

MSS. Collection #76

Sellars Family Papers, 1791-1945. 1½ boxes (85 folders), ca. 390 items.

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

The Sellars Family Papers primarily document the **financial** and **legal** transactions of a prominent **Randolph and Alamance County physician** named **Benjamin Abel Sellars**. In addition, some of the documents in the collection relate to B.A. Sellars' father **Thomas Sellars, Jr.**, and to his probable father-in-law, **David Kime**, both of whom were natives of Orange/Alamance County.

The collection may be useful to researchers interested in the **Company Shops/Burlington area** of Alamance County in the mid to late 19th century.

Significant accumulations of **Confederate bonds and currency** may be of interest to specialists in those areas.

Arrangement: The Sellars Family Papers are arranged into five series, and within series materials are arranged alphabetically. The five series are: **CSA imprints**, 1861; **Correspondence**, ca. 1850-ca. 1945; **Financial**, 1754-1869; **Legal**, 1791-1916; and **Printed**, 1849-1949.

Provenance: The Sellars Family Papers were donated by Mrs. Elizabeth Sellars Little of Greensboro in 1988, and accessioned under 1988.76.15.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid prepared by J. Timothy Cole, June 1996.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The focus of this collection is **Dr. Benjamin Abel Sellars** (1816-1896), the third generation of an important Alamance County family. His grandfather, **Thomas Sellars, Sr.** (1740?- ?), is known to have settled in Alamance by the 1760s. His father, **Thomas Sellars, Jr.** (1782-1865), was a **wealthy cotton planter** in both **Orange and Alamance Counties**. He is said to have owned as many as 100 slaves. Dr. Sellars' mother was **Nancy Rainey Sellars** (1795-1881).

B.A. Sellars attended **medical school** at the **University of Pennsylvania** where he graduated in 1844. He moved to Randolph County to practice medicine, and eventually he met and married (ca. 1850) **Frusannah Elizabeth Kime** (1833-1922). Dr. Sellars also practiced in Guilford County.

In the early 1870s, Dr. Sellars moved his family to **Company Shops, NC** (present-day Burlington). There he built a store where he sold primarily drugs, but also hardware, groceries,

seeds and piece goods. The enterprise still existed as a department store in the early 1980s, though not at the original location on Front Street. Sellars was influential in changing the name Company Shops to Burlington.

The name **David Kime** (? -1850?) also figures prominently in the collection. This was a **prominent German name** in the Orange/Alamance County area in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Kimes apparently settled initially in the Alamance Creek area. While nothing is known of David Kime, it seems likely that he was the father of Dr. Sellars' wife, Frusannah Elizabeth Kime.

Biographical Sources: An excellent biographical source for Dr. Benjamin Abel Sellars and his family is Elinor Samons Euliss, *Alamance County: The Legacy of Its People and Places*, Greensboro, NC: Legacy Publications, 1984, pp. 386-87. The German name Kime is referred to in Walter Whitaker's *Centennial History of Alamance, 1849-1949*, Burlington, NC: Alamance County Historical Association, 1974, p. 14.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

Types of materials in this collection include **account books, CSA imprints, correspondence, receipts, envelopes** (i.e., postal covers), **Confederate bonds and currency, 18th century NC currency, deeds, contracts, estate inventories, tax receipts, court orders** and **various other legal documents, broadsides, circulars, certificates, clippings, ration books and postal cards.**

Much of the material in the collection relates to **business and legal matters** concerning Dr. B.A. Sellars. His business correspondence can be found in 2:1-3,6-9,14,17-18. The letter (1874) in folder 2:18 is notable for a description of conditions in **Missouri** following the **Panic of 1873**. Financial and legal documents in the collection also shed light upon Dr. Sellars' businesses and investments (see 3:12; 4:1,5,7,9,13,20). For example, folders 3:12 and 4:7 contain materials which relate to the **North Carolina Railroad**, and folders 4:1,5 pertain to **Falls of Neuse Manufacturing Company**. Materials relating to the financial transactions of Dr. Sellars' father, **Thomas Sellars, Jr.**, can be found in folders 4:10,11 and 3:10; and similar materials relating to his likely father-in-law, **David Kime**, are located in 4:6,19 and 3:6.

