

Guide to the John S. Sledge Papers

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: John S. Sledge, 1957-

Title: John S. Sledge Papers

Dates: 1580-2022

Quantity: 7 linear feet

Abstract: These papers are the documents of John S. Sledge that were used to conduct the writing for many of his published works.

Accession: 776-2023

Biographical Note:

John Sturdivant Sledge is an Alabama writer and author who researches and writes about the areas in and around the Gulf of Mexico. He was born in Gainesville, Florida, in 1957 and moved with his family in 1962 to Montevallo, Alabama, where he grew up. He currently lives in Fairhope, Alabama, with his wife. Mr. Sledge has had a successful career as a journalist and author. He graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in history and Spanish. He achieved his master's degree in historic preservation from Middle Tennessee State University. Mr. Sledge is a senior architectural historian for the Mobile, Alabama Historic Development Commission. He began working for the Commission in 1985. He was a newspaper Book Page editor for the *Mobile Press-Register*, writing over eight hundred articles during his career there. He has published journal articles, is a National Book Critics Circle member, and has published books about the Gulf Coast region and its history.

Sledge is the author of: *The Mobile River, An Ornament to the City*; *Old Mobile Ironworks, Cities of Silence*; *A Guide to Mobile's Historic Cemeteries*; *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History*; *Southern Bound: A Gulf Coast Journalist on Books, Writers, and Literary Pilgrimages of the Heart*; *The Mobile Museum of Art: Selections from Fifty Years of Collecting*; *These Rugged Days: Alabama in the Civil War*; *The Pillared City: Greek Revival Mobile*; and *Common Ground: Photographs of Havana and Mobile*.

Scope and Content:

The John Sledge Papers include correspondence, handwritten notes, typed essays, chapters, poems, and sketches. The contents include photographs, photocopied images, newspapers, newspaper clippings, CD ROM discs, cassette tapes, business cards, journals, notebooks, drafts of manuscripts, magazines, articles, and oversized folded documents.

Provenance:

Gift of John S. Sledge, 2023

Arrangement:

These papers are grouped by project for Sledge's writing as received from the donor.

Project: The Mobile River, 1580-2021 (2 linear feet)

This project contains contracts, correspondence, articles, notes, and chapter information for the book *The Mobile River*. Its topics include information concerning Mobile River demographics, waterways, landscapes, the Mobile River bridge, industry, native Americans, the Spanish colony, the Mobile colony, ships/shipbuilding, rights to water lots, Mobile Bay operations, natural disasters, and pollution in the bay.

Project: Publications & Mobile Historic Development Commission Work, 1847-2022 (1 linear foot)

This project includes some of John Sledge's published journal, newspaper, and magazine articles found grouped by like material in chronological order. Its topics include information on Rudolph Benz, colonial Mobile, the Civil War, Mobile cemeteries, and architecture in Mobile. There is correspondence regarding Alabama Heritage magazine and notes, photos, and drafts regarding the Mobile Historic Development Commission.

Project: *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History* 1676-2021 (1 linear foot)

This project contains contracts, correspondence, articles, notes, and chapter information for the book *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History*. Its topics include information concerning

the coastal environment, Gulf ecosystem/landscape, demographics, Spanish trade, British Gulf connections, French Gulf connections, piracy, lighthouses, exploration, ships/shipbuilding/shipwrecks, slave trade, cotton, and Naval battles.

Project: *Slavery in Old Mobile* 1706-2022 (1 linear foot)

This project contains contracts, correspondence, articles, notes, and chapter information for the book project *Slavery in Old Mobile*. Its topics include information concerning Mobile architecture, brickmaking, slavery in French Mobile, slavery in British West Florida, slavery in Spanish West Florida, slave ship Clotilda, demographics, abolitionists, underground railroad, Creoles, the Chastang family, Africa Town, and slavery in the Civil War.

