

**A3020**

**Wilson Family Papers, 1841-1938**

13 folders

Processed by Gwyneth Henke, July 2013

**REPOSITORY**

Missouri History Museum Archives

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**DONOR INFORMATION**

Papers were donated by Ms. Melissa Politte in 2013.

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

David Wilson was born in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Virginia. He married Annie Vinyard and they had several children. One of their daughters, Martha, married Peter Politte. David Wilson moved his family from Virginia to Jefferson County, Missouri, in 1834. After the death of his wife in the 1840s and his wife's mother on November 16, 1844, Annie's father, Christian Vinyard, moved in with the Wilson family. Christian's son, Elisha Vinyard, was born in Kentucky and moved to Clay County, Missouri, and then to Oregon, where he had a successful farm, married, and had two children. David Wilson died in 1855. Martha's husband, Peter Politte, moved to California during the Gold Rush, but he failed to find any substantial wealth there, suffered from bad health, and died in 1864. David Wilson's brother Jonathan M. Wilson (born 1797) was a slave trader in New Orleans. His daughter Rachel married Elkanah D.W. Carper, a doctor who graduated from the University of Maryland's Medical School, and they lived together in Baltimore. Elkanah Carper died in April 1852 at New Castle, Virginia, at the age of 34.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Collection consists primarily of mid-nineteenth-century correspondence of the Wilson, Carper, Politte, and Vinyard families.

**Folder 1**

1841 Dec 22

Letter signed Elisha Vinyard, Clay County, Missouri, to his parents (addressed to Mr. Christian Vinyard, Avoca, Jefferson County, Missouri). Mentions his 11-day trip to Clay County and that he suffered with boils. Describes the family that he is staying with and gives his parents advice and good wishes for the new year.

**Folder 2**

1848 Feb 25

Letter signed Mary Carper, New Castle, [Virginia], to her brother. Discusses news of family and informs her brother of property available for him to buy in Virginia. Mentions Jonathan Wilson's success in New Orleans as a slave trader. Appended letter signed Elkanah D.W. Carper to his uncle mentions a letter received from Jonathan Wilson at White Sulfur Springs, Greenbrier County, Virginia, September 6, 1847.

**Folder 3**

1848 May 28

Letter signed J.M. Wilson [Jonathan M. Wilson], New Orleans, to "My dear Moses[?]" (envelope addressed to Miss Martha E. Wilson, care of David Wilson, Avoca, Jefferson County, Missouri, or to Vally Minds [Valles Mines]). Plans to visit in the fall and mentions his business. Asks after his sick brother David and mentions his daughter Rachel in Baltimore.

**Folder 4**

1848 Dec 8

Letter signed J.M. Wilson [Jonathan M. Wilson], New Orleans, to his brother. Says Elkanah Carper came home to New Castle with him and had married his daughter Rachel after six weeks, and Maserina Carper [Mazarin Carper or Mazarine Carper] is living with him now. Mentions visiting Zed and his family and requests that everyone write him more. Says he has 130 slaves at the moment.

**Folder 5**

1849 Apr 22

Letter signed S. Brill, Caledonia, [Missouri], to David Wilson. Advises "the old man . . . not to bring suit on the note." Mentions that he intends to move soon to Independence or Iowa.

**Folder 6**

1849 Nov 26

Letter signed F.A. McClanahan, Puebla De San Jose, to "Friend Wilson." Describes the perfect climate of the Sacramento Valley and encourages Wilson to join him there for its prime stock-raising opportunities. Reports prices and abundance of different commodities there (gold, produce, etc.). Complains of excess geese in the valley.

**Folder 7**

185- Aug 19

Letter signed Mary, Baltimore, to her sisters. Describes her life and family in her home far away from her sisters and asks after them and her family.

**Folder 8**

1852 June 3 Letter signed Jos.[Joseph] M. Magehan, St. Louis, to David Wilson, Glenfenlass [Glenfinlas, Jefferson County], Missouri. Mentions that he was recently at Cape Jorardo [Cape Girardeau] and that he has “sold the Copper Mines.” Says he was recently at Louis Polite’s [Louis Politte’s] home, and that he has moved to “4<sup>th</sup> street between Locust and St. Charles streets.” Asks for him to visit and to bring Sarah or Mary with him, and expresses his happiness at Sarah’s recovery.

