

# Guide to the James Henry Burton Papers

MS 117



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

March 1974

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 117

**CREATOR:** Burton, James Henry, 1823-1894

**TITLE:** James Henry Burton papers

**DATES:** 1845-1950

**BULK DATES:** 1845-1893

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 5.75 linear feet (9 boxes, 1 folio)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, diaries, notebooks, clippings, printed matter and a draft history of the Richmond Armory which he headed from 1861 to 1862. Included also are notes on machinery and a British patent for small fire-arms.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0117>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0117>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Edwin Pugsley, 1953, 1958, and 1962. Gift of Eugenia Scheffel, 1998.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown, though much of the material in this collection is likely in the public domain. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

James Henry Burton Papers (MS 117). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Processing Information

Parts of the papers were microfilmed in 1970 and 1974. The papers were reorganized in 1979 and no longer correspond with the film.

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## Existence and Location of Copies

Correspondence and other papers available on microfilm (2 reels, 35mm.) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM3.

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## Biographical / Historical

Colonel James H. Burton (1823-1894), after he had been educated at Westchester Academy, Pennsylvania, entered a Baltimore machine shop at the age of sixteen. In 1844, he took employment in the rifle works of the United States armory at Harper's Ferry, was appointed foreman in 1845 and master armorer shortly thereafter. In 1855, he accepted the post of chief engineer of the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, near London, and did not return to Virginia until 1861. In June of that year, Burton was commissioned a Lieutenant Colonel in the Ordinance Department of the Virginia State Militia and placed in charge of the State Armory by Governor John Letcher with instructions to arrange for the removal of all machinery captured at Harper's Ferry and place it in position for use. Within ninety days, Colonel Burton had the machinery at work in Richmond producing rifles of standard United States patterns.

The following September, Burton was appointed superintendent of arms by President Jefferson Davis with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. During the summer of 1863, the Confederate Government ordered Burton to Europe on State Department business. He did not return to the United States for three years and only then after having received an amnesty from President Johnson.

As a private citizen, he returned to England in 1871 to take direction of a Leeds firm manufacturing arms for the Russian Government. He returned to Virginia in 1873.

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## Scope and Contents

The Colonel James H. Burton Papers consist of correspondence, diaries, notebooks, photographs, plans, and miscellaneous items spanning from 1845 to 1950.

## Collection Contents

### Inventory, 1845-1950

Correspondence		
b. 1reel U1	1845-1862 This material has been microfilmed. Patrons must use HM 3 instead of the originals.	1845-1862
b. 2reel U1	1862-1893 This material has been microfilmed. Patrons must use HM 3 instead of the originals.	1862-1893
b. 3	Letterbooks	1863, 1865-1866
b. 3	Plans of firearms and ammunition	1852-1859, 1872-1873, undated
b. 3reel 2U	Draft, "History of Richmond Armory" This material has been microfilmed. Patrons must use HM 3 instead of the originals.	1893
Diaries		
b. 3	1855-1859	1855-1859
b. 4	1859-1863, 1865, 1867	1859-1863, 1865, 1867
b. 5reel 2U	1868, 1872, 1875 This material has been microfilmed. Patrons must use HM 3 instead of the originals.	1868, 1872, 1875
Notebooks		
b. 5	1855-1866, 1888-1893	1855-1866, 1888-1893
b. 6	Undated	Undated
Miscellaneous		
b. 6	Scrapbook	1852-1860
b. 6	<a href="#">Photographs of James Burton, the Macon Armory, and unidentified persons and buildings</a>	[1860?]-1928
b. 6	Newspaper clippings	1860-1893
b. 6	James Hall: "Report upon the Property of the Empire State Iron and Coal Company, of Georgia"	1866
b. 6	Correspondence concerning James Burton	1928-1950, undated

