

**The Filson Historical Society**

**Doniphan, George, 1790-1864  
Papers, 1814-1863**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections.

**Size of Collection:**

0.33 cubic feet

**Location Number:**

Ms. A D683

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**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of George Doniphan reflect the interests and attitudes of both Kentucky and Missouri's antebellum slave owning class. A planter and businessman of Augusta, Kentucky, Doniphan's viewpoints in both the state and national political arenas (as well as those of his Missouri relations and other associates), are documented in the collection. In addition, Doniphan's papers also touch on his interests in the wholesale grocery business, as well as the leather industry. Also present are papers which document his involvement in expanding the local road network to promote commerce.

Folders 1-5 contain correspondence, 1824-1863 and undated, which primarily concerns the business interests and political inclinations of George Doniphan, his relatives, and his associates. Correspondents include Thomas A. Marshall, Alexander William Doniphan, John Chambers, and Jesse R. Grant (father of Ulysses Grant).

Letters frequently contain political discourse with most correspondents expressing their allegiance to the Whig Party. Subjects discussed include the powers of the executive branch; the role of the federal government, especially in the protection of slave property; the colonization of Liberia by freedmen; poor voter turnout and the necessity of an enlightened electorate; the admission of Kansas; and the Democratic National Convention of 1860. A few letters also mention the service of George Doniphan's brother, Alexander William Doniphan, in the Mexican War.

In addition, a number of letters concern Doniphan's interests in the leather industry, particularly his trade with A. M. Taylor & Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio. Two letters from Jesse R. Grant concern mutual interests in leather production. There are also a few letters regarding Doniphan's partnership with Josias G. Smoot in the wholesale grocery business. A number of letters regard the settlement of accounts for Doniphan's business transactions.

Folder 6 contains business papers, 1850-1854. Papers primarily concern the activities of the Dutch Turnpike Road Company, which sought to construct a road through Augusta, Kentucky.

Folder 7 contains accounts and receipts, 1814-1858, regarding Doniphan's various business dealings.

Folder 8 contains essays and poetry. Essays concern the African race; the influx of new immigrants into the country; the importance of education for ministers; and secession.

Folder 9 contains miscellaneous materials, including an 1856 election ticket for the Democratic Party.

The collection consists of two accessions: 012z5 and 012z8. A portion of the collection has been transcribed.

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**Biographical Note**

George Doniphan, planter and businessman, was born in Virginia in 1790. Later immigrating to Augusta, Bracken County, Kentucky, Doniphan became a planter and slave owner. He was also involved in the wholesale grocery business under the name Doniphan & Smoot, as well as the leather industry, frequently trading with A. M. Taylor & Co. of Cincinnati. In 1821, Doniphan married Mary Ann Marshall, the sister of Kentucky politician Thomas A. Marshall. They had several children, including Joseph, William, and Margaret. George Doniphan died in 1864 and is buried in Augusta Hillside Cemetery.

George Doniphan's brother, Alexander William Doniphan (1808-1887), was a prominent figure in the history of Missouri. Alexander William Doniphan was an attorney, politician, and soldier. He was a hero of the Mexican War and remembered for his intervention to prevent the execution of Mormon leader Joseph Smith at the close of the 1838 Mormon War.

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**Folder List**

Box 1

- Folder 1: Correspondence, 1824-1834
- Folder 2: Correspondence, 1835-1845
- Folder 3: Correspondence, 1846-1855
- Folder 4: Correspondence, 1856-1863
- Folder 5: Correspondence, undated
- Folder 6: Business papers, 1850-1854
- Folder 7: Receipts, 1814-1858
- Folder 8: Writings & poetry, 1854-ca. 1860 & undated
- Folder 9: Miscellaneous, 1847-1856

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**Subject Headings**

African Americans – Colonization – Africa.  
Agriculture – Kentucky.  
Alcoholism – Kentucky.  
American Party.  
Antislavery movements – Kansas.  
A. M. Taylor & Co.  
Augusta (Ky.)  
Beatty, Adam, 1777-1858.  
Bracken County (Ky.)  
Brown, B. Gratz (Benjamin Gratz), 1826-1885.  
Business enterprises – Kentucky.  
Chambers, John, 1780-1852.  
Clergy – Education.  
Commerce – Kentucky.  
Conference Convention (1861 : Washington, D.C.)  
Courtship – Kentucky.  
Crittenden, John J. (John Jordan), 1787-1863.  
Death.  
Doniphan, Alexander William.  
Doniphan and Smoot.  
Doniphan family.  
Dutch Turnpike Road Company.  
Elections – Kentucky.  
Fairbanks, Calvin, 1816-1898.  
Federal Party (U.S.)  
Grant, Jesse Root, 1794-1873.  
Grocery trade – Kentucky.  
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845.  
Jackson, Claiborne Fox, 1806-1862.  
Kentucky – History – Civil War, 1861-1865.  
Kentucky – Politics and government – 1792-1865.  
Lawyers – Missouri.  
Leather industry and trade – Ohio River Valley.  
Marshall, Thomas A. (Thomas Alexander), 1794-1871.  
Mexican War, 1846-1848.  
Military pensions – United States – Revolution, 1775-1783.  
Missouri – Politics and government – 1861-1865.  
Payne, John.  
Phelps, John S. (John Smith), 1814-1886.

Poetry, Modern – 19th century.  
Polk, James K. (James Knox), 1795-1849.  
Presidents – United States – Election – 1856.  
Presidents – United States – Election – 1860.  
Railroads – Kentucky.  
Roads – Kentucky.  
Secession.  
Sectionalism (United States)  
Slavery – United States.  
Smoot, Josias G.  
States' rights (American politics)  
Taylor, Zachary, 1784-1850.  
Temperance – Kentucky.  
Trials (Murder) – United States.  
United States – Emigration and immigration.  
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865.  
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Destruction and pillage.  
United States – Politics and government – 1829-1837.  
United States – Politics and government – 1845-1849.  
Whig Party (U.S.)