



John Neville Birch, Mary Leila Caldwell (and others)

[Archive]: The John Neville Birch Family Papers, circa 1840-70

Macon, Georgia: [circa 1840s - 1960s]

\$8500

A small archive of family photographs and documents belonging to the ancestors of the famous American Missionary and U.S. Military Intelligence Officer, Captain John Birch, who was killed by Chinese Communist soldiers at the end of World War II.

The collection includes four daguerreotypes of John Birch's great-grandfather John Neville Birch, a Confederate soldier in the 12th Regiment, Georgia Cavalry who died of war injuries in 1863; and original photographs of other family members and relatives from Georgia dating from the 1840s to the early 1870s. Among the documents is an autograph friendship album owned by Carrie Birdsong with manuscript entries dating from 1852-62; and an early notebook of Mary Leila Caldwell (who married John Neville Birch, 2nd in 1884). The archive also includes genealogical papers compiled in the 1920s by John Neville Birch, 2nd; a typed copy of a long letter written by Captain John Birch from China in 1941; and miscellaneous books and articles on Birch family history and the John Birch Society. Anyone familiar with the iconic image of Captain John Birch in uniform will be amazed at the similarity of the young military officer to his great-grandfather from Macon, Georgia, whose life was cut short at the age of 28 due to war injuries in 1863 (Captain John Birch was killed in China in 1945 at the age of 27).



In addition to the four daguerreotypes of the elder Birch dating from the 1840s and 50s are contemporary photographs of the matriarchs of the Birch family, including the elder Birch's wife Margaret "Maggie" Sewell Snider (of Savannah), his son's wife Mary Leila Caldwell, and other relatives of the Snider, Caldwell, Birdsong, and Stovall families of Georgia.

Carrie Birdsong's friendship album contains several manuscript entries dating from 1852-62, written by various friends from throughout Georgia, including at Emory College, and including two autograph entries from friends serving in the Confederate Army: John G. Patton, of the 1st Regiment, Georgia Regulars, Macon, dating from: "Tybee Island, June 23rd, 1861"; and James O. A. Sparks, Chaplain 4th Georgia Volunteers, dating from: "Decem. 3rd, 1862 ... Valley, Virginia." Together with Mary Leila Caldwell's 1880-81 notebook from Wesleyan Female College, and 12 letters of genealogical information sent from various relatives to John Neville Birch, 2nd in the early 1920s. Also included is a later copy of a long and informative letter sent from Captain John Birch to his parents in October, 1941, in which he describes his experiences fleeing from occupying Japanese military forces throughout Zhejiang province in eastern China.

An historically compelling collection of materials from the Birch family.

A detailed listing of the items in archive follows.

I. Family Photographs (circa 1840s-70s)

Five portraits of John Neville Birch (b. January 4, 1835 – September 18, 1863)

1. Sixth plate daguerreotype (2 ¾ x 3 ¼ inches). With light hand coloring. Circa 1847. In wood case covered in decorative molded leather with a velvet pad in the interior, interior edges gilt. Portrait of J.N.B. as a boy. The top cover of case is detached, scattered tarnishing and some corrosion to the image, good.

2. Sixth plate daguerreotype (2 ¾ x 3 ¼ inches). With light hand coloring. Circa 1852. In beveled molded case covered in purple velvet with a silk pad in the interior, interior edges gilt, metal clasp. With an identifying paper slip pinned to the interior pad: "My husband J N Birch 17 yrs". The top cover of case is detached, scattered tarnishing and some corrosion to the image, good.

3. Sixth plate daguerreotype (2 ¾ x 3 ¼ inches). With light hand coloring. Circa 1853. In enamel wood case decorated in gold and inlaid mother of pearl, with a velvet pad in the interior, interior edges gilt, metal clasp. With an identifying paper slip pinned to the interior pad: "My husband J N Birch 18 yrs". Loss to the left edge 'spine back' at the crown and foot, tarnishing and fading to the edges of the image, good or better.

4. Ninth plate daguerreotype (2 x 2 ½ inches). With light hand coloring. Circa 1854. In wood case covered in decorative molded leather with a velvet pad in the interior, interior edges gilt. With an identifying paper slip pinned to the interior pad: "J N Birch 19 yrs". The top cover of case is detached, very good.

5. Sixth-plate ambrotype (2 ¾ x 3 ¼ inches). Circa mid to late 1850s. In wood case covered in decorative molded leather, interior edges gilt. With an identifying paper slip laid-in: "J N Birch – Dad's father". Lacking the top cover of case, else about very good.

