

J. Z. George papers CPRC.JZG

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Summary Information

Repository:	Mississippi State University Libraries
Creator:	George, James Z. (James Zachariah), 1826-1897
Title:	J. Z. George papers
ID:	CPRC.JZG
Date [inclusive]:	1846-1899
Date [bulk]:	1892-1894
Physical Description:	2 Cubic Feet
Language of the Material:	English .

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Biographical / Historical

James Zachariah George, better known as J. Z. George and Mississippi's "Great Commoner", was a soldier in the Mexican-American war, a Confederate General, successful lawyer, Mississippi Supreme Court justice, United States Senator, and a statesman. George is well known for his confederacy redemption politics and was one of the writers of the 1890 Mississippi state constitution.

J. Z. George spent most of his life in Mississippi but was born in Georgia on October 18, 1826 to Joseph and Mary George. Joseph died in June 1828, before his son's second birthday. Mary would remarry in 1830 to Seaborn Durham. Though J. Z. was young at his mother's second marriage, he never saw Durham as a father figure. Instead, it was his mentor William Cothran who seemed to have influence over the young man. J. Z. legally emancipated himself at age 19, married Cothran's sister in law, Elizabeth Brooks Young, and enlisted for the Mexican-American war.

Upon return from the war, where he served under Jefferson Davis, J. Z. George successfully petitioned the Mississippi Courts to become one of the youngest attorneys in the state. He officially began practicing law with his mentor, Cothran. George was described as impatient, a workaholic reclusive who questioned authority, but was devoted to his wife. By 1850, at age 24, J. Z. George owned twelve slaves; by 1860, that number would grow to 65. He would declare himself a southern democrat in 1850.

J. Z.'s career was full of highs and lows. He was a private in the Mexican-American war, became a colonel in the Civil War, and would later obtain the title of General. By some accounts, he was not a successful soldier, as he was captured twice during the Civil War. His professional career as a lawyer, but before and after the War was more successful. William Cothran continued to be a mentor and father-figure to J. Z., with Cothran moving in with the Georges after his wife and daughter died. George would later take his son-in-law, J. H. H. Hemingway as a partner in his law firm. J. Z. was a Mississippi state Senator in 1853-1854, was a state recorder for the court of appeals, and served on the board of secession before the Civil War. George's Postbellum career saw him return to law where he continued to practice. In 1870, he was a member of the group to found Mississippi A & M, which would become Mississippi State University.

The highpoint of J. Z. George's political career came with his election to the United States Senate to represent Mississippi in 1881. He would remain a Senator until his death in 1897. While in congress, George pursued southern redemptive partisan politics. He also supported the Chinese Exclusion Act. It was also during this time that J. Z. helped pen the Mississippi state constitution. This infamous document shows the politics of white southern Democrats of the time. It does allow for black voting to align with Constitutional amendments, but was written to keep white power securely in place.

J. Z. George was a supportive husband and doting father. He and E. B., whom he often called Bettie, had eleven children, with nine living to adulthood. This collection of letters shows J. Z. and E. B.'s concern for their family and grandchildren. Elizabeth Brooks Young George passed away on July 29, 1897. J. Z. George followed his wife two weeks later and passed on August 14, 1894 at 2:40 p.m.

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Scope and Contents

J. Z. George Collection Scope and Content:

This collection is composed of one box of correspondence from 1846 to 1899 with the majority of letters being written between 1892-1894 during which time J. Z. and his wife, Elizabeth Brooks or E. B. George, were in Washington as he served as a United States Senator representing the state of Mississippi. The collection also contains one receipt book and three scrapbooks of family news.

