

---

## Register of the Kerr-Hurd Family Collection, 1838-1946

### Collection number: Ms42

San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum

Lodi, California

#### Contact Information

- San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum
- 11793 North Micke Grove Road
- Lodi, CA 95241
- Phone: (209) 463-4119
- Fax: (209) 369-2178
- Email: [dwalker@uop.edu](mailto:dwalker@uop.edu)
- URL: <http://www.sanjoaquinhistory.org/>

Processed by:

Don Walker

Date Completed:

May 1998

Encoded by:

Don Walker

© 1998 San Joaquin County Historical Society & Museum. All rights reserved.

---

#### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Kerr-Hurd Family Collection,

**Date (inclusive):** 1838-1946

**Collection number:** Ms42

**Creator:** Kerr-Hurd family

**Extent:** 1 linear ft.

**Repository:** San Joaquin County Museum.

Lodi, CA 95241

**Language:** English

#### Access

Collection is open for research by appointment only.

#### Publication Rights

The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

#### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Kerr-Hurd Family Collection, Ms42, San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum.

#### Personal Names

Bessac, Henry William

Bessac, Nell Hurd (1888-1989)

---

Fish, Sarah Kerr (b. 1857)  
Hurd, Charles E. (d. 1935)  
Kerr, William Reed (1813-1861)  
Kerr, Frances Brown (d. 1918)  
Hurd, Emma California Kerr (1848-1941)  
Kerr, William R., Jr.  
Kerr, Benjamin E. (1855-1897)

### **Subjects**

Agriculture -California -San Joaquin County  
Physicians -California -San Joaquin County  
Politics -California -San Joaquin County  
Educators -California -San Joaquin County  
Women -California -San Joaquin County  
San Joaquin County -Social life and customs  
Overland journeys to the Pacific

### **Biography**

Dr. William Reed Kerr (1813-1861) studied medicine at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. During this period he married Frances Brown of Maytown, Pennsylvania. After receiving his license to practice (1843), Kerr moved with his wife to Miami, Ohio where they produced a son, John Brown (1847-1922) and a daughter, Emma (1848-1941). When he had lived about five years in Ohio, Dr. Kerr heard about the discovery of gold in California and resolved to go West with his family to offer his medical services to the miners of California. The Kerrs traveled to the Golden State via New Mexico and Arizona (1849), and, after many difficulties, including trouble with Indians and with quicksand along the Gila River, they arrived in San Joaquin County where they established themselves on a ranch east of Stockton called "Sheltered Oaks". From this base, Dr. Kerr became a "circuit-riding doctor," traveling from mine to mine, ministering to the needs of the sick as he found them. Kerr also opened a drug store in Stockton. During their years in California, the Kerrs had other children including William Jr. (1851-1872), Benjamin E. (1855-1897), Sarah [Fish] (b. 1857), and Louis C. Kerr.

Dr. and Mrs. Kerr were good friends of another prominent early physician in San Joaquin County, Dr. Dean Jewett Locke, who lived in the nearby hamlet of Lockeford. Both families participated in temperance society activities and in the establishment of the Republican Party in San Joaquin County (1856). Although William Kerr contracted typhoid and died suddenly at the age of forty-eight, his widow survived well into the twentieth century (1918). She later married a Mr. Russem.

The Kerr's eldest daughter, Emma California, attended the University of the Pacific and San Francisco Normal School, subsequently teaching school briefly in Merced County before marrying Charles E. Hurd of Stockton (1870). Mr. Hurd owned a dairy on the site of the present University of the Pacific campus near the Calaveras River until 1900. The family then moved to Lodi, where Mr. Hurd had operated a ten acre farm until his death (1935). The Hurds had eight children: Lila, Nell [Bessac], Clarence W., Frances [Manning], Ethel [Comfort], Lester K., Algae [Trewitt] and Charles Jr. The Hurd's second daughter, Nell, married Mr. Harry W. Bessac, who was for many years San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools.

### **Scope and Content**

The Kerr-Hurd family collection contains medical books, diaries and account books of Dr. William R. Kerr and/or his wife, Frances Brown Kerr (1849-1866), as well as mid-19th century correspondence, diaries and memorabilia produced or collected by their daughter, Emma California Kerr Hurd. The collection also contains genealogical material on the Kerr family, biographical material and 20th century memorabilia relating to Emma Hurd, her siblings and descendants.

#### **BOX 1: FAMILY PAPERS**

- 1.1: DR. KERR---DIARY OF TRIP FROM COLORADO RIVER TO SAN FRANCISCO (1849)**
- 1.2: FRANCES BROWN KERR---RANCH ACCOUNT BOOK (1852-1866)**
- 1.3: DR. KERR?---RANCH DIARY (1853-1859)**
- 1.4: DR. KERR---LETTER re Stockton beaver supply & farming matters (1-16-55)**
- 1.5: DR. KERR---NOTES on the organization of the Republican Party in San Joaquin County (1856)**
- 1.6: EMMA KERR [HURD]---JOURNAL (1860)**