Project: *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History* 1769-2019 (.5 linear foot)

This project contains drafts, illustrations, permissions, maps, notes, and chapter information for the book *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History*. Its topics include information concerning U-boats, ships/shipbuilding, Gulf ecosystems, trade, economy, human/natural disasters in the waterways, the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, hurricanes, pollution, and global warming.

Project: Article Projects 1699-2020 (.25 linear foot)

This project contains poems, notes, illustrations, permissions, and information on article projects conducted by Sledge. Its topics include information on the battle of Vigo Bay, USS Hartford, Bar Pilots, Pilot Town, "Wednesday at the Windsor" cassette tape, the Ivanhoe steamer, and Johnny Andrews.

Project: Eugene Walter 1921-2002 (.25 linear foot)

This project contains correspondence, drafts, articles, notes, newspaper clippings, photos, and information on Eugene Walter. Its topic includes Eugene Walter and Katherine Clark (scribe for Walter's memoir).

Project: *These Rugged Days: Alabama in the Civil War* 1823-2021 (1 linear foot).

This project contains contracts, correspondence, articles, notes, illustrations, permissions, and chapter information for the book *These Rugged Days: Alabama in the Civil War*. Its topics include Civil War demographics, industry, waterways, ships, river gunboats, infantry, blockades, Fort Morgan, Fort Stoddart, southern architecture, reconstruction, the occupation of Union forces, enslaved people in the Civil War, submarines, confederate navy ships, river

defense, obstructions for protection, the battles of Spanish Fort/Blakey, the battle of Daphne, the capture of Mobile, the River Fleet, General Rousseau's Raids, the steamboat Heroine, and the aftermath of the Civil War in Alabama.

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Guide prepared by: Graduate student Brian Lee, supervised by Deborah Gurt.

Guide updated by:

Guide last updated: 4/9/2024

Related Content: Listed below are other collections in The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library that are related to the topics found in the John S. Sledge papers:

The Chastang Family Papers (96-08-314)

Alabama Dry Dock & Shipping Company (81-03-60; 88-08-170; 90-08-200)

Daniel Geary Papers – Civil War – (93-09-278)

Mobile Historic Development Commission (90-04-210; 91-09-237; 92-18-251; 09-030489)

Mobile Press-Register & Mobile Bay Monthly

Mobile Bar Pilots Associations (94-09-284)

Sledge, John (96-09-310; 523-2010; 633-2012)

WHIL/Eugene Walter (04-09-422)

Content List:

Box 1:

Project: The Mobile River (1580-2021). 1 linear foot.

1. Contract & Correspondence (2011-2021)
2. Contract & Correspondence (2014-2018)
3. U.S. Coast Survey Mobile Bay (1843-1846)
4. Chap. 3, Colonial (1939 -2002)
5. Preface (1862-2011)
6. Chap. 2, Indian-Spanish (1759-1993)
7. Chap. 1, Mobile Described (1797-2014)
8. Chap. 4, American Dawn (1804-2012)
9. Chap. 5 Calliope Song (1829-2011)
10. Water Lots (1820-1911)
11. Chap. 8, Booster Dreams (1853-1895)
12. Wharves (1814-1939)
13. Chap. 9, Working (1821-2012)
14. Chap. 12, Modern Port - Dirty Water (1939-2013)
15. Alabama State Docks (1702-1975)
16. Alabama State Docks (1702-2011)
17. Steamboatin' (1797-1911)
18. Loose Material

Box 2:

Project: The Mobile River - Continued (1580-2021). 1 linear foot.

