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ANTEBELLUM MISSOURI, SLAVERY & MILITIA MOBILIZATION ARCHIVE (1857–1859)

Featuring the B. T. Thompson Diary, Pro-Slavery Resolutions, Enslaved Resistance Documents, and Regional Correspondence from Saline County ("Little Dixie")

Price: \$8500.00 (*Terms: Net 30/60*)

Overview:

A tightly focused, primary antebellum manuscript collection documenting pro-slavery paramilitary organization, extrajudicial mob action, and enslaved resistance in Missouri's "Little Dixie" region on the immediate eve of the Civil War.

The centerpiece of the archive are four crucial, directly related manuscript items and research ephemera:

Documented Enslaved Resistance (June 8, 1858): Autograph legal draft by prominent pro-slavery leader **J. Locke Hardeman** detailing an enslaved teenager named Nelson who became "*disobedient mutinous & disposed to make his escape to a free country,*" prompting his sale and estate indemnity.

Paramilitary & Slave Patrol Resolutions (c. July 1859): Original manuscript resolutions drafted by Saline County citizens mandating a county-wide active slave patrol and volunteer military company, directly tying into diary entries recording a 1,000-person mob in Marshall, MO.

Sectional Correspondence (Oct 23, 1857): Autograph letter from Dr. Benjamin Trigg detailing severe epidemic illness in Holt County alongside anti-abolitionist commentary ("*there are more abolitionists up here than white men*").

Historical Research Slips: Contemporary bibliographical slips linking the archive to local figures including Judge William Barclay Napton and Nathaniel Beverley Tucker.

Original Manuscript Journal/Diary: Written in dark ink kept by Saline County schoolteacher and resident B. T. Thompson. The volume documents in 135 entries daily agricultural operations, slave labor, local events, and pivotal political occurrences, headlined on pages 114–116 by a graphic account of intense extrajudicial mob actions, lynchings, and slave patrol movements in Marshall, MO, during July 1859.

SELECTED JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Major Missouri Art History (George Caleb Bingham) (Entry 42 / p. 43, Feb 3, 1859): Direct Feb 3, 1859 mention of "George Bingham" the "Missouri Artist" returning from Europe with completed state portrait commissions of Washington and Jefferson for the State Capitol in Jefferson City.

Coded Secret Script / Cryptography (Multiple Entries, e.g., Entries 45, 117, 118 / pp. 44, 112, 113): Features recurring instances of a complex substitution cipher utilizing mathematical, astronomical, and custom symbols inserted at the end of daily entries. Includes a massive 5-line encrypted block on July 11, 1859, immediately followed by the diarist's remark: "I am not done yet either; I intend to continue it."

Mob Law & Extrajudicial Violence Record (Entry 119 / p. 114, July 18, 1859): A graphic, step-by-step eyewitness account recording a local assault accusation involving an enslaved person ("a negro belonging to Dr Price"), young children gathering blackberries near Slough Creek, the lynching of an enslaved teenager ("Henderson") in Arrow Rock, and a reported mass mob action in Marshall, Missouri ("3 hung and one burnt within 12 hours").

Sectional Tensions & Antebellum Fear of Slave Insurrection (Entry 121 / p. 116, July 20, 1859): Thompson explicitly reflects on slave management, fears of future violence ("we will, before many years, have much trouble with them"), and accuses outside agitators of "inciting them to insubordination!" on the eve of the Civil War.

Uncensored Antebellum Education Rant & Wages (Entries 2 & 88 / pp. 1, 85–86, Sept 14, 1858 & May 27, 1859): Details on teaching at School District No. 1, class sizes (25 students), and pay negotiations (a \$5/month raise), alongside an extraordinary, angry 2-page tirade on frontier attitudes toward public schooling, state/county orphan funds, low teacher wages, and "stingy" Missouri parents ("D—n their stingy souls, they may go to hell...").

Local Missouri Commerce & Town Life (Entry 1 / p. 1, Sept 13, 1858): References to Arrow Rock, Missouri, traveling circuits (Satterlee & Bell's Circus), and local social societies.

