

**Tait Family Papers:
Creating the Digital Collection**

*Diploma
Chas. W. Mat. Sci.*

**Midge Coates
Auburn University Libraries**

Tait Papers: Why Go Digital?

- **Small enough to be feasible; large enough to give a full-ish picture**
- **Documents 19th century agriculture, business, medicine, family life**
- **Rich in documentation of slavery:**
 - **Lists of enslaved workers**
 - **Receipts for slave purchases**
 - **Tax assessments with valuations based on slave-holdings**

Digital Collection Users

- **Usually not located on-site**
- **May lack real-time access to archival staff**
- **May be novice researchers**
- **May not understand archival terminology**

So, how do we construct the Digital collection to make their research easier?

What Digital Format Should I Use?

- **Types of use that can be expected**
 - Viewing items online
 - Downloading items to view/study offline
 - Printing items to view/study offline
- **PDF (Portable Document Format) works well for this collection.**
- **Provide repository contact information for users who want high-resolution images.**

Should I Include the Finding Aid?

- **Will your finding aid make it easier for a remote user to understand and use your collection? If not, fix it up or omit it.**
- **Do you already have a usable finding aid online? If so, put a link to it in the metadata.**
- **Do you have a usable finding aid not yet online but available in digital format? If so, upload it as part of the collection.**

Add Repository Contact Information

Name of Collection Tait Collection (1809-1922)
Gift Deposit Purchased Loaned for Duplication
Source Dr. Frank L. Owsley, Jr. as part of the James B. Sellers Collection

Date Received December 1974

Approximate Number of Items 500

Description of Material The collection includes material relating to James A. Tait (1791-1855) and his plantations in Wilcox County, Alabama. Included are the diaries (1815-1855) of James A. Tait, correspondence of family members (1809-1922), financial records (1817-1917), materials relating to slaves, legal papers (1832-1904), maps newspaper clippings, post office accounts, circulars, speeches.

Remove Donor Information

Best Foot Forward—Retype If Necessary

from the TAIT papers is to be used in a publication of ANY kind.
SEE REGISTER 3/24/94
Addition to none
Restrictions ~~none~~ Item 10 in Box 2 is Restricted. Permission of the donor is Required. 3/24/94

Remove References to Restricted Materials

Arrangement for Digital Collections

- **Original order doesn't always work for a digital collection.**
- **Splitting up some items can make them more useable and/or findable.**

1250
 cotton on hand now
 21st Jan'y
 L.P. -- 47 - Lbs
 H.P. - 109
 S.P. - 30

 184 = sugar pi.
 304 = total crop

H.P. my weaver wheels, for 3 days
 yours, to be ready in June or July next
 to have all the reap hooks
 & cradles put away
 Cotton bales on hand
 now 7th Feb. Horn Place.

1250
 Plantation rules.
 During the months of June
 July & August, give the negroes
 1/2 of every Saturday, if they w
 ork well. — The most effe
 ctual way of improving m, la
 nds, a desideratum; get Professor
 Voorn's reports, see if there
 is any merit on my land —
 Prices iron. 4 1/2 cents all

James A. Tait's Memorandum Book, 1850-1855

L.P. - 30
 H.P. - 47

 77

The hydraulic machine. Mr. Vosen of
 Dallas Co. has one, it cost him \$160.00
 less spring 800 yds off. M. Lee.

home — Trust in the Lord
 and so good; so shall Thou dwell in
 the land, and verily Thou shalt
 be fed 37th Psalm, 3rd verse —

Dep't
 of
 the

256
 as Bluff Wilcox Co Ala
 to the 31 of March 1851

postage on unpaid letters received at this office this quarter	\$ 9 50
To postage on paid letters sent from this office this quarter	\$ 1 05
	10 55
To postage on news papers and pamphlets received at this office this quarter	\$ 5 69
	16 24

In Ar't current with the Gen'l Post office

By commission on \$10-55 letter postage at 40 pr Ct. — — —	\$ 4 22
By commission on \$5-69 news papers and pamphlets at 50 pr Ct. — — —	\$ 2 84
	7 06
	16 24
J. A. Tait P. M.	\$ 9 18