Margaret "Maggie" Sewell Snider

Sixth-plate ambrotype (2 ¾ x 3 ¼ inches). Circa mid-1850s. In black thermoplastic case. Studio name stamped on inter frame: "Kimball, 347 Broadway, N-Y." Portrait of "Maggie Birch" (?) as a young woman. Lacking the top cover of case, else about near fine. An identifying paper slip: "Maggie Birch" is pinned to the top from another case, but kept with this ambrotype.

Benjamin Snider (Margaret Snider's father)

Ninth plate ambrotype (2 x 2 ½ inches). In wood case covered in decorative molded leather with a velvet pad in the interior. With an identifying paper slip pinned to the interior pad: "B. Snider". The top cover of case is detached, very good.

Thomas Snider

Sixth plate daguerreotype (2 ¾ x 3 ¼ inches). In wood case covered in leather decorative embossed in blind, with a velvet pad in the interior. With an identifying paper slip pinned to the velvet pad: "This is perhaps the picture of Thomas Snider, brother of Benjamin Snider". Modest tarnishing and spotting to the image, near very good.

Mary Stovall Birdsong

1. Sixth plate daguerreotype (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches) in wood case covered in decorative leather stamped in blind, with a velvet pad in the interior, interior edges gilt. With an identifying paper slip laid in: "My Mother's mother: Mary Stovall Birdsong". Some tarnishing and light spotting to the image, near very good.

2. Carte de visite. Albumen print (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 inches). Portrait of Mary Stovall Birdsong, likely made from the daguerreotype. Riddle's Gallery. Back mark: A. J. Riddle's Photographic Temple, Macon, Ga. Captioned on the back in ink: "My Mother's mother, Mary Stovall Birdsong / Written by Leila Caldwell Birch".

Carrie Birdsong Caldwell

Sixth plate ambrotype (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches). Circa 1865. In wood case covered in decorative leather case stamped in gold, with a velvet pad in the interior, interior edges gilt. With an identifying paper slip laid in: "Carrie Birdsong Caldwell and her daughter, my mother Leila Caldwell Birch". Scattered scratching and surface abrasion to the image, fair.

Three Portraits: Margaret Waldron Thompson (and Benjamin Schneider?)

Two ninth plate ambrotypes (2 x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches). Circa early 1850s. In wood cases covered in blind embossed decorative leather, each with a velvet pad in the interior. One is a portrait of a young woman with an identifying paper slip laid in: "Margaret Waldron Thompson" (1804-71); the other is an unidentified portrait of a young man, most likely Thompson's husband Benjamin Schneider (1801-52).

Carte de visite. Albumen print with light hand coloring (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 inches). Unidentified portrait of Margaret Waldron Thompson (?). Back mark: From Riddle's Gallery of Art, Wood's Old Stand, Macon, Georgia.

Unidentified Ambrotypes

Two sixth plate ambrotypes (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches). Circa early 1850s. Both in wood cases covered in blind embossed decorative leather, each case is lacking its top. An unidentified portrait of a young woman (darkening to the image, fair only); and of an infant (scattered spotting, good).

Albert Birdsong and John Caldwell

Carte de visite. Albumen print (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 inches). In contemporary printed paper sleeve. Back mark: From Riddle's Photographic Temple, Macon, Ga. Captioned on the paper sleeve in pencil: "Uncle Albert Birdsong / Uncle John Caldwell".

Mary Leila Caldwell Birch (b. January 14, 1864 – November 11, 1929)

Two albumen prints: Leila Caldwell Birch as a young girl (circa 1871).

Two Tintypes. Leila Caldwell Birch and other Caldwell family members? (circa early 1870s).

Two unidentified African-American servants

Gelatin Silver Print (3 x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches). Image of two elderly African-American women, standing outside. (Circa 1880s). Studio ink stamp on back: "McEvoy B. & S. Co. Amateur Finishing, Macon, Ga."

Two unidentified glass plate negatives (3 ¼ x 4 ¼ inches). Portrait of a young man. One is damaged, the other very good.

II. Manuscript Notebook and Friendship Album

Mary Leila Caldwell

(Notebook, 1880-81): Wesleyan Female College

Quarto. 28 leaves written in manuscript in ink (and pencil) on the rectos and versos. Bound in quarter diced calf and marbled paper over boards, with a printed paper label on front cover: Wesleyan Female College / Compositions. "Leila Caldwell" written in manuscript on cover label, and on front pastedown: "Mrs. J.N. Birch nee ..." Manuscript notes and doodles in ink and pencil on both pastedowns and last page, a few leaves have been removed, wear to the edges, about very good. Contains manuscript compositions (with her teacher's comments written in pencil), on Rome, Caesar, Shakespeare, and various other topics and subjects: "My Classmate"; "The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots," etc. Here, for example, is an extract from: "Criticism on Macbeth and Lady Macbeth" (March 6th, 1881) "... Lady Macbeth is entirely different from her husband in character, there is nothing in common with them except ambition. She has an iron will. No allusion born of guilty fear escapes her. While her husband is shaken with fears she is perfectly calm ..." Part of her "Diploma / Macon Georgia" is transcribed in pencil on the last page.