19th-Century Reform Movements (Entries 3–6 / pp. 1–2, Sept 15–19, 1858): Lengthy firsthand commentary on itinerant temperance preacher "Billy Ross" and local temperance lodge investments.

Social Life, Vice & Saloon Culture (Entries 44, 45 & 54 / p. 44, Feb 5–6, 1859; p. 50, Mar 3, 1859): Drinking habits in Arrow Rock, games of euchre at "Bill Townsends," visiting itinerant dentists, and local Masonic/Odd Fellows lodge meetings.

Astronomical History (Entry 4 / p. 2, Sept 16, 1858): A direct contemporary observation of Donati's Comet on September 16, 1858.

Satirical Depth, Humor & World Events (Entries 89 & 90 / pp. 89–92, May 31, 1859): Links notes on Alexander von Humboldt's death and European war news into an extended multi-page political satire mocking international diplomacy and American isolationism ("he wouldn't cross the pacific to gnaw their bonds") using a barnyard "Convention of Rats"—complete with rats squealing at the mention of "Cæsar" the barn cat and shouts of "go in your hole!" from the crowd.

ARCHIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Alongside the detailed journal are contemporary research ephemera:

Documented Enslaved Resistance (June 8, 1858): Autograph legal draft by prominent pro-slavery leader J. Locke Hardeman detailing an enslaved teenager named Nelson who became "disobedient mutinous & disposed to make his escape to a free country," prompting his sale and estate indemnity.

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Sectional Correspondence (Oct 23, 1857): Autograph letter from Dr. Benjamin Trigg detailing severe epidemic illness in Holt County alongside anti-abolitionist commentary ("there are more abolitionists up here than white men").

Historical Research Slips: Contemporary bibliographical slips linking the archive to local figures including Judge William Barclay Napton and Nathaniel Beverley Tucker.

CONDITION & DESCRIPTIVE NOTES:

Extent: 1 manuscript journal + 3 primary manuscript documents/letters + 3 research slips.

Date Range: September 13, 1858 – August 4, 1859 (Volume 2).

Location: Hickory Grove, Saline County, Missouri.

Binding & Physical Features: Standard 19th-century half-leather sheep ledger binding with patterned paper-covered boards and leather corners.

Paper & Media: Mid-19th-century blue-ruled and unruled paper; iron gall ink and graphite additions. Features a distinct paper maker's blind stamp of a lion rampant within a crest on the 1859 resolutions leaf.

Condition: Overall very good for antebellum manuscript material; light toning, historical fold creases, and minor age-appropriate edge wear. Fully legible throughout.

MANUSCRIPT LETTER: DR. BENJAMIN TRIGG IN OREGON, MISSOURI (OCTOBER 23, 1857)

Oregon Oct 23^d 1857

Dear Beverly: I take my pen to scratch you a long
card. I have on me of importance to relate for
in this & on villages nothing occurs to interest
any one. Hoped you believe me when I tell you
I have not seen a nice day since I arrived here.
The second day after getting I believe it was I
was thrown on my bed, and stayed there for
a couple of weeks, and the glimpse of health.
I recovered under the treatment of Dr. Howard
and walked around for a few days, when down
I tumbled again, then I saw Dr. W., this time
I remained in bed a 3 weeks. Just imagine to
yourself that you are in a strange town in a
doctor's office sick, and the doctor always gone night
and day, and nobody else to wait on you, and inside
you, and funeral bells continually telling you
that somebody is "going home", and you probably can
show & feel. So this is no exaggeration for the first
time I was sick, I actually believe I saw heard 14
funeral bells tolling, and then I could hear of
deaths in the country where "strangers" was not made
known by a bell. Lord God! what a time I have ex-
perienced! I had the Bilious Fever first, and an at-
tack of Typhoid last with the Bilious. The doctor wrote
the Typhoid down in the first approach or I should