The correspondence contained in the collection is mostly written from E. B. George to her daughter, Elizabeth "Lizzie". A few letters in the collection are written by J. Z. to Lizzie and other recipients. A few other letters in the collection are written to or from individuals outside of the George family. The majority of the letters offer insight to a well-to-do political southern family in the late nineteenth century. The letters are full of family inquiries, gossip, accounts of minor illnesses, births, descriptions of their homes, and other aspects of their day to day lives. E. B. appears to be accustomed to her place in society as she frequently mentions in her letters

disappointments she perceived, elite visitors she entertained, descriptions of new clothing, and a disconcerting number of new maids, cooks, and other domestic help. E. B. does provide detailed names and accounts of how she spent her time in Washington DC. Also of note are the details of how she treated minor illnesses, a surgery to remove a tumor from J. Z.'s tongue, and receiving 'electricity' and massage treatments after an illness left one side of her body weakened.

The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, handwritten notes and poetry, and articles. The two scrapbooks in the larger flat box are more sporadic and include articles that do not center on the George family. The scrapbook that is in the small clamshell box seems to focus more narrowly on J. Z. George's career, life, and death.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Controlled Access Headings

- Mississippi--Politics and government--1865-1950
- Mississippi -- Race relations.
- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.

General

Possible Family Tree: James Zacharias George born to Joseph (d. 1828) and Mary (d. 1881). J. Z. married Elizabeth Brooks Young in May of 1847. Children of J. Z. (10/18/1826 – 8/14/1897) and E. B. George (d. 7/29/1897):

1. Frances "Frannie" Lenore George, born 3/25/1848 (m. William Robert Barksdale) 2. Thomas Jefferson George, (died in infancy) 3. Emma George, born 9/17/1850, possibly suffered from ailments throughout her life. One report listed she wore special shoes as a child. (m. J. B. H. Hemingway, attorney) 4. Kate George, born 8/2/1852 (m. F. M. Aldridge) 5. Mary George, born 8/12/1854 (m. William Hayne Leavell) 6. Alfred Hudson George, born 8/16/1856 (m. Fanny Tarver) 7. William Cothran George, born 7/24/1858 (unmarried) 8. Frank George, born 10/22/1861 (possibly died in infancy) 9. Elizabeth "Lizzie" George (m. Dr. T. R. Henderson) 10. Pinckney Smith George (m. Kate Duncan) 11. Joseph Warren George (m. Kate Hammond)

(one record states that two children died in infancy. Thomas is known as in one letter J. Z. states that he had four girls, and finally had a son when Alfred was born. Frank may have possibly been the other as less records exist with this name. Or there may have been another child born and not recorded).

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Collection Inventory

Correspondence and Documents

Language of the Material: English.

1846 Letters	box 1	
1846 Letters	box 1	folder 1
Title/Description	Instances	
[Unknown] To James Z. George, June 28, 1846.		
Description		
This letter written to J. Z. George discusses the author's melancholy after recent deaths in his or her family; stating he only has only one slave left.		
1856 Letters	box 1	folder 2

Title/Description	Instances	
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J. Z. George To Fannie, Emma, Kate and Mary, January 1, 1856.

General

This is a type-written letter trascribed in 1937 by Emma George Herringway. The letter is from J. Z. to the oldest four children encouraging them to behave for their mother and explaining that he has to work in order to buy their Christmas gifts.

1861 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
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Cathie To J. Z. George, October 6, 1861.

box 1 folder 3

General

This letter appears to be written by an adult (E.B.?) for young Cathie. It says he has been a good boy, has minded his mother and uncle, and enjoys riding his horse.

1872 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
-------------------	-----------	--

J. Z. George To [Unknown], May 24, 1872.

box 1 folder 4

General

Written on law office letterhead, this letter mostly concerns an illness of one of the children.

1879 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
-------------------	-----------	--

J. Z. George To Mr. Chambers, July 1, 1879.

box 1 folder 5

General

This letter concerns a legal case including instructions to Mr. Chambers to review the case before it reaches the Federal Courts.

1883 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
-------------------	-----------	--

J. Z. George to Billie, February 10, 1883

box 1 folder 6

General

This letter accompanied \$50 sent home to Mississippi and discusses his illness (headaches) that caused him to miss a day of work.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, March 18, 1883. box 1 folder 7

General

This letter concerns daily life in Washington including decorating the house, a trip to Boston, and minor illnesses of the family.

