



## **Nathaniel Leonard Papers (C2525)**

**Collection Number:** C2525

**Collection Title:** Nathaniel Leonard Papers

**Dates:** 1800-1896, 1927

**Creator:** Leonard, Nathaniel, 1799-1876

**Abstract:** The papers of Nathaniel Leonard, a stock breeder and farmer from Cooper County, Missouri, and his family consist of land papers, account and other record books, correspondence, Civil War papers, an 1824 fur memorandum, and an 1875 diary of Lon V. Stephens.

**Collection Size:** 0.02 cubic feet, 2 rolls of microfilm  
(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](http://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:** Materials in this collection are in the public domain.

**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Nathaniel Leonard Papers* (C2525); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

**Donor Information:** The papers were temporarily deposited on June 19, 1959 (CA3390) and July 24, 1959 (CA3399) by Charles W. Leonard for copying at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection. A microfilm copy was made at that time. On June 2, 2004, Traci Wilson-Kleekamp donated the original of one of the microfilmed ledgers, along with a letter and newspaper clipping about Ravenswood (CA6037).

**Alternate Forms Available:** Digital images and transcriptions of [slavery documents on Roll 1](#) are available in the [Missouri Slavery Documents](#) digital collection.

**Related Materials:** Additional materials related to the Nathaniel Leonard Papers can be found in the following collections:

[\*Abiel Leonard Papers, \(C1013\)\*](#)

**Processed by:** Processed by SHSMO-Columbia staff, date unknown. Finding aid updated by Heather Richmond, June 3, 2022.

**Historical Note:**

Nathaniel Leonard was born in Vermont in 1799 and later moved with his family to Lewiston, New York. After spending time as a young man in the fur trade near Milwaukee, Nathaniel decided to follow his brother to mid-Missouri to seek his fortune. Abiel Leonard (1797-1863) had migrated to Missouri in 1819 and had settled in Howard County, earning his living as a lawyer. Through his letters, Abiel convinced his brother of the wisdom of moving to the area. Nathaniel settled in Cooper County in 1825 and both brothers became prominent in their communities. They affiliated with the Whig Party and, although they were enslavers, the Leonards were sympathetic to the Union cause in the Civil War.

In 1839, Nathaniel Leonard bought a Shorthorn bull and heifer imported from England and became the first Shorthorn breeder west of the Mississippi. He also engaged in the mule trade and farming, in addition to a considerable amount of land speculation with brothers Abiel and Benjamin, and his future son-in-law, Dr. Robert P. Richardson. At one time, Nathaniel Leonard had 4,000-5,000 acres in Missouri plus land in Kansas and Iowa.

Nathaniel Leonard married Margaret Hutchison Johnston in 1832 and raised several children, including Benjamin (1833-1865), Medora (1835-1880), Leverett (1837- ? ), Charles E. (1839-1916), William H. (1848- ? ), and Abiel (1851- ? ), as well as Margaret's son from her previous marriage, William H. Johnston (1830-1848). Son Charles attended Missouri University, while Leverett, William and Abiel attended Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Most of the sons became farmers and stock breeders in Missouri. Nathaniel Leonard died in 1876 and his wife in 1880. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, descendants of their son Charles still inhabit Ravenswood, the estate that Nathaniel built in the mid-1800s in Cooper County.

**Arrangement:**

The microfilming of the Nathaniel Leonard Papers was not accomplished in any particular order, except that groups of documents were kept together, as described below. A folder of original documents includes an account book that is also on the film.

**Scope and Content Note:**

Microfilm roll one includes a lists of land owned in Missouri by Nathaniel Leonard on January 1, 1854, including the number of acres, when and from whom purchased, price and description. Also included is a notebook containing a list of expenses for travel, land and steers, 1856-1857; contained in the notebook are three letters, one from Nathaniel's brother concerning land and two from his son Benjamin concerning the sale of cattle and mules, 1857-1859; also included are miscellaneous newspaper clippings. Land patents signed by James Monroe, 1823, and Andrew Jackson, 1829 are included on this reel, followed by receipts, bills of sale, deeds, and notes of land sales, 1800-1857. Material related to the estate of William H. Johnston (1830-1848) includes a list of expenses, 1845-1849, inventories of his land and the people he enslaved, and papers concerning the sale of these, 1849-1863. After that are agreements and bills of sale

involving land, enslaved individuals, and cattle, 1821-1864. Fur memorandum contains a list of goods and pelts returned from the vicinity of Milwaukee, 1824. An account book includes records of stock, expenses, labor and weather, 1835-1845, and also contains a list of birthdays of family members. Miscellaneous papers include lists of enslaved individuals owned by the family and various bills of sale. Letters are from Nathaniel to the family of his daughter, Medora Richardson, in St. Joseph, Missouri, concerning family matters and farming, 1869-1876. Maps, surveyors charts, and township plats are then grouped together, followed by a list of land in Missouri, Kansas and Iowa, belonging to Nathaniel, B. G. Leonard, and Robert P. Richardson, 1868. At the end of the reel is an account book, 1873-1896, and an inventory after Nathaniel Leonard's death, 1877.

Roll two includes account books, 1840-1861 and 1862-1874. The second of these includes expenses of sons William and Abiel at Dartmouth. A list of land in Missouri belonging to Nathaniel Leonard, Robert P. Richardson and Benjamin G. Leonard, 1865, is included, followed by papers of D. M. Hutchison, brother of Mrs. Nathaniel Leonard, including his manuscripts on geology and his 1851 will. Correspondence is mainly between members of the Hutchison family, concerning family affairs; two letters are from B.G. Leonard and one from Abiel Leonard, 1837-1860. Civil War papers include permission from the Provost-Marshal for Nathaniel to buy and sell stock and retain arms during the war; news article about 400 soldiers sleeping in his barn; a request for him to serve on the "County Board" set up by General Order No. 21 to carry out General Order No. 3; letters recommending his son Charles to raise a military company and authorization for this; a muster-in-roll of Company H, 52<sup>nd</sup> Regiment; and personal and official letters to Charles during war. Materials from 1869-1870 include letters received from relatives and friends when the Leonards' house at Ravenswood burned in 1869; and plans and receipts from building a new house, 1870. Accounts include school accounts of Petite Saline School District, of which Nathaniel was clerk, 1846-1850; and a list of funds given to his children, 1853-1868. Records of building a house in 1850 follow this, and next is a diary of Lon V. Stephens, future governor of Missouri, that was kept while he was a student at Kemper School, 1875. (Connection to Leonard: Charles E. Leonard married the sister of Stephens' future wife.) Final items on the reel include financial records, including a farm diary, 1872; bank books, 1858-1872; labor cost books, 1850-1876; and livestock records, 1836-1864.

The only original items in the collection are an account book from 1862-1864, and a letter and news clippings about Ravenswood, 1927.

### Container List:

Roll 1	Papers, 1800-1896
Roll 2	Papers, 1840-1875
f. 1	Account book, 1862-1874; letter and news clippings, 1927

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