not have been writing this letter. Frank Howard
has been sick as the mischief too. He has the Ty-
phoid fever too, but he is recovering now, and will
be up in a day or two. Oh Beverly this is one of
the d - & - t places. I have thrown up my arms
in town, I am going out in the country soon dis-
tance, I think I can live during the winter out in
the country, but if I stay here I shall die sure as
the devil. The doctor wants me to go home, and
I want to too, but I am ashamed. I started away
to stay 2 years, one at least, and I am going to
stay! I may freeze out, but I - on it I mean
to stay, and I am home - sick as the devil most
standing. And then to consider one solitary dis-
tance there are more abolitionists up here than within our
view, they are thick in this town, and hold the
offices of the same. This city is beautiful, and the
surrounding country good, but God damn it, we
can live with pleasure among abolitionists.
I am going to shift my perch. I have a lot
to say since I have been here! But excuse this long
writing, for I have just got up from my sickness
and I am so nervous I can scarcely hold a pen,
Ask Bill, Dick, what in the devil is the reason he
don't answer my letters. Tell all the boys to
write - Give my love to all of them and
believe me Yours Affectionately
Benj. Trigg

Overview & Historical Significance

Date & Origin: October 23, 1857; Oregon, Holt County, Missouri.

Writer & Recipient: Written by Dr. Benjamin Trigg (signed *Benj. Trigg*) to his friend *Dear Beverly* [likely Beverly Sappington or a member of the local Saline County network].

Physical Description: 2 pp. written on a single folded folio sheet (15.5 × 10 inches unfolded), forming two 7.75 × 10 inch leaves; manuscript in dark ink written across two pages.

Content Highlights:

- Severe Frontier Illness & Mortality:** Detailed accounts of suffering from Bilious Fever and Typhoid Fever back-to-back in Oregon, MO ("I actually believe I saw heard 14 funeral bells tolling").

- **Pro-Slavery & Anti-Abolition Fervor:** Angry diatribe against the local political climate in northwestern Missouri ("*there are more abolitionists up here than white men... hold the offices of the same... who can live with pleasure among abolitionists*").
- **Refusal to Return Home Out of Pride:** Describing quitting his school, refusing to return home sick because he vowed to stay at least two years.

Full Transcription

[Page 1]

Oregon Oct 23d 1857

Dear Beverly

I take my pen to scratch you a hasty scroll. I have no news of importance to relate for in this d--n village nothing occurs to interest anyone. Would you believe me when I tell you I haven't seen a well day since I arrived here.

The second day after getting I believe it was I was thrown on my bed, and stayed there for a couple of weeks, and saw the glimpse of h--ll. I recovered under the treatment of Dr. Howard and walked around for a few days, when down I tumbled again, then I saw h--ll. This time I remained in bed a 3 weeks. Just imagine to yourself that you are in a strange town in a doctor's office sick, and the doctor always gone, night and day, and nobody else to wait on you, and be with you, and funeral bells continually tolling telling that somebody is 'going home', and you probably can conceive how I felt. So this is no exaggeration for the first time I was sick, I actually believe I saw heard 14 funeral bells tolling, and then I could hear of deaths in the country whose 'exitus' was not made known by a bell. Lord God! What a time I have experienced! I had the Bilious Fever first, and an attack of Typhoid last with the Bilious. The Doctor arrested the Typhoid fever in its first approach or I should...

[Page 2]

...not now be writing this letter. Frank Howard has been sick as the mischief too. He has the Typhoid fever too, but he is recovering now, and will be up in a day or two. Oh! Beverly this is one of the d--dest places. I have thrown up my school in town, I am going out in the country some distance, I think I can live during the winter out in the country, but if I stay here I shall die sure as the devil. The doctor wants me to go home, and I want to too, but I am ashamed, I started away to stay 2 years, one at least, and I am going to stay! I may freeze out, but d--n it I mean to stay, and I am home-sick as thunder notwithstanding. And then to render me entirely disagreeable there are more abolitionists up here than white men.