"Carrie E. Birdsong" (i.e., Caroline E. Birdsong, b. 1840 [?])

(Friendship album, 1852-62). Small quarto. Commercial album of blank leaves (several in color) of which 33 intermittent pages are written in manuscript. Illustrated with 10 engraved plates. Bound in black morocco over boards, with a decorative design stamped in gold on the spine and both boards. "Carrie E. Birdsong" written in ink and pencil on the front free endpaper. With a knitted silk border laid-in. Soiling and scattered foxing, wear and modest splaying to the board edges, about very good. Contains holograph entries in ink, signed or initialed by various friends, several of which are dated, for example: "Oxford, Oct. 10th, 1855"; "Emory College, September 22, 1857"; "Macon, Sept. 20th, 1859". Also includes entries from other places in Georgia (Covington, Savannah, Houston), and a few entries dating from the Civil War period: "[John G.] Patton, 1st Regiment Geo. Reglrs" [1st Regiment, Georgia Regulars, Macon], Tybee Island, June 23rd, 1861"; "Decem. 3rd, 1862 / James O. A. Sparks, Chaplain 4th Ga. Vols., Valley, Virginia". The 10 engraved plates have printed titles: "Saratoga Lake"; "Happy Moments"; "The Rescue"; "View of Hudson City and the Catskill Mountains"; "Highland Mary"; "Interior of a Highlander's Cottage"; "The Miniature"; "Flor MacIvor"; "The Valentine"; and "Little Red Riding Hood".

III. Genealogical Papers, 1921-25

One large envelope (10 ½ x 7 ½ inches) containing about 12 letters (TLS and ALS) written to John Neville Birch [Jr.?] from relatives and others, in response to his inquiries about Birch family history and genealogy. The letters are addressed to Birch at his home address and his company address (Juliette Milling Co.) at Macon, Georgia. Also included are accompanying notes and biographical records.

IV. Copy of letter from John M. Birch (to his parents)

Seven folio sheets (8 ½ x 13 inches) typed on the rectos. Shangjae, Kiangai, China: October 2, 1941. A long and informative letter, rich in content, in which Birch describes his experiences fleeing from occupying Japanese military forces throughout Zhejiang province in eastern China.

appreciate the radio. KGEL likes the messages short and snappy as yours have been, but I think it would be OK if you put a little more in,

Evangelist Wu Mong En and I had some interesting experiences on the way here (by the way, It's great to be able to sit down in a land that the suffering is free, and tell you fr frankly of our experiences.) We had to wait about 32 hours in and near a village called Hung-Lung- Tsuen; once we started before the dawn with two baggage porters and our two bicycles winding thru the mountains to the point where we were going to try to cross a Japanese patrolled motor road--the last barrier between us and FREE CHINA. We had almost reached the road when a spy employed by a Chinese smuggling company came hurrying back along the trail toward us; he shouted one short word which told our coolies that some Jananese were just ahead; they came running back toward us in a panic, and were all for trying to run back several miles to Hung-Lung-Tsuen, but we persuaded them to stop, then we all took cover in a bamboo and pine grove on the mountain side.

There were evedently some Chinese farther down the trail ahead of us because a few moments later we heard some

V. Books and Miscellaneous

The Birch Family History . Compiled by Bernerd L. O'Neil. Franklin, North Carolina: Genealogy Publishing Service, 1998. Small quarto. pp. xiii, 425. Bound in blue cloth over boards.

Birch, Burch Family in Great Britain and America. Volume 1. By Marilu Burch Smallwood. Adel, Georgia: Press of The Patten Publishers, (1957). Octavo. pp. ix, 423, 5. Bound in green cloth over boards.

The Blue Book of The John Birch Society. Fifth Printing. Copyright 1961 by Robert Welch. Ownership signature of "Leila Birch" in ink on the title-page. Spiral-bound printed cardboard covers.

The Secret File on John Birch. James and Marti Hefley. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, (First printing, March 1980). Ownership signature of "Geo. S. Birch" on the half-title leaf. Printed wrapper.

"The John Birch Society: A Report." Advertising Supplement to the *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1964.

[Two offprints]. "Belief and Principles of the John Birch Society." Remarks of John H. Roussetot. (Congressional Record, June 12, 1962); "The Man Who Buried John Birch" by Clyde Walter (Reprinted from the Amarillo Daily News, July 5, 1962). [BTC#421786]