Researchers will find an 1861 **Confederate imprint** (unrecorded in T. Michael Parrish and Robert M. Willingham, *Confederate Imprints: A Bibliography of Southern Publications from Secession to Surrender*, Austin, TX: Jenkins Publishing Co., nd) in folder 1:1. This item, essentially a form letter issued by the CSA's **Post Office Dept. Appointment Bureau**, apparently accompanied a commission. Accumulations of Confederate bonds and currency will be found in 3:2 and 3:3. In addition, some **middle 18th century North Carolina currency** can be found in 3:4; this folder includes a \$10 note (1778) from the press of **James Davis**, North Carolina's first printer and some examples of proclamation money.

An interesting **slave document** (1846) is located in 4:2. It concerns the hire of a negro slave named Fanny for a nine month period. There are also a few **World War II** materials in the collection, including: a ca. 1945 **application for a mileage ration** supplement (5:1); a collection of ca. 1945 **ration books** (5:20); and a letter written on a fine illustrated letterhead for **Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base** (2:5).

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Confederate States of America imprints. 1 folder (1 item). 1861.

This one item series (1:1) consists of a form letter from the **Appointment Bureau of the CSA's Post Office Dept.** which apparently accompanied a forwarded commission in the postal service. It is signed by the Chief of the Appointment Bureau, **B.N. Clements**, and dated July 31, 1861. This item is not listed in Parrish and Willingham.

2. Correspondence. 18 folders (ca. 40 items). ca. 1850-ca. 1945.

Much of this series consists of late 19th century **business correspondence** with Dr. Sellars (2:1-3,6-9,14,17-18). One interesting letter in this group (2:18), from a Missouri correspondent named **Thomas Stafford**, describes conditions following the Panic of 1873.

Also found in this series is an 1869 letter (2:13) from **L.P. Olds**, NC Attorney General, which refers to constitutional arguments before the Supreme Court; and an 1865 letter (2:19) addressed to **Gov. W.W. Holden** from **Joel F. Trogdon (?)** in which the latter resigns as Justice of the Peace in Randolph County. Folder 2:5 contains a letter (ca. 1945) signed simply David, written on a very fine **Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base** letterhead.

3. Financial. 5 folders (ca. 235 items). 1754-1869.

The thirteen **CSA bonds** in folder 3:2 vary in value from 50 to 1000 dollars; all have been clipped. One includes a picturesque view of the **City of Richmond, Va.** Folder 3:3 includes about 150 **CSA currency** notes ranging in value from 10 cents to 100 dollars. Most are North Carolina notes and a few are associated with the **Greensboro Mutual Life and Trust Company**.

Some examples of **early North Carolina currency** can be found in 3:4. Included is **proclamation money** as well as a 10 dollar note (1778) bearing the imprint of **James Davis**, North Carolina's first printer. Several manuscript receipts can be found in the series, including some from the 1850s associated with the **Greensborough Patriot** (3:5) and **W.C. Porter** (3:8). There are also large groups of 19th century manuscript receipts issued to Dr. Sellars (3:9) and David Kime (3:6).

Finally, the series includes documents relating to stock transfers for the **Deep River Manufacturing Company** (3:11) and the **North Carolina Railroad Company** (3:12).

4. Legal. 21 folders (ca. 50 items). 1791-1916.

The legal series includes an interesting **1846 slave document** (4:2) relating to the hire of a **negro slave named Fanny** for nine months.

There are also several deeds (4:4-11) in the series, dated 1800 through 1885, which concern properties in Orange, Alamance, Guilford and Randolph counties. The deed in folder 4:8 bears the signature of **Gov. Edward Dudley**; **Gov. Thomas Bragg** signed the deed in 4:10.