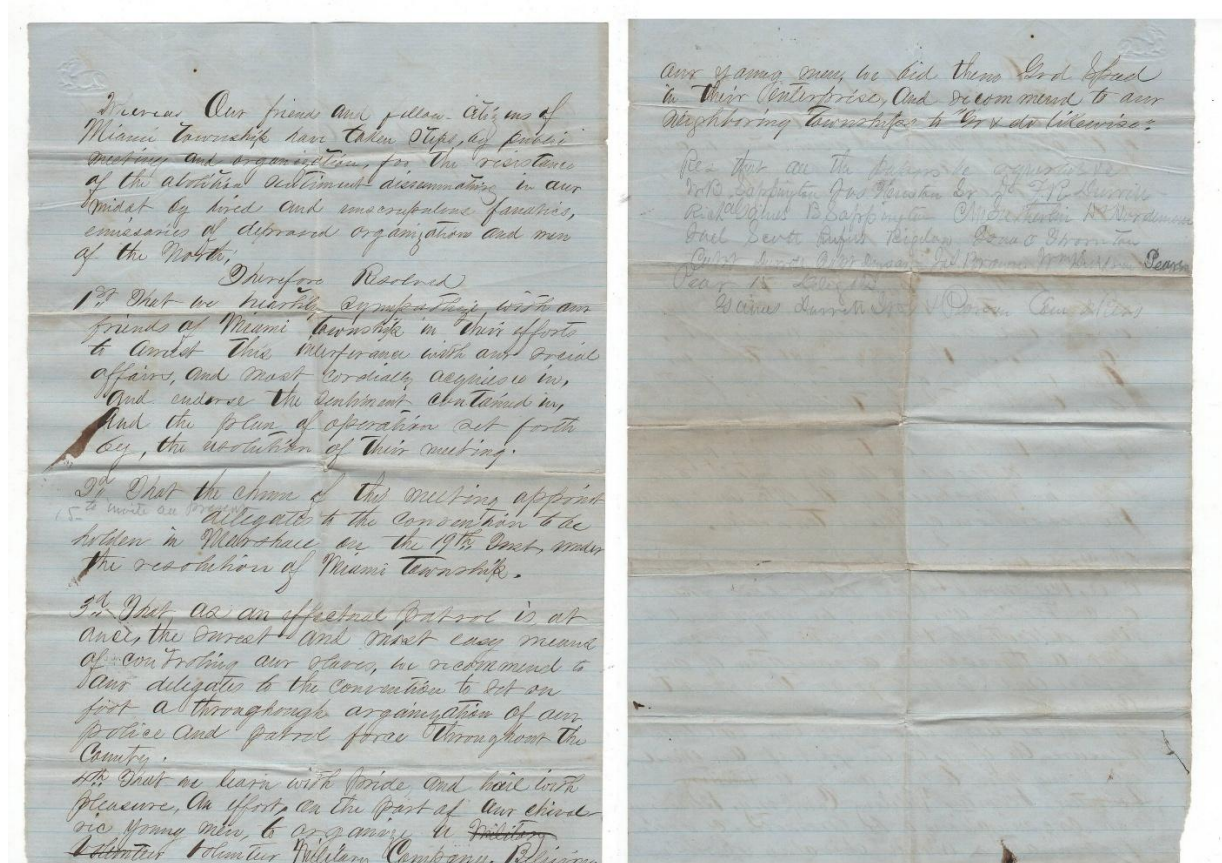
Yes, they are thick in this town, and hold the offices of the same. This city is beautiful, and the surrounding country grand, but God damn it, who can live with pleasure among abolitionists.

I am going to shift my quarters. I have seen but 3 negroes since I have been here! But excuse this bad writing, for I have just got up from my sickness and I am so nervous I can scarcely hold a pen.

Ask Billy Dulany, what in the devil is the reason he don't answer my letters. Tell all the boys to write. Give my love to all of them and believe me Your Affectionate Friend

Benj. Trigg

MANUSCRIPT RESOLUTIONS: PRE-CIVIL WAR PRO-SLAVERY & MILITIA ORGANIZING IN SALINE COUNTY, MISSOURI (c. JULY 1859)



Overview & Historical Context

Item Type: Original antebellum manuscript document / resolutions draft.