JZG to Lizzie George, April 12, 1883 box 1 folder 8

General

This letter from JZG to his daughter accompanied a \$50 check and discusses his financial concerns and debt.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, April 28, 1883. box 1 folder 9

General

This letter mostly deals with domestic concerns, and an admonishment from EBG to Lizzie to "take care of dimes and the dollar will be alright." Also, E.B.'s concern with not finding suitable domestic help is discussed. Finally, J. Z.'s demeanor is discussed and E. B. claims he has been pleasant as he "bears adversity better than prosperity."

JZG to Lizzie George, June 13, 1883. box 1 folder 10

General

J.Z. sent \$25 to Lizzie.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, August 8, 1883. box 1 folder 11

General

This letter was written from Mississippi and concerns local gossip about marriages, illnesses, births, and deaths of family friends; it gives while giving insight into daily life of the George's social circle.

JZG to Lizzie George, August 29, 1883. box 1 folder 12

General

J.Z. is sending a US Treasury draft for \$100 and a draft on R and M for \$30 with the hopes that farming will be better next year.

JZG to Lizzie George, December 10, 1883.	box 1	folder 13
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General

This is a note accompanying another draft.

1885 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
E. B. George to Lizzie George, January 25, 1885	box 1	folder 14

General

This lengthy letter gives great detail to the gossip and happenings in Washington, including how E. B. as J. Z.'s wife is received.

JZG to Lizzie George, July 9, 1885.	box 1	folder 15
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General

This is a note accompanying a draft to Lizzie and also discusses his illness (inflamed eyelids, received new glasses).

1886 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
E. B. George to Lizzie George, February 13, 1886.	box 1	folder 16

General

J. Z. has decided to rent a larger house in D.C., and has narrowed it down to two options (1 - corner of Ninth and Man Ave. 2 - on P. Street). The rest of the letter concerns what each house would need to furnish it, and family gossip and inquiries.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, August 30, 1886.	box 1	folder 17
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General

This letter mostly concerns family updates, gossip around Mississippi, and J. Z.'s travels through Mississippi for the following weeks. One interesting fact contained in this correspondence was their won,

Pinck (Pinckey) was supposedly robbed and had his clothing stolen at school; E. B. was very concerned.

JZG to Lizzie George, December 2, 1886.	box 1	folder 18
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General

A request for Lizzie to join them in Washington.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, December 19, 1886.	box 1	folder 19
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General

This letter begins with E. B. recounting her recent illness, then moves to who is coming to their home in Mississippi for Christmas. The letter also states that E. B. will be making presents this year as money is tight, then discusses the new dresses she is having made.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, December 28, 1886.	box 1	folder 20
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General

The Georges hosted 19 people for Christmas, and J. Z. went to Memphis on Business. The rest of the letter described family members, gossip, and new clothing.

1887 Letters

Title/Description

Instances

E. B. George to Lizzie George, January 17, 1887.	box 1	folder 21
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General

E. B.'s tone in this letter is unusual; she is upset with the lack of correspondence from her husband and family. The letter contains many medical concerns of the family including having teeth pulled, and domestic help concerns as she has another new maid.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, February 2, 1887.	box 1	folder 22
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General

Family gossip, J. Z.'s schedule, and the weather are discussed.

JZG to Lizzie George, October 19, 1887.	box 1	folder 23
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General

At the time the letter was written, J.Z. was in New Orleans. He sent \$100 to Lizzie, had a doctor's appointment, and was meeting with Jeff Davis.

1888 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
E. B. George to Lizzie George, August 30, 1888.	box 1	folder 24

General

This letter is more political than E. B.'s past correspondence - and says J. Z. is happy and busy "working up the republicans." The letter also describes a disagreement on the senate floor (Blackburn versus Keale or Heale) and that J. Z. spoke that morning and the day before.

