

## Guide to the Stephens G. Croom Papers

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### **Descriptive Summary:**

Creator: Velma L. Croom, 1911-2001

Title: Stephens G. Croom Papers

Dates: 1936-1993 [Bulk 1963-1988]

Quantity: 2 linear feet

Abstract: Genealogical material, a scrapbook, and material on the acquisition and arrival of the USS *Alabama* in Mobile.

Accession: 06-09-531 ; 272-1993

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### **Biographical Note:**

Stephens G. Croom was born in 1906. Initially, Croom was active in the utility industry, but ultimately devoted forty years of his life to building a successful career in the insurance business. As a key member of the USS *Alabama* Development Committee Board, Stephens played a pivotal role in bringing the South Dakota-class battleship USS *Alabamato* Mobile and developing the site into a major tourist attraction. Both Stephens and his wife, Velma Lassiter Croom, were politically and civically active in Mobile society. Velma served as the president of the Junior League of Mobile, Inc., from 1950 to 1951. Stephens G. Croom died in 1992.

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### **Scope and Contents:**

Consists of correspondence; genealogies, including charts, birth/death/ marriage records, and newspaper and journal articles; histories; photographs; publications; a scrapbook created by Velma Croom for her children; and typescripts and correspondence related to the 1837 wreck of the steamboat *Home*, which killed Hardy Bryan Croom and his family. The bulk of the collection, however, pertains to Stephens Croom's work with the USS *Alabama*.

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**Arrangement:**

The material is arranged into 4 series: 1. Genealogy, 1936-1978; 2: USS *Alabama*, 1962-1987; 3: Scrapbook, 1962-1993; 4: Steamboat Wreck of 1837.

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**Access Restrictions:**

This material is open to research.

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**Preferred Citation:**

Stephens G. Croom Papers, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL.

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**Series Description:****Series 1. Genealogy, 1936-1978, 1 folder**

This series contains Croom genealogy in the form of typescripts and correspondence. It also includes material on both the Howard and Marshall families. The typescripts are made up of genealogy charts, birth/death/ marriage records, copies of newspaper and journal articles, and short biographical sketches. Any correspondence that was directly related to a particular typescript was kept with that typescript. All other correspondence was moved to the subseries listed below. **For additional genealogy, see series four, Steamboat Wreck of 1837.**

**Subseries 1A. Correspondence, 1936-1988, 1 folder**

The majority of the letters in this subseries were written from Stephens Croom to various family members and contained genealogical inquires. In many cases, the response letter is included. The letters are arranged chronologically.

**Series 2. USS *Alabama*, 1962-1987 (Bulk 1973-1977), .5 cu. ft.**

This series will provide researchers with a well-rounded view of the process of acquiring and

relocating the USS *Alabama*—from the initial idea in 1962, to the preparation of the site and facility for exhibition, to the culmination of historical due diligence in 1987. The correspondence within this series, dated from 1965 through 1987, is primarily focused on understanding the history of the ship. Also included are personal stories; minute-by-minute accounts of several military engagements, including a photocopy of a book that recounts a major battle in which the ship was involved; information on the crew and radar equipment; a declassified official military action report; and, lastly, plan-of-the-day documents dating from November 15, 1943 to November 10, 1944.

**Series 3. Scrapbook, 1962-1993 (Bulk 1963-1978), .5 cu. ft.**

Compiled by Velma Croom for her children, the scrapbook contains memorial items such as newspaper accounts published at the time of Stephens' death. It also consists of items related to Stephens being named Mobilian of the Year in 1976, speeches and invitations to events in his honor, and newsletters and church bulletins from organizations with which he was affiliated. There is also material from his time as a member of the USS *Alabama* Battleship Commission, including photographs, correspondence, and newspaper clippings, as well as invitations to various events related to the ship. Of note is a photograph of the members of the USS *Alabama* Battleship Commission with Governor George C. Wallace. Each folder in this series is made up of one page from the original scrapbook, which was disassembled during processing.

**Series 4. Steamboat Wreck of 1837, 1 folder**

This series contains primarily typescripts and a few pieces of correspondence regarding the wreck of the steamboat *Home*, which occurred in 1837 and took the life of Hardy Bryan Croom and his three children. The bulk of the series relates to the Florida court case determining who died first, father or son, and in turn, which side of the family was entitled to the family's inheritance. Included in this series are letters (typed and handwritten), journal and newspaper articles, and court documents, including genealogy records. The series is arranged chronologically, when dates are known. **(See Box 1 for this series)**

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**Content List:**

**Box 1**

1. Genealogy, 1936-1978
2. Genealogy, Correspondence, 1936-1988
- 4.1. Steamboat Wreck of 1837

## **Box 2**

1. USS *Alabama*, Acquisition, Chronology and Exhibition
2. USS *Alabama*, Audio – Visual: Photographs, B&W
3. USS *Alabama*, Audio – Visual: Color Postcards and Color Negatives
4. USS *Alabama*, Audio – Visual: Art
5. USS *Alabama*, Correspondence: 1965-1972
6. USS *Alabama*, Correspondence: 1973
7. USS *Alabama*, Correspondence: 1974
8. USS *Alabama*, Correspondence: 1976-1977
9. USS *Alabama*, Correspondence: 1982-1987
10. USS *Alabama*, Confederate Navy Steel Engraving Plate Literature
11. USS *Alabama*, Development Committee Members
12. USS *Alabama*, History
13. USS *Alabama*, Legislative Documents
14. USS *Alabama*, News Clippings
15. USS *Alabama*, Publications
16. USS *Alabama*, USS *Drum*, Submarine
17. USS *Alabama*, USS *Wisconsin* Research

## **Box 3**

- 1-40. Scrapbook, 1962-1993