Date & Location: Circa July 1859; Saline County (Miami & Arrow Rock Townships), Missouri.

Physical Description: 2 pp. on a single folio leaf of blue-ruled paper, written on both sides (recto and verso). Single-column manuscript in dark iron gall ink with interlinear additions in graphite pencil. Features a distinct paper maker's blind stamp/embossing in the upper-left corner of a lion rampant within a crest.

Historical Significance: A crucial primary source document capturing the intense sectional anxiety, anti-abolitionist fervor, and paramilitary mobilization in Missouri's "Little Dixie" region on the immediate eve of the Civil War. Drafted in direct response to perceived Northern "abolition raids," the resolutions explicitly call for two major actions:

The establishment of a coordinated, county-wide **Slave Patrol** ("the surest and most easy means of controlling our slaves").

The formation of a local **Volunteer Military Company** to prepare young men for armed defense.

Direct Tie-In to B. T. Thompson Diary: This document provides the exact organizational context for the extrajudicial mob actions, lynchings, and slave patrol movements recorded in B. T. Thompson's diary entries on pages 114–116 (July 18–19, 1859). Resolution 2 specifically mandates sending 15 delegates to a county convention in **Marshall on the "19th Inst."**—the exact date Thompson records a mob of nearly 1,000 gathering in Marshall to carry out extrajudicial executions.

Full Line-by-Line Transcript

[Page 1]

Whereas, Our friends and fellow-citizens of Miami Township have taken steps, by public meeting and organization, for the resistance of the abolition sentiment dissemination in our midst by hired and unscrupulous fanatics, emissaries of depraved organizations and men of the North,

Therefore Resolved,

1st That we heartily sympathize with our friends of Miami Township in their efforts to arrest this interference with our domestic affairs, and most cordially acquiesce in, and endorse the sentiment contained in, and the plan of operation set forth by, the resolution of their meeting.

2d That the chairman of this meeting appoint 15 delegates to the Convention to be holden in Marshall on the 19th Inst., under the resolution of Miami Township.

3d That as an effectual Patrol is at once, the surest and most easy means of controlling our slaves, we recommend to our delegates to the Convention to set on foot a thorough organization of an active police and patrol force throughout the County.

4th That we learn with pride, and hail with pleasure, an effort on the part of our chivalric young men, to organize a Volunteer Military Company. Believing such organization to be promoters of order, fraternization and a chivalric spirit in...

[Page 2]

...our young men, we bid them God Speed in their enterprise, and recommend to our neighboring Townships to 'go & do likewise.'

Res[olved] that all the persons be agreed to:

15 Delegates

W. B. Sappington, Jas Huston Sr, Dr J. F. R. Duncan

R. E. McDaniel, B. Sappington, C. M. Sutherlin, H. Nordman

Joel Scott, Rufus Bigelow, Isaac C. Thornton

Caleb Sunder, Amos Duncan, Jul. Brown, Wm. Finley, Pearson

Gaines, Duncan, Geo & Pearson Com. Miss.

DOCUMENTED SLAVE RESISTANCE & ESTATE BOND: J. LOCKE HARDEMAN MANUSCRIPT DRAFT (JUNE 8, 1858)

Know all men that whereas, a certain negro boy named Nelson aged about fifteen years in 1839 was by an agreement then made between the undersigned and F. W. Thompson his late husband made the property of their two children Bernard Thompson and Virginia C. Thompson subject to the sole use, benefit and control during the natural life of the undersigned during her natural life. And whereas the said slave did become disobedient, malicious & disposed to make his escape to a free country & for the good cause the undersigned did sell and dispose of the said slave Nelson in the month of July 1847 for the sum of six hundred dollars then and at that time a full value for slaves of his age & qualities. Now therefore for and in consideration of the foregoing premises I do hereby acknowledge my self sold and freely bound to my said son and daughter Bernard & Virginia C. in the full sum of Six hundred dollars payable by my executor or administrator without interest, as soon as my may later dispose of my property or after my passing, conditions however that at my time & way at pleasure replace the said slave so I disposed of by the purchase of another slave

who shall be of similar age and equal value to the boy Nelson at the time that said purchase shall or may be made.