- 
- 1.7: PETITION FOR ROAD INTERSECTING UPPER SACRAMENTO RD. & CALAVERAS RIVER (4-23-61) [signed by Charles M. Weber "for Dr. Wm. R. Kerr"]
  - 1.8: A.D. JONES. UNTITLED ACCOUNT OF DEATH & FUNERAL OF DR. KERR (3-8-61)
  - 1.9: EMMA KERR [HURD]---NOTES concerning how Dr. Kerr was cheated on sale of 600 cords of wood; how his widow was cheated by his clerk after his death and other family anecdotes
  - 1.10: EMMA KERR [HURD]---JOURNAL containing notes on Kerr family life in San Joaquin County (1849-1862) [probably written ca. 1900]
  - 1.11: EMMA KERR [HURD]---CORRESPONDENCE (1860-1875)
    - a)-"Dear Mother & Father" (4-28-60) [written while studying w/ Mrs. Locke at Lockeford]
    - b)-"My Dear Mother" (8-15-68) [written while a student in San Francisco]
    - c)-"Dear brother Willie" (8-15-68) [do.]
    - d)-"Dear ones at home" (1875) [written from Yosemite]
  - 1.12: BARBARA DAY SMITH LETTERS TO EMMA KERR [HURD] (1866)
  - 1.13: EMMA KERR [HURD]---NOTES ON FAMILY GENEALOGY
  - 1.14: WILLIAM R. KERR JR.---LIFE INSURANCE POLICY (1871)
  - 1.15: B.E. KERR---SCRAPBOOK (1875)
  - 1.16: FRAGMENTARY DESCRIPTION OF TWO PRE-ADOLESCENT BOYS named Donald & George (ca. 1880)
  - 1.17: KERR-HURD FAMILY 19TH C. MEMORABILIA
    - a)-3 cards admitting William R. Kerr to lectures at Jefferson Medical College (1840-42)
    - b)-Yankee Jims [Sons of Temperance]: proposition & order of business (n.d., ca. 1855)
    - c)-John Halper to Benj. E. Kerr (4-23-72) [telegram announcing death of Wm. R. Jr.]
    - d)-Stockton Art Association announcement (12-17-92)
    - e)-Grace F. Hale/Dr. W.L. Buckley wedding announcement (5-22-94) [incl. env.]
    - f)-L.C. Kerr to D.S. Fish (189?) [telegram announcing "Frank's" death]
    - g)-env. addressed to "Mrs. Emma C. Hurd" (3-29-97)
    - h)-3 advertising cards from Wells Funeral Home, Lodi
  - 1.18: KERR-HURD FAMILY CLIPPINGS & MS. BIOGRAPHIES (20TH C.)
    - a)-Charles E. Hurd Jr. (1878-1918) obit. [died in influenza epidemic]
    - b)-Frances Brown Kerr Russem (1824-1918) obit.
    - c)-John B. Kerr (d. ca. 1920) obit. [died at 75 yrs.]
    - d)-Sarah J. Fish.: "Dawn at Rosewild; dedicated to the memory of our mother (Grandma Kerr Russem) on her 106th birthday" (7-9-31)
    - e)-"Telephone history---Lodi" (1931)
    - f)-Charles Edwin Hurd (1843-1935) obit.
    - g)-Charles E. Hurd & Emma Kerr Hurd 50th , 55th & 59th wedding anniv. announcements
    - h)-Sarah Kerr Fish (1857-1940) obit.
    - i)-Emma Kerr Hurd (1848-1941) obit.
    - j)-Lila Hurd (b. 1872) biography: "Lila's 90th birthday" (1962)
  - 1.19: KERR-HURD FAMILY 20TH C. CORRESPONDENCE
    - a)-Xmas card from Geo. Drabenstadt, Maytown PA (n.d.)
    - b)-T.H. Wolfenbargar to Harry Bessac (4-10-04)
    - c)-Marion R. Bessac to Sgt. H.H. Comfort, El Paso TX (2-45) [photostat of telegram]
  - 1.20: KERR-HURD FAMILY 20TH C. MEMORABILIA
    - a)-C.E. Hurd poll tax rcpt. (1902)
    - b)-WSC Alumni 6th annual meeting (1909) [program]
    - c)-George F. Hudson for Mayor (1920) [adv. card]
    - d)-Reelect Harry W. Bessac, County Supt. Schools (1926) [adv. card]
    - e)-Harry W. Bessac, County Supt. Schools (n.d.) [letterhead]
    - f)-Arthur Hurd Bessac 8th grade graduation (6-10-29) [program]
    - g)-Virginia Bessac 8th grade graduation (6-6-39) [program]
  - 1.21: LODI EASTERN STAR ROSTERS (1931; 1946)

**BOX 2: DR. WILLIAM R. KERR'S MEDICAL BOOKS; OTHER PRINTED MATTER**

- 2.1: DR. KERR'S LIBRARY
  - a)-Beach, W. The American practice of medicine, vol. 2 of 3 (1836).
  - b)-Clymer, Meredith. Principles of human physiology (1845).
  - c)-Combe, George. Elements of phrenology (1843).

- d)-Curling, T.B. Diseases of the testis... (1843).
  - e)-Hastings, John. The practice of surgery... (1850).
  - f)-McClellan, George. Principles & practice of surgery (1848).
  - g)-Ralph, Joseph. A practical treatise on diseases of the genital organs (1852).
  - h)-Ricord, P.H. Venereal diseases (1843).
  - i)-Ure, Andrew. A dictionary of arts, manufactures & mines (1847).
- 2.2: DR. KERR'S LECTURE NOTES (1838-1842)**
- 2.3: OTHER PRINTED MATTER**
- a)-Stockton Street Fair (1900).
  - b)-Services for the Use of the Grand Army of the Republic (1917).
  - c)-Overland Monthly (June 1926). [contains articles relevant to UOP 75th anniversary]
  - d)-Harry W. Bessac for reelection... (n.d., ca. 1926) [campaign poster]
  - e)-College of the Pacific 1942 Football Facts