19. Negatives & Other Prints
20. Jane Clayton (2016)
21. Mobile River General (1820-2010)
22. Maps (1690-1904)
23. Color Images (1765-2012)
24. Preface (1937)
25. Mobile River 18th Century
26. Mobile River 19th (1894-1910)
27. Mobile River 21st Century
28. Bridges
29. Mobile River Invoices (2013-2014)
30. Mobile River Permissions (1702-2017)

31. Voting Machine Storage (1735-1988)
32. Chap. 10 Diversity (1893-2018)
33. Chap. 11 Storm, Fire, Mayhem, Amusement, Pleasure, Violence (1758-2013)
34. Mobile River Topo Maps (1580-1982)
35. ADDSCO (1859-1911)
36. Harbor Port War 1870 Work (1815-1973)
37. Epilogue (2004-2012)
38. Images (1937-2015)
39. John Sledge Book Illustrations (1937-2015)
40. John Sledge Book Illustrations (1776-2012)
41. Loose Material

Box 3:

Project: Publications & Mobile Historic Development Commission Work (1847-2022). 1
linear foot.

1. MHDC-Mobile Historic Development Commission (1985-1986)
 2. MHDC-Mobile Historic Development Commission (1985-1996)
 3. Rudolph Benz (1847-1994)
 4. Alabama Heritage Correspondence (1990-1992)
 5. Articles (1991-2006)
 6. Loose Material
- Alabama Heritage* (1991)
- Alabama Heritage* (1992) "Old Mobile Ironwork"
- Alabama Heritage* (1994) "The Tangible Past: Mobile's Magnolia Cemetery"
- Alabama Heritage* (1997) "Alabama's "Bengal Tiger": Alva Smith Vanderbilt Belmont"
- Alabama Heritage* (2002) "Mobile's Old Catholic Cemetery"
- Alabama Heritage* (2007) "Ornamental Ironwork: Signature of Antebellum Mobile"
- Alabama Heritage* (2007) "Ornamental Ironwork: Signature of Antebellum Mobile"
- Alabama Heritage* (2010) "Columns & Colonnades"
- Alabama Heritage* (2010) "Columns & Colonnades"
- Alabama Heritage* (2011) "Mobile's Hall-Ford House"
- Alabama Heritage* (2017)
- Alabama Heritage* (2017)
- Alabama Heritage* (2017)

Alabama Heritage (2019)
Alabama Heritage (2019)
Alabama Heritage (2020) "The Voyage of the Ain't-it-'Eil"
The Alabama Review (1987), "Summerfield in Dallas County"
The Alabama Review (2002), "Church Street Graveyard"
The Alabama Review (2002) "Church Street Graveyard"
Gulf Coast Historical Review (1987), "Understanding Southwest Alabama's Architectural Heritage"
Gulf Coast Historical Review (1990), "The Alabama Catalog, Historic American Building Survey"
Gulf Coast Historical Review (1990), "The Alabama Catalog, Historic American Building Survey"
Gulf Coast Historical Review (1990) "Shoulder to Shoulder: Mobile's Shotgun Houses"
The Journal of Southwest Georgia History (1983), "Cordele, 1887-1917: Thirty years of Growth and Booster Spirit."
The Journal of Southwest Georgia History (1985), "The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies"
The Journal of Southwest Georgia History (1987), "Echoes of the Past"
Landmark Letters (1995) John Sledge President Letter
Landmark Letters (1996) John Sledge President Letter
Landmark Letters (1997) John Sledge President Letter
Landmark Letters (1997)
Mobile Bay Monthly (1992) "Seeking a Future for the Past: Historic Preservation in Mobile"
Mobile Bay (2007) "My Quintessential Mobile"
Mobile Bay Monthly (2010) "French Connection"
Mobile Bay Monthly (2018)
Mobile Bay Monthly (2018) "Jean Laffite's Mobile"
Sea History (2021) "The Pastry War"
Sea History (2021-22) "The Battle of Vigo Bay"
The Mississippi Doctor (1942)
The Journal of the Association of Lunar & Planetary Observers (1977 & 1978)
Blue & Gray Magazine (1984) "Common Soldier: The Lots of War"
Old House Journal (1991)
The Southern Quarterly (1993)

Box 4:

Project: *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History* 1676-2021 (1 linear foot)

