



## Viles-Hosmer Family Papers (C3709)

**Collection Number:** C3709

**Collection Title:** Viles-Hosmer Family Papers

**Dates:** 1814-1948

**Creator:** Viles-Hosmer family

**Abstract:** This collection contains autograph albums, account books, diaries, and personal and business correspondence of the Viles and Hosmer families. Included are Jonas Viles' professional papers while professor of history at the University of Missouri from 1902 to 1942.

**Collection Size:** 6.1 cubic feet  
(464 folders)

**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.

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Viles-Hosmer Family Papers* (C3709); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Ruth Viles on May 4, 1949 and October 5, 1951 (Accession No. CA3027). An addition was made on December 17, 1971 by Elmer Ellis (Accession No. CA3892) and material was transferred from the State Historical Society of Missouri on November 4, 1982 (Accession No. CA4469).

**Processed by:** Processed by Sharon L. Fleming, June 30, 1983. Finding aid revised by Nicholas Raya, February 3, 2023.

**Historical Note:**

These papers illuminate four generations of the Viles family of Waltham, Massachusetts, where Jonas and Abigail Viles farmed and sold milk. This family business was passed on to their sons, Jonas and John. In the late 1850s John W. Viles disappears from these records. Jonas and his wife Elizabeth continued the farming and dairy business which they, in turn, passed to their only son Charles Lowell Viles.

In 1871 Charles Lowell married Almira Hubbard. Two children, Jonas and Elizabeth, were born in 1875 and 1882 respectively, before Almira's death in 1883. When Charles married Clara Berry in 1889 they stayed on the family farm in Waltham. Young Jonas was educated at Harvard and in 1902 left Massachusetts to teach history at the University of Missouri. Elizabeth Viles traveled to India as a missionary where she met and married Arthur McBride.

Charles' sister, Elizabeth Viles, married Edward Hosmer, a Boston commission merchant, in 1872. Elizabeth Hosmer moved back to Waltham after Edward's death in 1898, but spent many winters in Pasadena, California, where her husband had invested in real estate. Mrs. Hosmer speculated in numerous mining and real estate ventures until her death in 1926.

Jonas Viles married Ruth Bennet Hayes in 1903 and fathered four sons. He remained in Columbia until his death in 1948. Jonas Viles served as history department chairman from 1928 to 1937, as trustee of the State Historical Society of Missouri from 1904 to 1948, and as first vice-president of the society, 1907-1916. Viles was president of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1933-1934, and also served on the Public Archives Commission of the American Historical Association. Viles family genealogical chart in information folder.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into the following five series:

Viles Family Papers  
Elizabeth Viles Hosmer Diaries and Papers  
Miscellaneous Family Papers  
Viles-Hosmer Genealogical Records  
Jonas Viles Professional Papers

**Scope and Content Note:****Viles Family Papers**

This series contains personal and business papers of the Viles family, who ran a dairy and farmed. Account books and receipts indicate volume of business; amounts, types and prices of produce sold; planting and harvest schedules; and labor expenses. Autograph albums and diaries help personalize these papers, and many of the account books also contain diary entries. Later papers in this section deal with the settlement of estates and often contain family news, and social, political, and economic comments in addition to financial information. Arrangement is chronological. While the Elizabeth Viles Hosmer diaries and papers form a separate section, her estate papers (dated after December 1926) are found in this section.

## **Elizabeth Viles Hosmer Diaries and Papers**

This series contains material related to the daily activities of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Hosmer and her friends and family. topics include the weather, fashions, food, deaths, short trips, lipreading, politics, economics, newspaper stories, and World War I. In 1881 Elizabeth and her husband Edward spent the summer in England and Europe. This trip is covered in detail.

Also included are Personal and business correspondence, receipts, investment literature, and the will and some estate papers of Elizabeth and Edward Hosmer. Edward B. Hosmer, a commission merchant in Boston, Massachusetts, died leaving a sizable inheritance in trust and outright to his wife. Between 1900 and her death in 1926 Mrs. Hosmer invested in many stock corporations in such areas as oil, gas, mining and milling, and California real estate. Company losses, failures, reorganizations, and stockholder assessments, are detailed, with statements on real estate taxes, repairs, rentals, and agent correspondence. See also Viles family papers after 1926 for information re settlement of her estate, including material on stock market crash and depression.

## **Miscellaneous Family Papers**

This series contains papers which are not dated and many which cannot be identified as to originator or recipient.

## **Viles-Hosmer Genealogical Records**

This series contains family Bible pages listing births, deaths, and marriages. The earliest entry is for Jonas Viles, Jr., born 11 December 1814. This covers the birth records of four generations and helps clarify the family papers in this collection.

## **Jonas Viles Professional Papers**

This series contains academic and professional papers, 1896-1941. Jonas Viles moved to Columbia, Missouri, in 1902 to teach history at the University of Missouri. With only short leaves of absence for health and family concerns, Viles remained at the university for his entire career. Viles was an active faculty member and contributed to the local and national history community. This portion of the collection has been subdivided by type of material.

