

**Marshall Harvey Twitchell (1840 – 1905)**  
**Collection, 1870 – 2011 (Bulk 1870 – 1905)**  
**Doc 568, MSB 80, MSA 645, Size C, Video C-359**

## **Introduction**

This collection contains documents relating to the family, war service, and career of Marshall Harvey Twitchell, a Vermont-born Civil War hero who became a “Carpetbagger” in Louisiana during Reconstruction as well as a U.S. consul to Kingston, Canada. This collection was donated to the Vermont Historical Society by Ann Twitchell Brown, James Twitchell, Peggy Twitchell, Robert Twitchell, and Clark D. Holland, Jr., in 2010 and 2011. The collection is stored in one document box, one flip-top archival box, one flat archival box, one over sized folder, one videotape, and 3 DVDs, it consumes 2 linear feet of shelf space.

## **Biographical Note**

Marshall Harvey Twitchell was the first son of Harvey Daniel Twitchell (1808-1864) and Elizabeth Scott Twitchell (1819-1899). He was born on February 29, 1840, and raised on the family farm in Windham County, Vermont, with his three sisters, Helen, Isabella “Belle,” and Kate and his younger brother, Homer. At 13 he attended Leland Academy and after graduation chose to read law, studying with a local lawyer named John Roberts. In August of 1861 he enlisted as a private in the 4<sup>th</sup> Vermont regiment, mustering out in September of 1861. He was present at many battles including Lee’s Mills, where he was injured in the foot. In 1864 at the Battle of Wilderness, he was badly wounded in the head. He survived and eventually returned to Vermont to recover. After suffering from permanent eyesight and hearing damage, Twitchell returned to the war as Captain of the 109<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops.

When the war ended he was reassigned and Twitchell’s brigade was sent to Indianola, Texas, to establish Union authority. Tired of military life he retired his post and found employment in the Freedman’s Bureau. His new post was as Provost Marshall of Bienville Parish over four hundred miles north of New Orleans. He was the federal representative who also acted as sheriff, judge and jury. He soon met and married a local woman named Adele Coleman. Twitchell became one of the most successful men in the Parish. When it came time to choose a delegation to form a new state constitution under the Reconstruction Act, Twitchell ran for office as the Republican delegate. By 1868 violence spurred on by the White League was on the rise in Louisiana and at least three attempts were made on Twitchell’s life by the time the elections were settled.

By 1870 he was successful enough to buy the Starlight Plantation, a 620 acre piece of river land in Desoto Parish. His family from Vermont soon moved to Louisiana and included his sisters, Helen, Belle, and Kate; their husbands Monroe Willis, George King and Clark Holland; his brother Homer and his wife Lottie Miller Twitchell, as well as their widowed mother, Elizabeth. Twitchell was elected to State Senate taking his seat in January 1871. He soon helped create the new Red River Parish, and its seat, the newly

developed town of Coushatta. He became its most powerful politician and land owner. By that summer the White League was seizing power and death threats, violence, and murders were occurring regularly. Republicans were fleeing the State and threats to Twitchell and his family were increasing. Members of the White League from all over the state poured into Coushatta and started arresting black and white Republicans. Among them were Twitchell's brother, Homer, and his brothers-in-law Clark Holland and Monroe Willis, who were murdered in what became known as the "Coushatta Massacre."

In 1875 Twitchell returned to Newfane, Vermont, where he bought a house for his family. While in Vermont he became engaged to an old friend, Henrietta Day. Twitchell returned to Louisiana to resume his work in the State Senate. In May of 1876, while crossing the river toward Coushatta, Twitchell and George King were attacked by a gunman. Twitchell was wounded and his injuries were grave. First one arm was amputated and failing to save the other it was amputated too. He returned to Vermont in the summer and married Henrietta Day that fall. That December he returned to New Orleans to fill his seat in the Senate. After his term ended in March, Twitchell went to Washington where he received his appointment as the American Counsel in Kingston, Canada. Twitchell was considered a hero and was well liked in Kingston. After many legal battles over the years Twitchell had lost all his assets in Louisiana and he never returned there. He carried out his duties in Canada as Counsel until his death. A man of many lives, Marshall Harvey Twitchell died on August 21, 1905. His body was returned home to Vermont where he is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Townsend, Vermont.

