

Brown, Joseph Emerson

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of
Alabama November 2009

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical/Historical note	3
Scope and Contents note	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	5
Collection Inventory	5

Summary Information

Repository:	University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama
Creator:	Brown, Joseph E. (Joseph Emerson), 1821-1894
Title:	Joseph Emerson Brown letters
ID:	MSS.0219
Date [inclusive]:	1857-1867
Physical Description:	0.05 Linear feet (25 items)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Letters from Brown, most of them to his friend and business associate General Ira R. Foster, Quartermaster General of the State of Georgia during the Civil War. Also contains copies of letters between Brown and Georgia politician Howell Cobb, regarding appointing Foster as a special railway postal agent for north Georgia and north Alabama.

Preferred Citation note

Joseph Emerson Brown letters, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical/Historical note

Joseph Emerson Brown was born in Pickens County, South Carolina, on 15 April 1821. He and his family moved to Union County, Georgia, when he was young. He left the farm in 1840 seeking an education. Trading a team of oxen for eight months of room and board, he attended an academy near Anderson, South Carolina. He moved to Canton, Georgia, in 1844, and served as the headmaster of the academy there. He went on to study law, and in 1847, opened a law office in Canton. He was elected to the Georgia state senate in 1849, and soon became a leader in the state Democratic Party. He was elected the state circuit court judge in 1855 and governor in 1857.

As governor, he diverted state railroad profits to Georgia's public schools, supported the expansion of women's rights, and was a strong supporter of secession after Lincoln's election and South Carolina's secession in 1860. However, once the Confederate States of America was established, Brown spoke out

against expansion of the powers of the Confederate central government, and denounced Jefferson Davis in particular. He even tried to stop Colonel Francis Bartow from taking Georgia troops of of the state to the First Battle of Bull Run. After the destruction of Atlanta, Brown withdrew the state's militia from the Confederate force to harvest crops for the state and the army. When General U.S. Sherman overran much of Georgia in his "March to the Sea" in 1864, Brown called for an end to the war.

After the war, Brown was held for a short time as a political prisoner in Washington, DC. He was chief justice of Georgia's Supreme Court from 1865 to 1870, when he resigned to become president of the Western and Atlantic Railroad. He supported President Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction policy, to the point of becoming a Republican "scalawag" for a short time. After Reconstruction, he became returned to his Democratic roots again and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1880 by the state legislature, according to the laws of the time. Soon after his election to the Senate, Brown became the first Georgia official to support public education for all children -- not a popular position at the time. He was re-elected in 1885, but retired in 1891 due to poor health. He died on 30 November 1894, in Atlanta, Georgia.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains twenty-five letters from Brown, most of them to his friend and business associate General Ira R. Foster, Quartermaster General of the State of Georgia during the Civil War. It also contains copies of two letters from Brown to Georgia politician Howell Cobb, and one from Cobb to Brown, regarding appointing Foster as a special railway postal agent for north Georgia and north Alabama. The bulk of the collection predates the Civil War.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama November 2009

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Revision Description

November 2012

Provenance

Gift of Clinton McGee

Processed by

Revised by Donnelly Lancaster Walton, November 2009; updated by Martha Bace, 2012

Conditions Governing Use note

None

Conditions Governing Access note

None

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Foster, Ira R., 1813-1885
- Business and Labor
- Correspondence
- Daily Life and Family
- Government, Law and Politics
- Governors--Georgia
- Southern States--Politics and government

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Joseph E. Brown letters	Box 2356
	Box 2356
	Folder 2

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Canton, Georgia, to General Ira R. Foster, June 30, 1857

Digital Object: [u0003_0000219_0000001](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, April 29, 1858

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000002](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, November 10, 1858

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000003](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, November 5, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000004](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, July 14, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000005](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to
Honorable Howell Cobb, February 15, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000006](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to
Honorable Howell Cobb, February 23, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000007](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, July 23, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000008](#)

Letter from Howell Cobb, Washington, City, to Joseph E. Brown,
February 19, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000009](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, May 7, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000010](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, March 24, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000011](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, October 17, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000012](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, October 29, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000013](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, September 15, 1859

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000014](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, June 9, 1861

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000015](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Canton Georgia, to General Ira R.
Foster, June 9, 1862

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000016](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, July 6, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000017](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, May 21, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000018](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, June 19, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000019](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Marietta Georgia, to General Ira R.
Foster, August 13, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000020](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, November 25, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000021](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, March 8, 1864

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000022](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, February 15, 1864

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000023](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, October 28, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000024](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Georgia, to General
Ira R. Foster, October 29, 1863

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000025](#)

Letter from Joseph E. Brown, Atlanta Georgia, to General Ira R.
Foster, October 7, 1867

[Digital Object: u0003_0000219_0000026](#)
