

The Filson Historical Society

**Wait-Beaty family
Papers, 1782-1982 (bulk: 1814-1874)**

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

Size of Collection:
1 cubic foot

Locator number:
Mss. A W144

**Wait-Beatty family
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Biographical Note

Cyrenius Wait (1791-1868) was born in Chester, Massachusetts, in 1791 to Jonathan and Margaret Smith Wait. He and his brother, William Wait (b. 1797), left Massachusetts for Kentucky in 1818. William Wait documented this journey in the travel journal included in this collection.

Cyrenius Wait settled in Somerset, Pulaski County, Kentucky, and became a prominent landowner and businessman. At one time he reportedly owned more land than anyone else in the county—one assessment list shows he was paying taxes on 40,000 acres of land. Wait was involved in several business ventures throughout his life, most of which he cultivated on his many acres of land, including farming, coal mining, drilling salt wells for salt production, cultivating mulberry trees and silkworms for silk making, and pioneering the banking and insurance industries in Pulaski County. He also had several public and political roles, including serving as a senator in the Kentucky legislature in 1850, local justice of the peace in 1848, and state school commissioner for Pulaski and Casey counties in 1843. Wait was also involved in the railroad industry—the material in this collection shows how he worked to bring about the construction of a railroad through Pulaski County.

Although his sympathies seemed to have been with the Union during the Civil War, Wait enslaved many people.

Wait's first wife was Eliza Beatty and his second was Mary Jane Newell (1820-1898). He had six children by his second marriage: George Washington (1850-1907), John Quincy (1846-1901), Millard Fillmore (1856-1927), Benjamin Franklin (1852-1897), Henry Clay (1858-1900) ... and Margaret. By his first marriage he had a son who was remembered as "Webb" (which some speculate may be short for Daniel Webster). Wait had many connections throughout Kentucky and relatives in Aurora, Ohio.

Cyrenius Wait's last home was at the top of Wait's Hill in Somerset. He died in 1868 and is buried in the Wait Cemetery in Pulaski County.

A few alternative spellings of "Wait" crop up in the collection and in other resources. These include "Waite," "Waits," "Wates," etc.

Sources:

A History of Pulaski County, Kentucky (976.973 T552)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/17731805/cyrenius-wait>

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Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of material related to the Wait family of Pulaski County, Kentucky, most having to do with the personal and business pursuits of Cyrenius Wait (1791-1868).

Folders 1-6 contain miscellaneous correspondence. Folders 1-4 contain letters mostly written to Cyrenius Wait. Some letters are from family members and concern health, family news, and personal impressions of social and political matters. Others are from acquaintances or associates of Wait concerning business or trade, especially having to do with the railroad industry. Folder 5 contains funeral notices from the late 19th century. Folder 6 contains a copy and typed transcript of a 1782 letter from Colonel William Christain to Benjamin Harrison, Governor of Virginia, which shares news about altercations with Indigenous peoples.

Folder 7 contains William Wait's travel journal from the early 19th century, which records Wait's travels from his birthplace in Massachusetts to his and his brother Cyrenius's eventual home in Kentucky.

Folder 8 contains bills of sale/mortgage and hiring out agreements for enslaved people, dated 1820-1858. Most of the transactions recorded in these documents took place in Pulaski County and involved Cyrenius Wait. Over 30 people are named and/or described in these documents.

Folders 9-14 contain legal and business documents. Folders 9-12 contain surveys, sale documents, and deeds for land largely in Pulaski County, dated 1807-1856. Folder 13 contains legal documents related to railroad construction in Pulaski County, dated 1849-1874 and undated, most of which have to do with Cyrenius Wait's business pursuits.

Folder 15 contains reports and other material related to Pulaski County public schools, for which Cyrenius Wait served as commissioner.

Folder 16 contains an 1837 notice of a petition to form a new Kentucky county.

Folder 17 contains undated descriptions of the town of Waitsborough in Pulaski County, later spelled "Waitsboro."

Folders 18-20 contain documents related to 19th century military efforts. Folder 18 contains a muster roll for a volunteer company organized in Pulaski County in 1847, during the Mexican-American War. Folder 19 contains material from Civil War camps Ingram and Hoskins from 1861. Folder 20 contains a Civil War supply list from 1861 and a fort pass from 1862.

