



## William A. McCanse Papers (C1290)

**Collection Number:** C1290

**Collection Title:** William A. McCanse Papers

**Dates:** 1856, 1868

**Creator:** McCanse, William A.

**Abstract:** The William A. McCanse Papers consist of two items: a document listing the valuation and division of 11 individuals enslaved by the McCanse family, 1856, and a letter from Jeremiah McKanse, formerly enslaved, of Olathe, Kansas, to William McCanse, 1868.

**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](mailto:columbia@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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

**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *William A. McCanse Papers* (C1290); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

**Donor Information:** The McCanse papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Raymond E. McCanse on September 25, 1972 (SHS Accession No. CA979).

**Alternate Forms Available:** The collection is available [online](#) in the [Missouri Slavery Documents digital collection](#).

**Processed by:** Processed by SHSMO staff, date unknown. Finding aid updated by Heather Richmond, August 25, 2022.

**Historical Note:**

William Alexander McCanse was born in Tennessee on May 23, 1821, to James Arthur and Louisa Galbraith McCanse. His siblings were Elizabeth Jane Waters, Sarah Adaline Cravens, Lucinda Caroline Cotter, Nancy Payne, and Andrew Galbraith McCanse.

William's father, James Arthur McCanse, died in 1842, and his mother, Louisa McCanse, married Henry Zinn in 1845. They enslaved several people. By 1856, Henry Zinn had died, and the people he and Louisa enslaved were divided up among Louisa and her children, including William. After the Civil War, several people formerly enslaved by the McCanse family settled in Olathe, Kansas.

**Arrangement:**

The collection is arranged chronologically.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The agreement for the division of enslaved individuals lists the names, ages, and value of ten enslaved individuals and the names of the ten people who were taking them. Among those enslaved was a woman named Mary, children that might have been Mary's, possibly Mary's mother and brothers. On the list is eight-year-old Jeremiah who went to William A. McCanse.

The letter from Jeremiah McKanse to William was written from Olathe, Kansas, where Jeremiah and several others listed on the agreement settled. Jeremiah informs William about how the other formerly enslaved individuals are doing and where they are working. He tells him about property he owns in Olathe and about other business dealings. The tone of the letter seems cordial and Jeremiah mentions an earlier letter which he received from William.

**Container List:**

f. 1                      Papers, 1856, 1868

**Index:**

Index Terms	Folders
Blacks, 1850s	1
Blacks, 1860s	1
McCanse, William A.	1
McKanse, Jeremiah	1
Race relations, 1860s	1
Slave trade	1
Slavery	1
Slavery, 1850s	1
Slavery--Missouri	1
White, John R.	1