



State of Tennessee
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GOVERNOR WILLIAM TROUSDALE
(1790-1851)
PAPERS
1849-1851

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers of Governor William Trousdale contain an interesting amount of material relevant to the antebellum period of Tennessee. Trousdale served only a single two-year term as Governor of Tennessee, and as such only a small number of papers are available for his Administration. Among the interesting events that are represented within these papers are the various States' resolutions resulting from the passage of the Compromise of 1850 in Congress; slavery issues; the Wilmot Proviso (prohibiting the sale of negroes in the District of Columbia); the planned Southern Convention, which was held in Nashville, Tennessee in 1850; the African Colonization Society, and the creation of the Republic of Liberia; and the proposed Industrial Exposition of 1851, held in London, England. There is some correspondence regarding certain judicial appointments in Tennessee, which involved politicking against the Whig Party of Tennessee. The State Lunatic Hospital is discussed in one correspondence from Peter Martin, who submitted his resignation as Commissioner of said institution.

Governor Trousdale's papers could provide some interesting and useful information on the antebellum period in the South, and the slavery question as it leads to the secession of the South and the Civil War.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Governor William Trousdale Papers

- 1790 Born in Sumner County, Tennessee; his father, James Trousdale was from North Carolina and had fought in the patriot's army during the Revolution, as captain of a company of Whigs.
- 1813 When the Creek War of 1813 broke out, William Trousdale left school and volunteered as a private in the Tennessee army; when Trousdale's term of service expired he returned home and resumed his studies.
- 1814 When the Capital at Washington was burned (in the War of 1812), William Trousdale responded to the call for volunteers for the Southern army.
- 1815 In the spring, peace having been restored, Trousdale returned to Gallatin, Tennessee and resumed his studies once more.
- 1820 Admitted to the Bar in 1820, and practicing law until 1835, Trousdale is elected a Senator in the Tennessee State Legislature.
- 1836 Seminole War having broke out in Florida, Trousdale was elected a Major-General in the State Militia. After serving his term of enlistment, Trousdale returns to Sumner County, Tennessee.
- 1837 Nominated a candidate for U.S. Congress by the Democratic Party, but was defeated by the Whig Party candidate.
- 1840 Served as a Democratic Party Elector in the Presidential Election.
- 1847 Trousdale was appointed a Colonel of Infantry in the United States Army by President James K. Polk; serving with a notable distinction, Trousdale earns the nickname, "the War Horse of Sumner".
- 1849 Trousdale was nominated by the Democratic Party as a candidate for Governor; defeats the incumbent Whig governor Neil S. Brown in a close contest.
- 1851 Re-nominated by the Democrats, but is defeated for re-election by the Whig nominee, William Bowen Campbell.

- 1852 Trousdale was appointed Minister to Brazil by President Franklin Pierce; one inducement for this appointment was the hope that the climate would be beneficial to the health of former Governor Trousdale, who was a victim of chronic rheumatism.
- 1872 Governor Trousdale died on March 27th of pneumonia; buried in Gallatin, Tennessee.

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