W. Beverly Thompson
J. W.

The above is the rough draft of an instrument of writing drawn up by me at the request of your Mother & is substantially the same as that signed by her in my presence June 8th 1858.

Respectfully Yours
J. Locke Hardeman

Item Type: Original manuscript legal draft and accompanying autograph letter signed (ALS).

Date & Location: June 8, 1858; Saline County, Missouri.

Physical Description: 2 pp. on a single folio leaf of blue-ruled paper (15.5 × 10 inches unfolded, forming two 7.75 × 10 inch leaves), written on both sides (recto and verso). Single-column manuscript written in iron gall ink.

Historical Significance: A remarkable, highly sensitive primary source documenting an explicit act of enslaved resistance, attempted escape to free territory, and the subsequent financial/legal accounting within the Thompson family estate.

Documented Attempted Escape: Directly records that an enslaved teenager named Nelson ("*aged about fifteen years in 1839*") became "*disobedient mutinous & disposed to make his escape to a free country,*" prompting his summary sale in July 1847 for \$600.

Financial Obligation & Estate Legalities: Outlines a \$600 indemnity bond binding the mother of diarist B. T. Thompson to compensate her children, Burwell and Virginia C. Thompson, for the value of the sold enslaved youth, or to replace him with "*another slave... of similar age and equal value.*"

Prominent Missouri Legal & Political Figure: Authored, drafted, and signed on Page 2 by **John Locke Hardeman (1809–1858)**, a wealthy Saline County planter, agricultural innovator, state legislator, and leading strategist in Missouri's antebellum pro-slavery movement. Drafted just weeks before Hardeman's death in July 1858, making this one of his final recorded legal instruments.

Archive Cohesion & Family Provenance: Addressed directly to **Mr. Beverley Thompson** (the diarist), providing essential historical, financial, and legal context to the family's slaveholding operations directly referenced in the 1857–1859 diary entries.

Full Transcription

Page 1

Know all men that: Whereas, a certain negro boy named Nelson aged about fifteen years in 1839 was by an agreement, then made, between the undersigned and P. M. Thompson her late husband made the property of their two children Burwell Thompson and Virginia C. Thompson subject to the sole use & benefit and control during the natural life of the undersigned during her natural life And whereas the said Slave did become disobedient mutinous & disposed to make his escape to a free country & for other good causes the undersigned did sell and dispose of the said slave Nelson in the month of July 1847 for the sum of Six hundred dollars then and at that time a full value for slaves of his age & qualities. Now therefore for and in consideration of the foregoing premises I do hereby acknowledge my self held and firmly bound to my said son and daughter Burwell & Virginia C. in the full sum of Six hundred dollars without interest payable by my executors or administrators without interest so soon as they may take charge of my property or estate after my decease, conditioned however that at any time I may at pleasure replace the said slave so disposed of by the purchase of another slave...

Page 2

...who shall be of similar age and equal value to the boy Nelson at the time that such purchase shall or may be made.

Mr Beverley Thompson

D[ear] Sir

The above is the rough draft of an instrument of writing drawn up by me at the request of your Mother & is substantially the same as that signed by her in my presence.

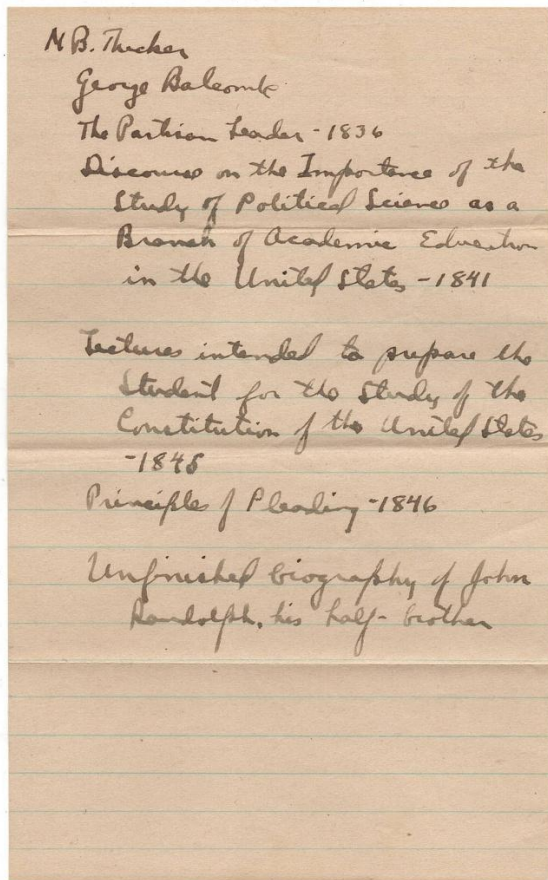
June 8th 1858.

