

MSS. Collection #17

John Hanner Family Papers, 1809-1912 [bulk 1850s-1880s]. 1 box (16 folders), 110 items.

INTRODUCTION

The John Hanner Family Papers primarily relate to Allen Armstrong Hanner, one of John Hanner's sons, and his nephew, John A. Young. Much of the material is of a financial nature, but the strength of the collection lies in specific items such as the Civil War letters and items relating to Greensboro Nurseries.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged into seven series by material type. The series are: **Correspondence, Minutes, Printed material, Financial documents, Genealogies, Miscellaneous and Books.**

Provenance: This collection was donated by Mrs. C. Johnson and Mr. F. Masters, both descendants of John Hanner, in 1982 and 1983. It includes accession numbers 1982.1089.1-6 and 1983.114.4.

Processing: This collection was organized by Karen C. Carroll, and the finding aid was completed in September 1983.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Hanner, born on October 4, 1777, was the son of Robert and Isabella Erwin Hanner. On September 4, 1801, he married **Anne Gillespie** (1780-1858), daughter of Colonel John and Elizabeth Armstrong Gillespie. The Hanners had a total of twelve children: Pleasant and an unnamed child died very young, Emsley survived only two years until 1804, and Melinda died in 1826 at age 17, but all the other children survived to adulthood. The Hanners lived on an 800-acre tract three miles southeast of Greensboro. Hanner farmed and by 1830 owned six slaves.

John Hanner was a well-known and well-respected citizen of Greensboro. He served as Clerk of the County Court and Register of Deeds from 1816 until 1832 when he was succeeded by his son Alfred. He was a friend and relative of the large Gillespie family, having married the daughter of Col. John Gillespie. In 1820 Hanner and Henry Humphrey were co-executors of the will of William C. Chapman. Hanner also performed many church duties in conjunction with Robert Donnell.

Hanner's affiliation with Buffalo Presbyterian Church was long and active. He and his wife were admitted to the church in August 1821. By 1825 he served as clerk and later as secretary of the congregation. In 1829 he and two other commissioners were appointed to auction the church pews at public sale. He later served as trustee to the church, and he and many members of his family are buried there.

John Hanner died intestate on January 11, 1850. At that time he owned over 600 acres including his home plantation on South Buffalo Creek and a tract in the Alamance area. The home plantation was awarded to his son Allen. His twelve slaves, valued at \$3,000, were divided

among the family members. Ann continued to live at the home place until her death in February 1858. Her will mentioned three slaves. She left to each of her five surviving children one bed and accessories; Allen and daughter Ann Eliza were to divide the remaining household furniture.

The Hanner's eldest daughter **Jane** was born in 1802. She married Joseph Armfield and died in 1848.

Alfred Emsley Hanner (1805-1836) was the eldest son of John and Anne Hanner and an active Greensboro lawyer. Raised on his father's farm, at age one he inherited 100 acres of adjoining land from his grandfather, John Gillespie. He was a contemporary of Ralph Gorrell II and was licensed to practice law in January 1828. He served as guardian to the children of Robert Gillespie and was also administrator of the William Swaim estate in 1835. He was a member of the Greensboro Library Society and of Buffalo Presbyterian Church. In 1832 he served as Clerk of the County Court and Register of Deeds. He was also a Colonel in the local militia unit.

Hanner, a long time friend of *Greensboro Patriot* editor William Swaim, owned the *Patriot* building located seven doors west of the Courthouse on what is today West Market Street (then West Street). In addition to serving as Swaim's administrator, Hanner continued to operate the *Patriot* after Swaim's death. In 1836 Hanner and C.N.B. Evans of Milton, North Carolina, bought the newspaper and operated it until 1837.

Alfred became engaged to Isabella McConnell. Family legend states that Isabella was originally engaged to Orpheus Hanner, brother to Alfred, but upon meeting Alfred changed her mind. Whatever the case, their engagement was broken by Alfred's death on August 26, 1836, at age 31. He died of "camp colic" (dysentery) while attending court at Wentworth (Rockingham County), North Carolina, and was buried in the Buffalo Cemetery.

John Gillespie Hanner was born July 6, 1806. He studied medicine with Dr. L. Watson of Greensboro and attended lectures at the University of Pennsylvania. By 1830 he was a practicing physician in Greensboro and later moved his practice to Randolph County. On October 6, 1840, he married Ann Palmer Goldston and they located one mile south of present day Siler City (Chatham County), North Carolina. They had three children. Hanner died on May 1, 1849, at age 43.

Orpheus Smiley Hanner (1810-1870) was a merchant and farmer. He married Margaret Elizabeth Goldston (1833-1910), sister to Ann Palmer Goldston Hanner. They settled in Chatham County on Margaret's home plantation, which Orpheus later owned. The couple had seven children.

Allen Armstrong Hanner was born March 13, 1813. He inherited his father's home place in 1850. He was also a supporter of Buffalo Presbyterian Church. Although he never married, at the death of his brother-in-law Robert Young he accepted guardianship of John A. Young, son of his sister Caroline. At Allen's death on November 25, 1886, he left his property to his nephew and this became the Greensboro Nursery Company tract.

Daniel James Hanner (1815-1901) married Susan E. A. Young (1829-1882) of Guilford County in 1849. He was a merchant in Graham, North Carolina, and later moved to Davidson County, where he established a Post Office at Hannersville and was a merchant and farmer. Daniel had seven children who survived to adulthood.

Ann Eliza Hanner (1820-1894) married William Tucker of Pleasant Garden (Guilford County), North Carolina, in 1859. They had two children.