1889 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
[Unknown] to Mama, January 26, 1889.	box 1	folder 25

General

It is difficult to read the author's name - but possibly Melneze or Melpuz. There is a congressional stamp visible on the paper. The letter discusses health, weather, and incidents 'back home in Greenwood, Mississippi', but also includes a political statement about Harrison's election causing an extra session.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, December 4, 1889.	box 1	folder 26
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General

This letter was written from Washington, and discusses the family that is currently visiting. E. B. took the grandchildren to the Smithsonian and the Capitol building.

1890 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
A. Easom to "Little Sister", August 3, 1890.	box 1	folder 27

General

This letter is vague in who the author or recipient may be, and acknowledges a "terrible family horror", but does provide detail.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, August 20, 1890.	box 1	folder 28
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General

This personal letter describes E. B.'s health, visitors, new maids, and includes a recipe for icecream cake.

E. B. George to Lizzie George, August 28, 1890.	box 1	folder 29
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General

This letter does contain some political information, as it states that E. B. does not know when the (MS) convention will adjourn, but she is afraid to go to Hattiesburg. The letter also discusses family matters including one sister being reluctant to go to Lizzie's upcoming wedding.

Frank Johnston to JZG, November 20, 1890.	box 1	folder 30
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General

This is a thank you note from Frank Johnston and his wife for being invited to Lizzie George's wedding.

E. C. Watt to Lizzie George Henderson, November 1890.	box 1	folder 31
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General

This letter is a congratulations on Lizzie's wedding, and references a letter sent by Lizzie to Ms. Watt describing the ceremony and presents.

1891 Letters

Title/Description

Instances

Mary George-Leavell to Lizzie George-Henderson, January 2, 1891.	box 1	folder 32
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General

This letter between sisters focuses on family inquires, activities (Mary was handstitching napkins for Lizzie), and the travels of Mary's husband as he raises money for the 'Mississippi evangelists'.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, January 7, 1891.	box 1	folder 33
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General

Written from Washington, the letter discusses politics more than many of E.B.'s letters. J. Z. was tired as he spoke on the floor Wednesday and a resolution for the election bill was introduced. J.Z. supported the financial bill ("It was right with the democratic programe") which was also supported by 8 republicans.

Kate Leavell to Lizzie George Henderson, January 28, 1891. box 1 folder 34

General

Written by a child, Kate, this letter states that she attended school and played outside everyday and enjoyed visiting friends. Her papa bought her a tricycle that was the 'prettiest in town'. This letter provides insight in to the families of well-to-do Mississippi families.

E. B. George to "Daughter", February 11, 1891. box 1 folder 35

General

This letter was probably not written to Lizzie, as it mentions that her husband was sick. It does recount family inquiries and gossip and tells of a new cook.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, June 29, 1891. box 1 folder 36

General

Written from Mississippi, this letter discusses J. Z.'s work schedule while not in DC and the health of the family.

1892 Letters

Title/Description**Instances**

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, February 6, 1892. box 1 folder 37

General

This letter references E. B. being weak on her right side and the weather is keeping her indoors. The letter also contains DC gossip and new domestic help.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, February 14, 1892. box 1 folder 38

General

This letter contains medical/health information including oil as a treatment and 'taking electric' for

E. B.'s weak side. The letter also states how much the treatments cost.

E. B. George to "Daughter", March 14, 1892. box 1 folder 39

General

The weather, gifts, DC gossip, and J.Z.'s good health are discussed. While the letter is addressed to 'daughter', it is probably for Lizzie as it mentions 'The Dr.' which is typically how she refers to Lizzie's husband.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, April 7, 1892. box 1 folder 40

General

This letter contains information about the family's health and inquiries. According to E. B., Lizzie's illness is due to spring approaching. She also mentioned her 'lameness' and difficulty walking. Finally, the cotton farm is discussed and E. B. questioned if they were going to plant as much as they did in the past due to "the alliance growing."