Respectfully Yours,

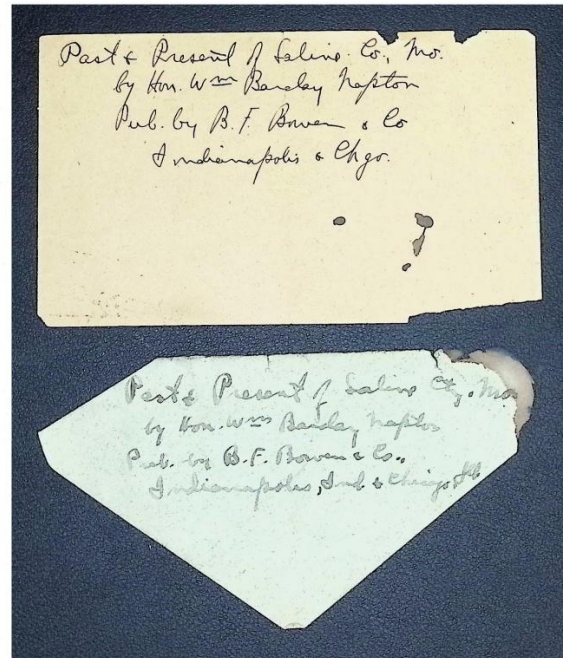
J. Locke Hardeman

ACCOMPANYING EPHEMERA & RESEARCH SLIPS

Item Description: Three (3) original manuscript research and bibliographical slips inserted within the diary volume.



N.B. Tucker
George Balconie
The Partisan Leader - 1836
Discourse on the Importance of the
Study of Political Science as a
Branch of Academic Education
in the United States - 1841
Lectures intended to prepare the
Student for the Study of the
Constitution of the United States
- 1845
Principles of Pleading - 1846
Unfinished Biography of John
Randolph, his half-brother



Past & Present of Saline Co., Mo.
by Hon. Wm Barclay Napton
Pub. by B. F. Bowen & Co.
Indianapolis & Chgo.

Past & Present of Saline Co., Mo.
by Hon. Wm Barclay Napton
Pub. by B. F. Bowen & Co.
Indianapolis, Ind. & Chicago, Ill.

Bibliographical Reading Slip (1 p., 16mo lined paper): A handwritten reference list documenting the works of **Nathaniel Beverley Tucker (1784–1851)**, the influential pro-slavery legal scholar, William & Mary professor, and early Saline County resident. Includes citations for his famous secessionist novel *The Partisan Leader* (1836), *Discourse on... Political Science* (1841), *Lectures... on the Constitution* (1845), *Principles of Pleading* (1846), and his unfinished biography of half-brother John Randolph of Roanoke.

Saline County Historical Reference Slips (2 small cut-paper slips): Two identical manuscript notes citing **William Barclay Napton's** regional history, *Past & Present of Saline Co., Mo.* (Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen & Co., 1910). Napton was a Missouri Supreme Court Justice, leading Saline County pro-slavery strategist, and contemporary associate of the figures named in the diary.

Curatorial Note: These slips demonstrate early local scholarly cross-referencing, linking Thompson's daily 1850s entries directly to the broader political and literary history of Saline County's most prominent antebellum figures.

JOURNAL ENTRIES