James A. Tait's Post Office Accounts, 1850-1855

Arrangement for Digital Collections

- **Clustering similar items together can make them more findable and/or give them context.**
 - **Tax assessments and receipts**
 - **Slave purchase receipts**
 - **Documents related to distribution of James A. Tait's estate**

James Asbury Tait, Will

In the name of God Amen! I, James A Tait of the county of Wilcox and state of Georgia, being of good health of body,

and capacity so to do, do make and publish this my last will and testament hereby revoking & making void all former wills by me at any time heretofore made and first and principally I commit my soul into the hands of my Creator who gave it, and my body to the earth to be interred in a decent & respectable manner without any unnecessary show

	Dist	Share	Self on Div of Negro	over on Div of Negro	bal
Mrs C. C. Tait	3,044	00			3,044 00
C. W. Tait	5,303	14	137 50		5,440 64
Felix Tait	5,303	14		162 50	5,140 64
R. H. Erwin & Sarah & Robert Tait	5,303	14		812 50	4,490 64
J. H. Beck & Martha J	5,303	14		62 50	5,240 64
Wm D King & Rebecca S	5,303	14	137 50		5,440 64

Division of Property of James A. Tait Estate

In the state of Georgia
 Columbus County 3 Before me Geo. W. Smith a Notary Public of said County & state duly sworn & qualified this day personally

Power of Attorney from Charles William Tait to James Goode Tait



As per my name & affix my official seal in Columbus, this May 7th AD 1855
 Geo. W. Smith
 Notary P. C. G.

Legacy from James Asbury Tait Estate to Charles William Tait

Rec^d of Felix Tait and R. H. Erwin Executors of the last will and Testament of James A. Tait

also the Negro property allotted & set off to the said C. W. Tait on the final division of the Negroes belonging to said Est. this 23rd June 1856.

C. W. Tait, by Jas. J. Tait Att^y for C. W. Tait

Description for Digital Collections

- Item level description is essential. In some cases, sub-item (page) level description will be necessary.
- Give items descriptive titles. Put record group and folder numbers in a separate field.

James Asbury Tait, Will

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and capacity so to do, do make and publish this my last will and testament hereby revoking & making void all former wills by me at any time heretofore made and first and principally I commit my soul into the hands of my Creator who gave it, and my body to the earth to be interred in a decent & respectable manner without any unnecessary show

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 AD 1855

Geo. W. Smith
 Notary P. C. G.

Description for Digital Collections

- **In the Description field:**
 - **Describe the item itself (more fully than the title).**
 - **Give the item some context.**

Rec^d of Felix Tait and R. H. Erwin Executors
of the last will and Testament of James A. Tait
dec^d. the sum of five thousand three hundred
and eighty eight Dollars & 25/100 being full pay-
ment, Satisfaction and discharge of a decree this
day rendered in the Probate Court of Wilcox
County, on the final Settlement of the Est. of Jas
A. Tait dec^d., said decree being in favour of
L. W. Tait and against the said Felix Tait
and R. H. Erwin
also the
said L. W.
recovers
1856.

This document is a legal document for the transfer of a legacy from the estate of James Asbury Tait to his son Charles William Tait and is signed on his behalf by another son James G. Tait, who holds Power of Attorney for Charles. ... The Tait family were plantation owners in Wilcox County, Alabama; active in politics in Georgia, Alabama, and Texas.

Description for Digital Collections

- Subject terms or keywords should be assigned to the item (not just the collection).

Rec^d of Felix Tait and R H Erwin Executors
of the last will and Testament of James Tait
dec^d. the sum of five thousand three hundred
and eighty eight Dollars & 25/100 being full pay-
ment, Satisfaction and discharge of a decree this
day rendered in the Probate Court of Wilcox
County, on the 1st of
a Tait dec^d, said
L. W. Tait and
and R H Erwin
also the negro
said L. W. Tait
negroes belonging
1856.

Plantation life

Wilcox County (Ala.)