## **Container List:**

### **Viles Family Papers Series**

- f. 1-3 Autograph albums, 1839-1849
- f. 4 School journal of Almira Hubbard Viles, February-July 1859.
- f. 5 Autograph album, 1867-1871
- f. 6 Account book, 1814-1842
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- f. 29 Expenses, 1892-1896
- f. 30 Family papers, 1890-1895
- f. 31 Ellen M. (Nellie) Viles diary, 1898-1910.
- f. 32 Account book, 1900-1916.
- f. 33-34 Family papers, 1900-1902
- f. 35 Account book, 1903-1908.
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- f. 135-136 Family papers, n.d.
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- f. 139 Estate papers, Mary E. Viles, n.d.
- f. 140 Estate papers, Charles L. Viles, n.d.
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- f. 142-145 Family papers, n.d.

### **Elizabeth Viles Hosmer Diaries and Papers Series**

- f. 150 England and Europe, June-August 1881.
- f. 151 1881-1884.
- f. 152-158 1901-1923.
- f. 159-226 Personal and business correspondence, receipts, investment literature, and the will and some estate papers of Elizabeth and Edward Hosmer. Edward B. Hosmer, a commission merchant in Boston, Massachusetts, died leaving a sizable inheritance in trust and outright to his wife. Between 1900 and her death in 1926 Mrs. Hosmer invested in many stock corporations in such areas as oil, gas, mining and milling, and California real estate. Company losses, failures, reorganizations, and stockholder assessments, are detailed, with statements on real estate taxes, repairs, rentals, and agent correspondence. See also Viles family papers after 1926 for information re settlement of her estate, including material on stock market crash and depression.

### **Miscellaneous Family Papers Series**

- f. 227-228 These folders contain papers which are not dated and many which cannot be identified as to originator or recipient.

**Viles-Hosmer Genealogical Records Series**

- f. 229 This folder contains family Bible pages listing births, deaths, and marriages. The earliest entry is for Jonas Viles, Jr., born 11 December 1814. This covers the birth records of four generations and helps clarify the family papers in this collection.

**Jonas Viles Papers Series**

- f. 230-237 Calvary Episcopal Church, Columbia, Missouri, 1920-1939. The Jonas Viles family, Columbia residents from 1902 until the late 1940s, were members of Calvary Episcopal Church. Jonas Viles served on the finance committee. These papers relate to budgets, operating expenses, financial pledges from members, and church activities and problems.
- f. 238-241 Academic papers, 1896-1899. Viles received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He taught for a short time at the Dalzell Boys School before completing his education.
- f. 242-278 Professional correspondence, 1902-1941. This covers Viles' search for employment and acceptance of the position at the University of Missouri. Correspondence topics include university policies, salaries the Degraff-Meyer survey, plans for the university centennial anniversary and the centennial history, and the teachers' union.
- f. 279-281 Teachers' union information, n.d.
- f. 282-283 University of Missouri, History Club, 1911-1917. This club was called the Klieo Club and the Women's History Club. Included here are meeting minutes, membership lists and dues collection, and lists of speakers and topics.
- f. 284-297 Viles-Cochran correspondence, 1933-1936. Michael Hermond Cochran, a history professor, became mentally ill in 1933 and left the university and Columbia very abruptly. This correspondence is primarily between his wife, Mary L., and Jonas Viles. It concerns the care of Cochran, his admittance to a veterans hospital in Massachusetts, and Mary's struggle to cope and earn a living. Viles sold and stored the Cochran possessions left in Columbia and handled many financial problems. Cochran's personal library was purchased by the university. A few references are made to graduate students and to Cochran's work in German history.
- f. 298-301 Viles collected papers. This material was assembled by Jonas Viles and concerns George and Mary Boone Memorial, James S. Rollins, photographs of Union Army generals in the Civil War, and an 1864 Emigrants and Travelers' Map of Missouri.
- f. 302-310 Historical Society papers, 1904-1934. This is primarily correspondence about the State Historical Society of Missouri and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. It concerns meeting plans, papers, speakers, and the 1933 convention held in Columbia, Missouri.
- f. 311-370 Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Historical County Survey. Sixty Missouri counties were studied by researchers under Viles' supervision. Topics for each county include early residents, agriculture, industry, transportation, population, and politics. Material is arranged alphabetically by county name.
- f. 371-410 Articles, lectures and research. Topics include Civil War, Missouri-Kansas Border War, World War I, democracy and justice, the Turner frontier hypothesis, the role of the historian, American ideals and world politics, Missouri history,

- Thomas Hart Benton, and history of England and Europe. These papers are neither dated nor clearly titled.
- f. 411-435 Missouri State Capitol Building Archives Inventory. Viles made a room-by-room inventory of the records stored in the Capitol. These are his notes giving room, dates, type of material, and volume. Viles produced a survey of Missouri archives for the Public Archives Commission.
- f. 436 Kellar agriculture survey information.
- f. 437 Soil Survey information.
- f. 438-451 *University of Missouri Centennial History*. This history was edited and compiled by Jonas Viles and published in 1939. Here are drafts for chapters and historical materials.
- f. 452-461 Switzler *History of the University of Missouri*, analysis. In writing his history Viles had the Switzler history documented. These folders contain a catalogue of correspondence and memos citing their origin and date.
- f. 462 Lowry *History of the University of Missouri*. This is a volume of clippings with annotations.
- f. 463 Miscellaneous professional papers, n.d.
- f. 464 Jonas Viles Family Photographs, 1912-1948. Ruth Viles and the four boys taken in May 1912; Jonas and Ruth Viles, 1948.

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