**Folder 9**

1853[?] June 12 Letter [portion of letter including signature is missing], Placerville, California, to “Dear father and sisters.” Responds to their concerns about him by saying that he is sure there is still some gold left and that he will get it through hard work. He mentions that he and Mark Helms and Eli Helms are going to a new location to make their fortune, and he mentions George Vineyard [George Vinyard] staying “2 miles from Placerville.”

**Folder 10**

1853 Dec 19 Bond of James G. Crowe, dram shop keeper, Jefferson County. Bond of Crowe as principal and Isaac Hunt and Wilson P. Hunt as securities, stating that Crowe will not keep a disorderly house and that he will not sell liquor to slaves.

1854 June 11 Letter signed Peter Politte to his wife. Says that he has had “hard luck and bad health” and that he hasn’t received a letter from her for almost a year. Discusses plans for the future and describes some of the men he is working with.

1855 Nov 2 Letter signed Peter Politte to his wife. Informs his wife that he has been sick with blindness and fever since his last letter in June and has not been able to work. Mentions that he heard of his wife’s father’s death [David Wilson] in a letter from Mary. Says he is running low on money, and “if it is God’s will that I am never to see you and my little boy I pray that we may meet in the world to come.”

**Folder 11**

1855 Nov 10 Letter signed John W. [remainder of signature missing], Weaverville, Trinity County, California, to his sister Miss Mary J. Wilson, Hillsboro, Jefferson County, Missouri. States that he is extremely saddened to hear of their father’s death and wants to know the circumstances. Complains that they have not been writing him and requests that they do so soon. Inquires after a check he sent to his father before he died. Mentions Solomon Stong.

1856 Jan 13 Letter signed Mary to her sister Martha [Politte]. Discusses family news and tells the story of “uncle” almost being “killed by a crazy Negro” and breaking

his foot. Expresses her deep sadness to hear of Peter's bad health and says that she wrote him to come home immediately, as well as to William to bring Peter home. She asks Martha to ask cousin John to write to her and apologizes for the "hard feelings" between them and hopes he can forgive her. She sends her love to the whole family, especially grandpa and Tommy, and asks everyone to write.

- 1856[?] Mar 30 Letter signed J.M. Wilson [Jonathan M. Wilson] to Martha. Sends \$50 to pay the balance of the year and asks if John Wilson is with them. Wants to know the particulars of how the farm is running, and tells her that he broke his foot. Gives his love "to John and Mr. Vinyard and all the children."
- 1856 June 1 Letter signed Peter Politte, Fiddletown, Amador County, California, to his wife. Writes that he received her letter and is feeling better but wasn't able to work all winter. Says that he is coming home as soon as possible, and that he saw Mark and George. Wants to return, but writes that he'd "as soon die as to go back with nothing."
- Folder 12**  
1856 Aug 31 Letter signed Jos.[Joseph] M. Magehan, St. Louis, to Martha Polite [Martha Politte], Tyro Post Office, Jefferson County, Missouri. Requests that she check on two men he hired to work for him, and that she should tell him what she wants him to bring to her when he comes to visit soon.
- Folder 13**  
1866 Apr 30 Letter signed Wm.[William] Vinyard, Lynnville Post Office, Jasper County, Iowa, to his nephew. States that they have settled down and bought a frame house; describes the process of building it and the design of the house. Discusses building a well on the property and reports the prices of various products. Mentions that he must stop writing because he has to travel to Newton, the county seat, for a week-long teacher's institute.
- 1898 Jan 23 Letter signed Mrs. Charlotte Tooloose, Flucom, Missouri, to her granddaughter Miss Henrietta Tooloose. Discusses family news, and mentions that she missed her on Christmas and is glad that her Christmas went well.
- 1936 Nov 15 Letter signed Lin[?], 424 Ridge Building, Kansas City, Missouri, to his mother, Mrs. Ida M. Politte, Vineland, Missouri. Wishes that his mother would write him more often; describes his journey through the Smoky Mountains; and requests clothes or money to be sent. Asks after friends.
- 1938 May 27 Promissory note signed by Howard W. Politte and Donnell B. Dietrich with the American Bank of De Soto.
- No date Handwritten lyrics to "Mollie Darling."

No date

Fragment of handwritten verse.