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, April 15, 1892. box 1 folder 41

General

E. B. expressed concerns about the floods in Mississippi in the vicinity of Columbus and Carrollton.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, June 14, 1892. box 1 folder 42

General

This letter mostly expressed E. B.'s shopping and new clothes while in DC. It mentions a silk at 85 cents a yard, and other specifics of the time. It also mentions a surgery for J. Z. where a portion of his tongue was removed, but "the last flesh cut from his tongue was found to be sound, healthy flesh."

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, June 21, 1892. box 1 folder 43

General

In this letter, E. B. stated that she recently had several dresses made. J.Z.'s tongue was reported to feel as though it had been scalded. She also disclosed the amount paid to the doctor for the surgery (\$100 for one doctor, and there would be a second bill.) And finally, it was reported that congress should adjourn in mid-July.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, July 15, 1892. box 1 folder 44

General

The hot weather in DC, Lizzie's lost 'good servants', and the postponement of congress's adjournment are discussed.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, July 24, 1892.	box 1	folder 45
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General

Along with the normal DC gossip, E. B. related that they were experiencing the hottest weather of the year. Also, congress had still not ended the session.

1893 Letters

Title/Description	Instances
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E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, January 21, 1893.	box 1	folder 46
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General

This letter contained news of J. Z.'s nephew (Robert George) had murdered someone and then took his own life, but there was little to no reaction to the event.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, February 10, 1893.	box 1	folder 47
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General

This letter relates E. B.'s improving strength, DC gossip, and some political comments. The day before, votes had been counted for the presidency and the ladies were allowed to go in to the house of representatives to watch.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, February 17, 1893.	box 1	folder 48
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General

This letter discusses the family's health (indigestion) and politics. E. B. went to the senate balcony to listen to a debate between Davenport of New York and southern Democrats.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, March 1, 1893.	box 1	folder 49
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General

DC gossip (Senator Colquit is very sick) and E. B.'s massage treatments are discussed.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, April 7, 1893.	box 1	folder 50
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General

This letter contains some political discussions as E. B. stated that J. Z. wanted to give the major [unknown] a place in the senate but Republicans would not allow it.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, April 15, 1893.	box 1	folder 51
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General

This letter contained instructions to Lizzie to open Cotesworth for their arrival. It also mentions that a neighbor will help E. B. take her 'electricity' treatment.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, December 5, 1893.	box 1	folder 52
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General

This correspondence is mostly family gossip such as lost keys, visitors, etc.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, December 27, 1893.	box 1	folder 53
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General

Gossip, purchases, and health are discussed in this letter. J. Z.'s eyes are inflamed again.

1894 Letters

Title/Description	Instances	
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E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, January 15, 1894.	box 1	folder 54
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General

This letter mostly contains gossip and health concerns - it does talk about treatment for colds.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, January 26, 1894.	box 1	folder 55
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General

This letter also discusses some medical treatments for minor illnesses as well as some political gossip. It also mentions the DC sewers are good as there is "no scent around the place."

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, February 3, 1894.	box 1	folder 56
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General

In this correspondence, family concerns and gossip concerning families in DC are discussed.

E. B. George to Cathie George, February 17, 1894.	box 1	folder 57
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General

Family gossip, a painting repair, and news of J. Z. sitting for a new portrait are relayed in this letter.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, February 27, 1894.	box 1	folder 58
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General

In this letter, the weather and family business concerns are discussed. The 'count' was successful.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, March 16, 1894.	box 1	folder 59
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General

Treatments for ailments (oil applied on E. B.'s lame side), other wellness concerns, DC gossip, and a description of guests are subjects in this letter.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, March 27, 1894.	box 1	folder 60
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General

This letter is more political than many others. Senate was adjourned due to the death of Senator Colquit. A description of the funeral schedule is provided. Also, family gossip and E. B.'s 'electric treatments' are discussed.

