Alexander W. Doniphan Letters (C3520)

Collection Number: C3520

Collection Title: Alexander W. Doniphan Letters

Dates: 1859

Creator: Doniphan, Alexander W., 1808-1887

Abstract: Letters introducing Robert G. Gilmer to Sam Houston and Asbell Smith of Galveston, Texas.

Collection Size: 0.02 cubic feet
   (1 folder)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia. If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: Materials in this collection are in the public domain.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] Alexander W. Doniphan Letters (C3520); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The letters were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by William E. Eldridge on November 5, 1971 (Accession No. CA0894).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Alexander W. Doniphan Letters can be found in the following collections:

- Alexander W. Doniphan Letter, (C1803)
- Alexander W. Doniphan Letter, (C1927)
- Alexander W. Doniphan Letter, (C1935)
- Alexander W. Doniphan Letter, (C1942)
- Alexander W. Doniphan Letters, (C1926)
- Alexander W. Doniphan Letters, (C2917)
Biographical Note:

Alexander W. Doniphan was born on July 9, 1808, in Mason County, Kentucky. Alexander was the youngest of ten children of Joseph and Anne Smith Doniphan. In 1813, after Joseph Doniphan’s unexpected death, Alexander was sent to live with his oldest brother, George, in Augusta, Kentucky. Doniphan graduated from Augusta College when he was eighteen. He was admitted to the Kentucky bar, but decided to head west in search of greater opportunity. In 1830 he settled in Lexington, Missouri, where he quickly earned a reputation as an eloquent and skilled defense attorney.

Three years later, Doniphan moved to Liberty, Missouri. He joined the local militia company, the Liberty Blues, beginning what would become a lengthy military career.

In 1836 Doniphan was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives as a member of the Whig Party. He was reelected in 1840 and 1854. Doniphan married Elizabeth Jane Thornton on December 21, 1837, in Liberty, Missouri. The couple had two children, John Thornton Doniphan and Alexander William Doniphan, Jr. Both sons died before the age of eighteen.

In 1846 when war broke out between the United States and Mexico, Doniphan enlisted as a private. He was elected colonel by the men of his regiment and placed in command of the First Missouri Mounted Volunteers, part of General Stephen Watts Kearny’s Army of the West.

After returning home to Missouri, Doniphan continued to practice law, became a successful businessman, and helped establish William Jewell College in Liberty.

Although a slave owner, Doniphan rejected Southern secession and favored the preservation of the Union. He served as a delegate to the failed Washington Peace Convention and was a participant at the 1861 Missouri Constitutional Convention. Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson offered Doniphan a commission in the Missouri State Guard, but Doniphan turned it down. He spent the duration of the war as a civilian in St. Louis.

After the end of the Civil War, Doniphan and his wife moved to Richmond, Missouri. Jane Doniphan died in 1873. Alexander Doniphan continued to practice law and established the Ray County Savings Bank, serving as its president.

Alexander Doniphan died on August 8, 1887, in Richmond. He is buried in Fairview Cemetery in Liberty, Missouri.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged chronologically.
Scope and Content Note:

This collection contains letters introducing Robert G. Gilmer to Sam Houston and Asbell Smith of Galveston, Texas.

Container List:

f. 1 Letters, 1859

Index:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index Terms</th>
<th>Folder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doniphan, Alexander W. (1808-1887)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilmer, Robert G.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, Sam (1793-1863)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Asbell</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>