21** – Letter, Fayette, April 3, 1839, to Jeanette E. Leonard from A. (Abiel) Leonard
- **Folder 22** – Letter, Camden Point Female Academy (Platte County, Mo.), Dec. 8, 1855, addressed to Mr. Guitar from W. B. Todd.
- **Folder 23** – Letter, typewritten, Guy C. Bixley, Columbia, Mo., Oct. 5, 1907. Concerns an address about Abiel Leonard by Judge J.V.C. Karnes before the Missouri Bar Association. (See Folder 38)
- **Folder 24** – Court papers, Boone County Circuit Court, April Term, 1877. Singleton vs. Jacobs, Parberry vs. Jacobs.
- **Folder 25** – General Orders No.3, handwritten, Macon, Headquarters District North Missouri, April 6th, 1864. Signed by O. Guitar.
- **Folder 26** – Duel contract or agreement, handwritten, July? 1824, Franklin (Duplicate), signed by A. L. Langham, T.J. Boggs, Taylor Berry. (Folder includes photocopy of agreement as well as a typescript and a newspaper account of duel, See Folder 2 for printed newspaper account of the duel between Abiel Leonard and Taylor Berry) See Also Folder 30.
- **Folder 27** – Handwritten letter addressed to “Mon Cher Oncle” and written in French. Signature unreadable, n.d.
- **Folder 28** – Letter, handwritten, Louisiana, Missouri, July 18, 1874 addressed to O. Guitar from R. H. Chute.
- **Folder 29** – Articles of agreement, handwritten, Feb. 28, 1850, between James M. Crosswhite of Boone County, James M. Gordon and Odon Guitar. Concerns Crosswhite agreeing to go to California with Guitar and staying with him for 18 months.
- **Folder 30** – Letter, handwritten, Franklin, June 26, 1824, addressed to Major Berry from A. Leonard requesting a personal interview. (Two were involved in a duel) See Also Folder 2 and 26.
- **Folder 31** – Printed copy of An Act introduced in the House by Mr. Rollins to establish an agricultural chair at the University of the state of Missouri [1856]
- **Folder 32** – Newspaper, The State Argus, July 22, 1858. Odon Guitar is mentioned, running for office.
- **Folder 33** – Handwritten, legal document, S.W. Warren vs. Wm. Cochran, dated Feb. 28, 1873?
- **Folder 34** – Handwritten, article of agreement between C.T. Worley and William H. Allen, August 28, 1873.
- **Folder 35** – Published Senate Act No. 15, January 24, 1855, to encourage education in the state.
- **Folder 36** – Letter, handwritten, to Odon Guitar from A.W.T. [Terrell], Aug. 23, 1845.
- **Folder 37** – Handwritten transcript on yellow legal paper entitled “The Capture of Colonel John H. Winston, C.S.A., March 24, 1864”. It states that it was copied from the St. Joseph Morning Herald found on microfilm at the St. Joseph Public Library. Includes a stamp “Sheridan A. Logan, Thursday Feb 27 1969.”
- **Folder 38** – Typewritten paper entitled “Mr. Karnes Tells of the Career of One of Its Greatest Members” which refers to Abiel Leonard. 2 c. (See Also Folder 23)
- **Folder 39** – Typewritten transcript entitled “From the Republican, Letter From Judge Leonard”, Fayette, May 13, 1861, 1p.
- **Folder 40** – Partial letter, handwritten, apparently addressed to Abiel Leonard at Fayette from his brother N.? Leonard, 1 p., July 7, no year.

- **Folder 41** – Letter, handwritten, Chillicothe, Ohio, November 30th, 1824, to Abiel Leonard at Franklin from his brother B. Leonard, 2 p. folded. He talks about their sister Margaret and her mental condition.
- **Folder 42** – Handwritten indenture record, Feb. 7, 1809, copied and date 1875. Also includes a letter accompanying the document and dated 1875.
- **Folder 43** – Handwritten legal document and printed document, U. S., Western District of Missouri, bankruptcy proceedings. Odon Guitar involved, 1875
- **Folder 44** – Handwritten deed, January 30th, 1873, J. H. Hill and W. S. Wood, Boone County, Missouri.
- **Folder 45** – Handwritten, legal document, 4th District Court, Calloway County, Missouri.
- **Folder 46** – Newspaper, Daily Ohio Statesman, January 16, 1845.
- **Folder 47** – Handwritten, 9th Annual Report of the estate of Abiel Leonard, January 1, 1905, by N. W. Leonard.
- **Folder 48** – Handwritten, contract between Bixby and Adams and Odon Guitar, June 20, 1862. Concerns building of house.

Processed by Special Collections Department Manager Gloria Maxwell, April 1992; further processing by Special Collections Librarian Sara Nyman, 2003.