## Miscellaneous (continued)

b. 6	Notes concerning James Burton, machinery, and related subjects	1860-1940, undated
b. 6	Frank E. Vandiver: "A Sketch of Efforts Abroad to Equip the Confederate Armory at Macon," <i>Georgia Historical Quarterly</i>	1944
b. 6	British patent issued for an improvement in the manufacture of barrels for small fire-arms	1859
Plans, drawings, and maps		
Confederate States Armory, Macon, Georgia		
b. 7	Front elevation or view from Macon & Western Railroad, 21" x 98"	1864 March 23
b. 7	Design of Dwelling House for Mr. Herrington Mast. Machinist, 30 1/4" x 34 1/2"	Undated
b. 7	Design of cast iron ventilator for front building & wings, James A. Burton, Supt., 13 1/4" x 30 1/4"	1864 March 23
b. 7	Ground plan of basement story. Central Office, 10" x 14 3/4"	1863 May 5
Map of Southwestern Part of City of Macon		
b. 7	Shows location of Confederate States Armory and proposed connection of Armory track with Macon & Western Railroad signed A. Schwaab, CE, 14 3/4" x 18"	1863 December
b. 7	Shows land purchased for Confederate States Armory by Col. Burton, Superintendent Surveyed by A. Schwaab, Civ. Eng., 23" x 24"	1864 April
b. 7	Shows land purchased for Confederate States Armory by Col. Burton, Superintendent Surveyed by A. Schwaab, Civ. Eng., 21" x 22 3/4"	1864 April
b. 7	Shows location of Confederate States Armory and proposed connexion of Armory Track with Macon & Western Railroad. Aug. Schwaab, CE, 15" x 16"	1863 December
b. 7	Alteration of 2 screw drilling machines for facing striker nut (+B rifle) Order 528B full size, 26" x 39"	Undated
b. 7	General Store House 202 (ft.)/8 in. x 40 ft. 2 Stories High, 16 1/2" x 39"	Undated
b. 7	Cast iron base of column for main building of new armory. Jas. A. Burton, Supt. C. S., Armory, Macon, Ga., 22 3/4" x 30 1/4"	1864 March 23
b. 7	Design arrangement of lightning conductors (labeled on verso: General ground plans of roofs B), 22" x 29"	Undated
b. 7	General Ground Plan of roofs of Confederate States Armory to be erected in the city of Macon, made for the purpose of (labeled on verso: General ground plans of roofs A), 26 1/2" x 29"	Undated
b. 7	Untitled (labeled on verso: #3), 29 1/2" x 36 1/2"	Undated
b. 7	Untitled, 3 pieces of one floor plan, (labeled on verso: 1, 2, 3), 1 - 29" x 36 1/2", 2 & 3 - 30" x 36 1/2"	Undated

## Plans, drawings, and maps (continued)

b. 7	Vertical cross - nos - Main Work Shops, Detail of roof ridge, 19 3/4" x 28 3/4"	Undated
b. 7	Confederate States Armory at Macon, GA. General Groundplan, 3 pieces, 1 - 22" x 39", 2 - 30" x 40", 3 - 30" x 39"	Undated
b. 8	Oversize	1864-1888, undated

**Accession 1998-M-111: Additional Material**

Letterbooks		1866-1873
b. 1, f. 1	1866 August 2-1867 April 14	1866 August 2-1867 April 14
b. 1, f. 2	1867 June 22-1868 sep 3	1867 June 22-1868 sep 3
b. 1, f. 3	1868 September 3-1872 April 12	1868 September 3-1872 April 12
b. 1, f. 4-5	1872 February 17-1873 March 13	1872 February 17-1873 March 13
b. 2, f. 6	1873 March 14-September 14	1873 March 14- September 14



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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Firearms  
Science

### **Geographic Names**

Europe  
United States -- Foreign relations  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865  
Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

### **Genres / Formats**

Diaries

### **Occupations**

Engineers

### **Names**

Burton, James Henry, 1823-1894

### **Corporate Body**

Confederate States of America. Army  
(Ordnance and ordnance stores)