The document in 4:16 is an early eviction notice which orders a certain **Polly Staley** to relinquish possession of lands belonging to Dr. Sellars. The crudely written will (1916) in 4:21

is unsigned and appears to be unfinished. Folder 4:12 includes a detailed inventory of the estate of Dr. Sellars.

5. Printed. 32 folders (60 items). 1849-1949.

Folder 5:3 contains a stock certificate (1849) for the **Deep River Manufacturing Company** of Randolph County. Several ca. 1880 printed postal cards for the **National Bank of Greensboro** can be found in 5:19. A collection of **World War II ration books** in a leatherette pouch is located in 5:20.

A printed envelope (ca. 1890) for the **B.A. Sellars Co.** can be found in 5:15. Folder 5:17 consists of a memo book with **advertising for drugs** of the period ca. 1885. The back cover reads, "Dr. B.A. Sellars, Druggist, Company Shops, NC."

Printed CSA receipts can be found in 5:22-23. The series also includes ca. 1880 printed receipts for the National Bank of Greensboro (5:26), a ca. 1885 receipt for **Piedmont Air Line Railway** (5:27), an 1886 receipt for the **Richmond & Danville Railroad** (5:29), and ca. 1880 receipts for the **Southern Express Company** (5:30). Folder 5:32 holds several **wooden nickels** issued during the **Alamance County centennial observances** in 1949.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	CSA imprints – Corresp. – Postal appointment (1861)
2	1	Corresp. – Brower and Picket (Liberty, NC) (1886)
	2	Corresp. – Burgess, J.C. (1877)
	3	Corresp. – Chambers, P.E. (1886)
	4	Corresp. – Covers – Misc. (ca. 1880-1915)
	5	Corresp. – David (ca. 1945)
	6	Corresp. – Fonville, D.R. (1919)
	7	Corresp. – Fox, W.A. (1874)
	8	Corresp. – Gallega Mills Manuf. Co. (1885)
	9	Corresp. – Hendricks, G.G. (1894)
	10	Corresp. – Lanier, L.L. (1885)
	11	Corresp. – Misc. (ca. 1850)
	12	Corresp. – Moffitt, E.A. (1888)
	13	Corresp. – Olds, L.P. (1869)
	14	Corresp. – Rosenthal, G. (1879-81)
	15	Corresp. – Ross, R.R. (1893)
	16	Corresp. – Sellars, D.E. (1881)
2	17	Corresp. – Smith, M.A. (1862?)
	18	Corresp. – Stafford, Thomas (1874)
	19	Corresp. – Trogdon(?), Joel F. (1865)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
3	1	Financial – Account books (ca. 1850-70)
	2	Financial – Confederate bonds (1862-63)
	3	Financial – Confederate currency (1861-64)
	4	Financial – Currency (1754-73)
	5	Financial – Receipts – <i>Greensborough Patriot</i> (1850-57)
	6	Financial – Receipts – Kime, David (1814-50)
	7	Financial – Receipts – Misc. (1814-60)
	8	Financial – Receipts – Porter, W.C. (1857-59)
	9	Financial – Receipts – Sellars, Benjamin A. (1850-92)
	10	Financial – Receipts – Sellars, Thomas (1857-61)
	11	Financial – Stock transfers – Deep River Manuf. Co. (1850)
	12	Financial – Stock transfers – NC Railroad Co. (1869)
4	1	Legal – Contracts – Falls of Neuse Manuf. Co. (1876)
	2	Legal – Contracts – “hire a negro slave” (1846)