Folders 21-23 contain miscellaneous financial material dated 1810-1925.

Folder 24 contains printed copies of legislative bills and special orders for the state of Kentucky dated 1860-1865.

Folders 25-30 contain miscellaneous genealogical research material, publications, and newspaper clippings. Genealogical material in folders 25-27 concern mostly the Wait, Boone, Cunningham, and Beaty families.

Related Collections:

Wait-Beaty family photo collection (021PC50)

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Correspondence, 1814-1849
- Folder 2: Correspondence, 1850-1858
- Folder 3: Correspondence, 1860-1885
- Folder 4: Correspondence, 1905-1945 and n.d.
- Folder 5: Funeral notices, 1880-1900 and n.d.
- Folder 6: Letter copy and transcript, September 28, 1782
- Folder 7: William Wait travel journal, 1818-1825
- Folder 8: Bills of sale for enslaved people, 1820-1858
- Folder 9: Pulaski County land surveys, 1807-1865 and n.d.
- Folder 10: Pulaski County land sale documents, 1807-1856 and n.d.
- Folder 11: Kentucky Land Warrant Office deeds, 1806-1829
- Folder 12: Kentucky Land Warrant Office deeds, 1830-1840
- Folder 13: Legal documents related to railroad construction in Pulaski County, 1849-1874 and n.d.
- Folder 14: Miscellaneous Pulaski County legal documents, 1830-1867 and n.d.
- Folder 15: Reports of Pulaski County public schools, 1831-1854
- Folder 16: Notice of petition to form a new Kentucky county, October 4, 1837
- Folder 17: Descriptions of the town of Waitsborough, n.d.
- Folder 18: Muster roll for volunteer company organized in Pulaski County, 1847
- Folder 19: Material from Civil War camps Ingram and Hoskins, 1861
- Folder 20: Civil War fort pass and supply list, 1861-1862
- Folder 21: Miscellaneous financial material, 1810-1849
- Folder 22: Miscellaneous financial material, 1850-1859
- Folder 23: Miscellaneous financial material, 1860-1925 and n.d.
- Folder 24: Printed legislative bills and special orders for the state of Kentucky, 1860-1865
- Folder 25: Genealogy correspondence, 1963-1982 and n.d.
- Folder 26: Genealogy miscellaneous material, n.d.
- Folder 27: Daughters of the American Revolution applications, 1948-1961
- Folder 28: Miscellaneous publications and newspaper clippings, 1847-1977 and n.d.
- Folder 29: Courier Journal Cumberland County petroleum well article and correspondence, 1951
- Folder 30: Miscellaneous material, n.d.

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Subject Headings

Alcoholism.
Beaty family.
Boone family.
Cherokee Indians.
Coal mines and mining.
Counties – Kentucky – History.
Criminal procedure – Kentucky – Louisville.
Cunningham family.
Education – Kentucky.
Free African Americans – Illinois – History – 19th century.
Free African Americans – Kentucky – History – 19th century.
Illness.
Indians of North America.
Shawnee Indians.
Indigenous peoples – Kentucky.
Knights of Pythias.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865.
Mexican War, 1846-1848.
Military camps – Union – Kentucky.
Mingo Indians.
Music.
Ohio – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Religious aspects.
Oil well drilling.
Petroleum.
Public schools – Kentucky.
Pulaski County (Ky.)
Railroad companies.
Railroad land grants.
Railroads.
Religion – 19th century – Ohio.
Secession – Kentucky.
Secession – Tennessee.
Slavery – Economic aspects – Kentucky.
Slavery – Kentucky – History – 19th century.
Slaves – Emancipation – Kentucky.
Somerset (Ky.)
Steamboats.

Temperance.

Travel – United States – 19th century.

United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Battlefields.

United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Economic aspects.

United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Equipment and supplies.

Wabash Indians.

Wait family.

Wait, Cyrenius, 1791-1868.

Wait, William, b. 1797.

Waitsboro (Ky.)

World War, 1914-1918.

World War, 1939-1945.