E. B. George to Lizzie George Henderson, March 31, 1894.	box 1	folder 61
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General

In this letter, an upcoming visit from Lizzie is discussed, specifically the rates that E. B. will charge her for staying with them. A grandson with typhoid fever is also included in this correspondence.

1895 Letters

Title/Description

Instances

JZG to "Son", February 11, 1895.	box 1	folder 62
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General

This letter is about business concerns, especially expansion of farm land and attempts to control the market. It is also interesting because it alludes to

an understanding as JZG states it will only work if others agree to participate.

G. D. Shands to JZG, March 11, 1895.	box 1	folder 63
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General

This letter, from an "Ole Miss" law school professor seems to be written in political support of JZG.

JZG to "Son", December 13, 1895.	box 1	folder 64
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General

Business matters such as inflation on drafts, an economic downturn, and some sort of family-owned port or platform are relayed in this letter.

1897 Letters

Title/Description	Instances
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L. C. Foster to W. C. George, August 25, 1897.	box 1	folder 65
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General

This letter was written by Mr. Foster at the Baptist Record in Jackson, MS to JZG's 6th child, William Cothran George. It is a receipt for monies and a thank you for an invitation to JZG's funeral. He refers to J. Z. as a "peerless statesman."

Kate Leavell to Lizzie George Henderson, December 21, 1897.	box 1	folder 66
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General

This letter, written from niece to aunt, describes Christmas presents that were purchased including a "Cinderalla" game, cards, silk handkerchief, and a crafat.

1899 Letters

Title/Description	Instances
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T. C. Catchings to "Cat" [Unknown], March 9, 1899.	box 1	folder 67
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General

As best as can be determined, this letter discusses papers sent to a postmaster requesting an adjustment, and travel to New York.

Undated Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances	
JZG to Lizzie George, [Unknown]	box 1	folder 68
General		
This undated correspondence accompanied money sent for expenses.		
JZG to Lizzie George, [Unknown]	box 1	folder 69
General		
This is a note that accompanied money sent to Lizzie.		
E. B. George to [Unknown], [Unknown]	box 1	folder 70
General		
This appears to be a second or third page of a longer letter that discussed E. B.'s accommodations during a travel.		

1890 Will and Testament for J. Z. George

Title/Description	Instances	
JZG's Will and Testament, 1890.	box 1	folder 72
General		
This is a Will and Testament written in 1890 by J. G. Hemingway. This appears to be an unfinished copy as there are notes written in margins.		

1862 Sales Receipt

Title/Description	Instances	
Receipt Ledger, 1862.	box 1	folder 71

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Scrapbooks

Language of the Material: English.

larger

Large Flat File Box

Title/Description	Instances	
Receipt Book, 1869-1872.	box 2	object 1

General

This is a hard-bound receipt ledger book that appears to cover the finances of JZG from 1869-1872. It contains outgoing and incoming payments. There are several outside receipts included.

Scrapbook and Newspaper Clippings, [late 19th Century]	box 2	object 2
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General

The smaller of the two scrapbooks appears to be family news of the Georges for the late 19th century with many of the newspaper clippings appearing to be from Georgia as Augusta, Atlanta, and Duluth are referenced. However, clippings from Memphis, and areas of Mississippi are also included, as is hand-written, unsigned poetry and notes.

Scrapbook and Newspaper Clippings, [late 19th Century].	box 2	object 3
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General

The larger of the scrapbooks also contains newspapers clippings but it appears to be more random and less focused on the Georges. Most clippings are not dated but those who do contain a date appear to be from the late 1860s-1890s. Alabama cities, New Orleans, and other regions are represented.

Small Clam Shell Box

Title/Description	Instances	
Scrapbook and Newspaper Clippings, [late 19th Century]	box 3	object 1

General

Of the scrapbooks, this one appears the most focused on the George family. Included are newspaper articles about JZG's career and death. It does include a copy of his funeral pamphlet.

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