	3	Legal – Court orders – Randolph County (1854)
	4	Legal – Deeds – Barton, William (1805)
	5	Legal – Deeds – Falls of Neuse Manuf. Co. (1876)
	6	Legal – Deeds – Kime, David (1844)
	7	Legal – Deeds – NC Railroad Company (1884)
	8	Legal – Deeds – Pugh, Thomas (1836)
	9	Legal – Deeds – Sellars, B.A. (1869)
	10	Legal – Deeds – Sellars, Thomas (1856)
	11	Legal – Deeds – Sellars, Thomas (1800)
	12	Legal – Estate inventories – Sellars, B.A. (1896-99)
	13	Legal – Licenses – Merchandising (1886)
	14	Legal – Misc. (1791-1817)
	15	Legal – Notices to defendants (1864)
	16	Legal – Notices of eviction (1863)
	17	Legal – Subpoenas (1871)
	18	Legal – Summonses (1817)
	19	Legal – Tax receipts (1791-1850)
	20	Legal – Tax receipts (1841-78)
	21	Legal – Wills (1916)
5	1	Printed – Applications – Mileage ration supplement (ca. 1945)
	2	Printed – Broadsides – Watkins, Cottrell & Co. (ca. 1890)
	3	Printed – Certificates – Deep River Manuf. Co. (1849)
	4	Printed – Circulars – Stewart, Ralph & Co. (1884)
	5	Printed – Clippings (1856)
	6	Printed – Engravings – Moffat, John (ca. 1880)
	7	Printed – Envelopes – Falls of Neuse Manuf. Co. (ca. 1885)
	8	Printed – Envelopes – Greene, Lindley & Bentley (ca. 1885)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
5	9	Printed – Envelopes – Griffin & Bynum (Liberty, NC) (ca. 1897)
	10	Printed – Envelopes – Holt & Moore (Burlington?) (ca. 1885)
	11	Printed – Envelopes – Littleton Female College (1896)
	12	Printed – Envelopes – Misc. (ca. 1880-1917)
	13	Printed – Envelopes – Page, A.F. (Cary, NC) (ca. 1885)
	14	Printed – Envelopes – Randolph County Sheriff (ca. 1890)
	15	Printed – Envelopes – Sellars, B.A. & Sons, Inc. (ca. 1890)
	16	Printed – Envelopes – Southern Railway (ca. 1890)
	17	Printed – Memo book (ca. 1885)
	18	Printed – Postal cards – Misc. (1892-1919)
	19	Printed – Postal cards – National Bank of Greensboro (1879-81)
	20	Printed – Ration books (ca. 1945)
	21	Printed – Receipts – Carolina Coffin Factory (1886)
	22	Printed – Receipts – CSA bonds (1864)
	23	Printed – Receipts – CSA postal service (1862-63)
	24	Printed – Receipts – Gullett, Robert (Greensboro) (1881)
	25	Printed – Receipts – Misc. (1849-86)
	26	Printed – Receipts – National Bank of Greensboro (1879-80)
	27	Printed – Receipts – Piedmont Air Line Railway (1885?)
	28	Printed – Receipts – Postmaster (Salisbury) (1862)
	29	Printed – Receipts – Richmond & Danville Railroad (1886)
	30	Printed – Receipts – Southern Express Co. (1879-80)
	31	Printed – Receipts – US Post Office (1858-67)
	32	Printed – Wooden nickels – Alamance County (1949)

Index to the Sellars Family Papers (1791-1945)

Note: The numbers following the name/subject entry -- e.g. 1:1 -- indicate in which Series#:Folder# (or, if no ":", Series only) that name/topic can be found. Dates of the items are given in parentheses for an individual Series/Folder or, if at the end, for the entire subject/name entry. The abbreviation GSO indicates a Greensboro association.