Caroline Isabelle Hanner was born on July 7, 1823. In 1851 she married Robert Clelean Young (1827-1865) of Guilford County. They farmed the Young Plantation located six miles east of Greensboro; in 1860 Young's property was valued at \$8,600. The couple had three children, but only two survived to adulthood. In June 1861 Robert Young enlisted in the Confederate Army and served in Company F, 19th Regiment, North Carolina Troops (2nd Regiment, North Carolina Calvary). He returned home in 1865 but died on July 9 of that year. Caroline and the children were taken care of by her brother Allen. Her daughter Annie married Frank Starr of Guilford County and settled on the Young Plantation. John Allen Young inherited the Hanner homestead from his uncle and later established the Greensboro Nurseries Company. His mother Caroline died October 25, 1903.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The majority of items in this collection relate to Allen A. Hanner and his nephew John Allen Young. Although many items are financial in nature, several pieces of correspondence are also included. Two Civil War letters from Robert C. Young to his wife Caroline Hanner Young (February 16, 1862, from Fort Fisher and April 4, 1862, from Kinston) are long and newsworthy. They speak of home matters as well as military ones and provide excellent examples of phonetic spelling. Typescripts of these two letters are included in the folder. Another Civil War era item is the military authorization (November 14, 1865) from Greensboro for A.A. Hanner to hire a girl (probably black) for services.

Several items also relate to the Greensboro Nurseries, a business that John A. Young conducted on his grandfather's plantation east of Greensboro. Most other items concern general family matters and news – weather, crops, health, tax receipts, etc. Although the collection includes no photographs, original watercolors of the Hanner family have been documented and researched (see *Windows to the Past*, Greensboro Historical Museum, 1983).

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence. 22 items. 1849-1892.

This series includes a group of twelve letters from various salesmen to John A. Young reporting on sales of Greensboro Nurseries items (fruit trees, etc.) Most of the other letters are between family members and concern family matters. In particular, two Civil War-era letters are from Robert C. Young to his wife Caroline.

2. Minutes. 1 item. 1880.

These minutes are of the first church conference of the Holts Chapel and were taken in 1880 by John A. Young, Secretary.

3. Printed material. 10 items.

Nine of these items relate directly to Greensboro Nurseries, being calling cards, circulars for merchandise, etc. The tenth item was printed in New York in 1857 and is entitled "A Treatise on Self-Abuse.... Also Remarks on the Prevention of Conception...."

4. Financial documents. 65 items. 1829-1892.

This series includes the estate papers of Robert C. Young, John Hanner and Ann G. Hanner. Included in the Ann Hanner Estate file is a handwritten receipt signed by A.S. Porter and a copy (1857) of Ann's will.

Many of the documents are tax receipts: three for C.H. Young (1872, 1873, 1875), one (undated) for Ann Hanner, two for J.A. Young, and fourteen for Allen A. Hanner (1853-1883, scattered). Four of the latter are also written for Ann and one (1865) is a Confederate state tax income form.

The series also includes a small receipt notebook of Allen A. and Alfred E. Hanner as well as several unidentified receipt books. A ledger for A.E. Hanner (ca. 1831-1841) mainly contains expenses relating to the Hanner family and includes entries to the account of and in the hands of both Alfred and Orpheus Hanner. The ledger is indexed and in very good condition, but many pages are blank. Also included are several of the A.E. Hanner's law accounts.

Of special note in this series is a military authorization (November 14, 1865) for A.A. Hanner to be allowed to hire a girl (probably black) for services.

5. Genealogies. 2 items.

Included is a letter from W.C. Rankin, 1952, giving the relationship of the Hanner family to several other Guilford County families. Also included are three pages from the R.C. Young family Bible listing births, marriages and deaths and including birth dates of slaves.

6. Miscellaneous. 5 items. ca. 1836-1912.

The miscellaneous items include two 1836 Guilford County marriage certificates witnessed by Alfred E. Hanner; 1855 election results for the fifth congressional district; an advertising circular for Bell & Sons, New York; and a benefit ticket to a 1912 Greensboro Baseball Association game in Cone Athletic Park.

7. Books. 5 items.

The books include a New Testament that belonged to Melinda Hanner (1822); a *Familiar Spelling Book* that belonged to Caroline; a hymnal (fragment); a *Summary of Universal History* (1809); and a fragment of *Tales of the Days of Washington* that belonged to several prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland, during the Civil War. The book contains notes within it made by the prisoners.

FOLDER LISTING

| <u>Series</u> | <u>Folder</u> | <u>Contents</u> | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 1 | Correspondence | -- Robert C. and Caroline Hanner Young (1861-1862) |
| | 2 | “ | -- John A. Young (1876-1892) |
| | 3 | “ | -- O.S., A.A. and D.J. Hanner (1849-1870) |
| 2 | 1 | Minutes | -- Holts Chapel Conference (1880) |
| 3 | 1 | Printed Materials | -- Greensboro Nurseries (undated) |
| | 2 | “ | -- “A Treatise on Self-Abuse...” (1857) |
| 4 | 1 | Financial Documents | -- John Hanner Estate Records (1850-1858) |
| | 2 | “ | -- Ann Hanner Estate Records (1857-1859) |
| | 3 | “ | -- R.C. Young Estate Records (ca. 1860s) |
| | 4 | “ | -- O.S. Hanner and C.H. Young (1855-1856, 1873-1875) |
| | 5 | “ | -- John A. Young(1850-1892) |
| | 6 | “ | -- A.E. Hanner ledger (1829-1845) |
| | 7 | “ | -- Allen A. Hanner (1852-1887) |
| | 8 | “ | -- Other (1833-1869) |
| 5 | 1 | Genealogies | |
| 6 | 1 | Miscellaneous (ca. 1836-1912) | |
| 7 | -- | Books | |