

DeKalb History Center

Rowland/Steward Family Papers

Introduction: The Rowland/Steward Family Papers include correspondence and financial records of John Barnett Steward and his second wife, the former Martha Virginia Sanders Rowland.

Provenance: Gift of Mary Rowland Ivy, granddaughter of Martha Rowland Steward. Exact accession date is unknown.

Access: Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish materials from this collection must be requested from the archivist, DeKalb History Center. Citation should be as follows:

Description of specific item; Rowland/Steward Family Papers, DeKalb History Center Archives

Processed by Susan J. Illis, DHS Archivist, 1998.

Size: .15 linear feet (three folders)

Biographical Sketches of John Barnett Steward and Martha Rowland Steward: John Barnett Steward, a lifelong resident of DeKalb County, was born on January 16, 1833 to Elijah Greene and Annie Alford Steward. His paternal grandfather, Absalom Steward, was one of the five original justices on the inferior court of DeKalb County. Prior to the Civil War, Steward practiced law in Decatur. At the outbreak of the war, he joined the Confederate Army, attaining the rank of Colonel. Afterwards, he returned to practice law in DeKalb County, but also farmed and operated a grist and saw mill. From 1866-1867, he served as the Solicitor-General of the DeKalb County Court, and served three terms as Ordinary. At the time of his death, he was serving his first term in the lower house of the State legislature.

In 1858, he married Mary Jane Dean (1836-1886) and they had several children. After her death on January 22, 1886, he married Martha Virginia ("Jennie") Sanders Rowland, the widow of Samuel John Rowland (d.1884). A native of Opelika, Alabama, Rowland served with the LaGrange Light Guards during the war. The family moved to the Atlanta area sometime after the war, and after her husband's death in 1884, Jennie resided in Decatur. Her one surviving son, Henry Sanders Rowland (d.1943), worked at the Weekes Grocery Store in Decatur before becoming the first bookkeeper of the Coca-Cola Company. He later worked as manager of a tire and rubber company.

Description: The Rowland/Steward Family Papers include correspondence, financial records, and a memorandum book. Most of the correspondence is to Jennie Rowland Steward from her first husband, Samuel John Rowland, her sisters, Fannie Sanders and Belle Boykin, and her second husband, John B. Steward. There is also a small amount of correspondence from unidentified writers. S.J. Rowland wrote occasionally sentimental letters to his wife during his

service in the Civil War. Correspondence from family members contains general family news, as well as notes of condolence to Jennie on the death of her young child.

The correspondence from John B. Steward was written just prior to their marriage in 1886, and reveals the nature of their relationship. The financial materials include receipts and accounts held by the Stewards with Decatur merchants. Stationary for Rowland, Ansley and George, traders in dry goods, groceries, and general merchandise is included with the financial materials, as are receipts for county taxes paid in Gwinnett County by Robert M. Braden in the 1870's; the connection with the Rowland and Steward families is unknown. An incomplete memorandum book kept by Steward contains a few entries from 1867. Although small in size, this collection provides some insight into life in Decatur in the late nineteenth century.

Subject Headings

When possible, Library of Congress Subject Headings have been used.

Main Entry:

Steward, John Barnett (1833-1893).
Steward, Martha Sanders Rowland.

Subject/Added Entries:

Rowland, Samuel John (-1884).
Decatur, Ga.—Social Life and Customs.

Folder List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>
1	1	Correspondence	1844-1895
	2	Financial Records	1874-1893
	3	Memorandum Book	1867