Advertising: drugs, 5:17 (ca. 1885)
Alamance County, NC: wooden nickels, 5:32 (1949)

Barton, William: 4:4 (1805)
Bragg, Gov. Thomas: 4:10 (1856)
Brower and Pickett (Liberty, NC): 2:1 (1886)
Burgess, J.C.: 2:2 (1877)
Burlington (NC)
Business letters: 2:1-3,6-9,14,17-18 (1862?-1919)

Carolina Coffin Factory (Company Shops, NC): 5:21 (1886)
Chambers, P.E.: 2:3 (1886)
Clements, B.N.: 1:1 (1861)
Colonial currency: 3:4 (1754-73)
Company Shops (NC)
Confederate States of America: bonds, 3:2 (1862-63), 5:22 (1864); currency, (1861-64);
imprints, 1:1 (1861); postal service, 5:23 (1862-63)

Davis, James: 3:4 (1778)
Deep River Manf. Co.: 3:11; 5:3 (1849-50)
Dudley, Gov. Edward: 4:8 (1836)

Factories: North Carolina, 2:8; 3:11; 4:1,5; 5:3,7,21 (1849-86)
Falls of the Neuse Manf. Co.: 4:1,5; 5:7 (1876-ca. 1885)
Fonville, D.R.: 2:6 (1919)
Fox, W.A.: 2:7 (1874)

Gallega Mills Manf. Co.: 2:8 (1885)
Greene, Lindley & Bentley: 5:8 (ca. 1885)
Greensboro Mutual Life and Trust Company: 3:3 (1862)
Greensborough Patriot: 3:5 (1850-57)
Griffin & Bynum (Liberty, NC): 5:9 (1897)
Gullett, Robert (GSO): 5:24 (1881)

Hendricks, G.G.: 2:9 (1894)
Holden, Gov. W.W.: letter to, 2:19 (1865)
Holt & Moore (Burlington?): 5:10 (ca. 1885)

Kime, David: 3:6; 4:6 (1814-50)

Lanier, L.L.: 2:10 (1885)

Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base: 2:5 (ca. 1945)

Legal documents: defendant notices, 4:15 (1864); eviction notices, 4:16 (186 subpoenas,
4:17 (1871); summonses, 4:18 (1817); tax receipts, 4:19-20 (1791-1878)

Littleton Female College (Littleton, NC): 5:11 (1896)

Missouri: Economic conditions, 2:18 (1874)

Moffat, John: 5:6 (ca. 1880)

Moffitt, E.A.: 2:12 (1888)

National Bank of Greensboro: 5:19,26 (1879-81)

North Carolina: Currency,3:4 (1754-78)

North Carolina Railroad Company: 3:12; 4:7 (1869)

Olds, L.P.: 2:13 (1869)

Page, A.F. (Cary, NC): 5:13 (ca. 1885)

Physicians: North Carolina

Piedmont Air Line Railway: 5:27 (1885?)

Porter, William Clark: 3:8 (1857-59)

Proclamation money: 3:4 (1754-71)

Pugh, Thomas: 4:8 (1836)

Railroads: North Carolina, 3:12; 4:7; 5:16,27,29 (1869-90)

Randolph County, NC: 4:3; 5:14 (1854-ca. 1890)

Richmond (Va.), illustration of: 3:2 (1863)

Richmond & Danville Railroad: 5:29 (1886)

Rosenthal, G.: 2:14 (1879-81)

Ross, R.R.: 2:15 (1893)

Sellars, Benjamin A.: 3:9; 4:9,12 (1850-99)

Sellars, D.E.: 2:16 (1881)

Sellars, Thomas, Sr.: 4:11 (1800)

Sellars, Thomas, Jr.: 3:10; 4:10 (1856-61)

Sellars, B.A. & Sons, Inc.: 5:15 (ca. 1890)

Slavery: 4:2 (1846)

Smith, M.A.: 2:17 (1862?)

Southern Express Company: 5:30 (1879-80)

Southern Railway: 5:16 (ca. 1890)

Stafford, Thomas: 2:18 (1874)

Trogdon (?), Joel F.: 2:19 (1865)

US Post Office: 5:31 (1858-67)

Watkins, Cottrell & Co.: 5:2 (ca. 1890)

Wills: 4:21 (1916)

World War II: mileage ration supplement, 5:1 (ca. 1945); ration books, 5:20 (ca. 1945)