1. Gulf (2016-2021)
2. Village (1976)
3. Permissions (1974-2019)
4. Prologue, Small Craft Advisory (2015)
5. Introduction, The Ungovernable Gulf (1763-2016)
6. Introduction: The Ungovernable Gulf (1676-2016)
7. Indian Shore 1 (1911-2017)
8. John Sledge Gulf Book, 82 Contracts & Correspondence (2010-2018)
9. Spanish Sea 2 (1844-2014)
10. Spanish Sea 2 (1854-2008)
11. Colonial Crossroads 3 (1804-2010)
12. 4 Privateer's Haunt 4 (1729-1898)
13. 4 Privateer's Haunt 4 (1813-2016)
14. Cotton Seaway 5 (1836-2005)
15. Cotton Seaway 5 (1834-2014)
16. Troubled Waters 6 (1832-2015)
17. Vera Cruz Cities 7 (1843-2016)
18. Rachel (1956-2016)
19. Lorencillo (2013-2017)
20. Loose Material

Box 5:

Project: *Slavery in Old Mobile* 1706-2022 (1 linear foot)

1. Contracts & Correspondence (2018-2022)
2. Photos (1850-1935)
3. Prologue (1931-2016)
4. Colonial/Creoles (1970-2007)
5. 1 French Mobile (1706-2017)
6. 2 British West Florida (1763-1778)
7. 3 Spanish West Florida (1785-1997)

8. 4 Territorial Transition (1812-2005)
9. 5 Cotton City (1836-2019)
10. 5 Cotton City (1822-2002)
11. 5 Cotton City (1826-2014)
12. 6 Last Slave Ship Clotilda (1808-2019)
13. 7 The War (1862-2008)
14. 8 Jubilo! (1871-1968)
15. Hunting Pirates (2010-2014)
16. *Southern Bound* Press (2013-2014)
17. *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History* Draft
18. Loose Material

Box 6:

Project: *The Gulf of Mexico: A Maritime History* 1769-2019 (.5 linear foot)

Project: Article Projects 1699-2020 (.25 linear foot)

Project: Eugene Walter 1921-2002 (.25 linear foot)

1. *The Gulf of Mexico* Draft (2019)
2. *The Gulf of Mexico* Draft of Illustrations & References
3. Mobile Press Articles (1998-2008)
4. Information on U.S.S. Hartford (1902-1956)
5. American Sea 8 (1887-2021)
6. American Sea 8 (1880-2016)
7. Illustrations (1769-2005)
8. Vigo Bay (1719-2020)
9. Ivanhoe (2018-2019)
10. Blowout 9 (1869-2016)
11. Color (1699-1927)
12. Johnny Andrews (1975-1992)
13. Eugene (1921-2001)
14. Eugene Walter (1921-2002)
15. Loose Material
16. Loose Material

Box 7:

Project: *These Rugged Days: Alabama in the Civil War* (1823-2021) 1 linear foot.

1. ALCW, Correspondence (1860-2019)
2. Prologue Wilson & Ta Ta (Octavia S. Wynn) (1910-2019)
3. AL in 1860 (1840-1905)
4. 1 AL Not Submit (1858-1865)
5. Epilogue Gran & Gusta (1850-1862)
6. ALCW Permissions (2021)
7. 2 Town Full of Enemy (1850-1865)
8. 3 Hull Peppered (1823-1888)
9. Chap. 6 Rebel River (1853-1866)
10. 6 Mobile Bay (1864-1897)
11. 4 Streight (1863-1864)
12. Chap. 7 Rebel Defeat (1864-1866)
13. 8 Sp./Blakely (1864-1865)
14. 5 Rousseau's (1862-1864)
15. 9 End (1864-1865)
16. 7 Selma (1860-1865)
17. Sledge Drawing (1966)
18. Heroine (1866-1889)
19. Illustrations (1860-1884)
20. Loose Material