Slavery

Slave records

Farm management—

Records and correspondence

Wills

Legacies

Distribution of decedents' estates

Transcribe or Not?

- **Yes, please. If you possibly can manage it.**
- **Transcription makes the full text of your digital items available for searching, which improves findability.**

1850

Plantation rules.

**During the months of June
July & August, give the negroes
1/2 of every Saturday if they w-
ork well. ---- The most effe-
ctual way of improving my la-
nds, a desideratum; get Profesor
Toomey's reports, see if there
Is any marl on my lands. -----**

...

**Rain, a great one on sun-
day the 20th Jany, the day after
Gen. King left my house for
home ---- Trust in the Lord
and do good; so shalt thou dwell in
the land, and verily thou shalt
be fed. 37th Psalm, 3d verse ---**

1850

Plantation rules.

*During the months of June
July & August, give the negroes
1/2 of every Saturday, if they w-
ork well. ---- The most effe-
ctual way of improving my la-
nds, a desideratum; get Profesor
Toomey's reports, see if there
is any marl on my lands.*

*Pries. iron. 4 1/2 cents all
round diff-orts. Gen King.*

*Rain, a great one on sun-
day the 20th Jany, the day after
Gen. King left my house for
home ---- Trust in the Lord
and do good; so shalt thou dwell in
the land, and verily thou shalt
be fed 37th Psalm, 3^d verse ----*

Transcribe or Not?

- **Transcription is helpful for all users, but especially for users with visual challenges.**

depressed by the severe drought, we have not
a good rain here since June.

Louisa joins me in love to you all.

Your affectionate son
C. Wm. Tait

Jas A Tait Esqr

Black's Bluff.

...

Louisa joins me in love to you all.

Your affectionate son,

C. Wm. Tait

Jas. A. Tait Esqr.

Black's Bluff

[written in pencil, upside down]

Juli 35

Mitch 49

Leuwe 32

Glos 55

Worth 65

Horis 60

Nelson 65

Mily 40

Isac 29

Lotty 33

...

“Problem” Materials

- **Photos that depict racist, sexist, otherwise offensive behavior**
- **Materials with racist, sexist, otherwise offensive images**
- **Materials with racist, sexist, profane, obscene, otherwise offensive language**
- **Materials that are offensive or disturbing by their nature**

Plantation rules. Blow the
horn at sunrise for the negroes to start
to work. --- To make them get off
quick after the horn is blowed, alwa
ys whip the last one out. ---

**Plantation rules. Blow the
horn at sunrise for the negroes to start
to work. --- To make them get off
quick after the horn is blowed, alwa-
ys whip the last one out. ...**

the business ---

“Problem” Materials

- The decision to include or exclude problem materials should be a repository-level decision.**
- But ... it may change from one collection to another.**
- You may want to document your decision process.**
- You may want to add contextual information or content warnings.**

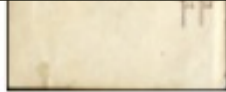
Tait Family Papers: Archival Collection



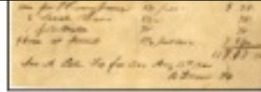
Tait Family Papers: Digital Collection



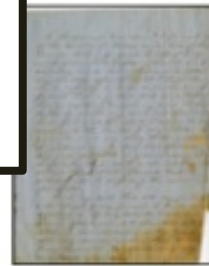
James Asbury
Tait, Post Office
Account,
1840-1850



James Asbury
Tait, Post Office
Account,
1851-1853



James Asbury
Tait, Tax
Documents,
1840-1851



James Asbury
Tait, Will and
Distribution of
Estate, 1851-1856



Letters from
Charles William
Tait, Columbus,
Texas, to James
Asbury Tait, Black's
Bluff, Alabama,...



Tait Plantations,
List of Enslaved
Women and Their
Children



Tait Plantations,
Lists of
Enslaved Workers,
by C



Tait Plantations,
Lists of
Enslaved Workers,



Tait Plantations,
Purchases of
Enslaved Workers

[http://content.lib.auburn.edu/cdm/
search/collection/taitfamily/](http://content.lib.auburn.edu/cdm/search/collection/taitfamily/)