**Helen Elizabeth Twitchell**, Marshall Harvey's sister, was born in Vermont in 1845. She married Monroe Willis before 1870, they had no children. They relocated to Louisiana with the family in 1871. She helped nurse her brother while he was wounded in both arms. She died of a fever in 1876 in Indianapolis, Indiana, accompanying her brother on the way back to Vermont.

**Isabelle Hannah Twitchell "Belle,"** another of Marshall Harvey's sisters, was born in Vermont in 1846. She married George A. King in 1869. By 1870 they had moved to Louisiana. They had one son Homer T. King born in 1871. Belle died of Yellow Fever on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1871.

**Homer Jonas Twitchell**, Marshall Harvey's brother, was born in Vermont in 1848. By 1870 he was working on his brother's Plantation. He married Lottie F. Miller in 1874 in Alachua, Florida. In August of 1874 he was murdered in the "Coushatta Massacre." His son, Homer J Twitchell Jr., was born two months after his death

**Kate Frances Twitchell**, the third sister of Marshall Harvey Twitchell, was born in Vermont 1854. She married Clark Holland in 1869. She moved with her husband to Louisiana to work on her brother's plantation. They had one son, Bert. During an epidemic she contracted yellow fever and died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 1875.

**Adele Coleman** was born in Mississippi August 15<sup>th</sup> 1846. After attending school she became a music teacher in Sparta Louisiana. In 1866 Adele met Marshall Harvey Twitchell at the hotel where she boarded and he ate his meals. In defiance of her family, she conducted a secret romance with him. So outraged by this her brother Gus attempted to kill Twitchell, the plan only thwarted by Adele herself who rode through the night to warn him of her brother's intentions. Eventually the family relented to meet him and allow her courtship. They were married at her father's home July 24, 1866. They had two children, Marshall Coleman and Daniel. Adele died from consumption on Valentines Day 1874, their infant son Daniel died a few weeks later.

**Monroe C. Willis** was born in Vermont in 1844 he married Helen Twitchell in 1870. They had no children. He relocated to Louisiana along with the rest of the family to help his brother-in-law run Starlight Plantation. He was murdered in the "Coushatta Massacre" in 1874.

**Clark Holland** was born in Vermont in 1850 he married Kate Twitchell in 1869. They had one child, Bert. Clark was also murdered in the Coushatta massacre.

**George King** was born in Vermont 1844 he married Belle in 1869. They had one child Homer. George escaped the "Coushatta Massacre" but was murdered in 1876 in the attack on Marshall Twitchell in the river crossing in which Twitchell lost his arms.

**Charlotte Floretta Miller "Lottie"** was born in Vermont 1850. She married Homer J. Twitchell in 1874. After his death she returned to Vermont where she gave birth to her son Homer. She remarried Arthur C. Harvey in 1879 and had two more sons, Jesse and Will. She died in 1940.

**Henrietta Nancy Day** was born September 14, 1843 in Hamden County, Massachusetts. She and Twitchell had been childhood sweethearts and had rekindled their romance after Adele died. Henrietta married Marshall H. Twitchell on October 26, 1876. They had one son, Emmus George Twitchell, born in 1880. She helped to raise her step-son and Twitchell's orphaned nephews in Kingston, Canada, as Twitchell served his Counsel appointment. Henrietta died March 5, 1902, in Kingston. She is buried next to her husband in Oakwood Cemetery in Townsend, Vermont.

**Marshall Coleman Twitchell** was born on Starlight Plantation Louisiana on March 21, 1871. He lived there until 1875 when he moved with his grandmother to Newfane, Vermont. He moved to Kingston when his father became counsel, attending medical school there. In 1906 he married Mary V. Buell. They had one child, Marshall Coleman Jr. (1912 -1987). They settled in Burlington, Vermont, where Dr. Twitchell practiced medicine. He died June 15, 1949.

**Emmus George Twitchell** was born February 18, 1880 in Kingston, Ontario, Canada He received his education at Queen's University in Ontario, earning M.D. and C.M. (master of surgery) degrees. Emmus specialized as an ear nose and throat doctor. Like his brother, Dr. Marshall C. Twitchell, Emmus became a physician in Burlington, Vermont.

He also served as a Professor of Medicine at the University of Vermont. During World War I, he served in France as a Captain in the Medical Corps from 1917 to 1919. He married his first wife, Edith Avery Nutt (1885 - 1917), in 1908; they had one daughter, Janet (1909 -1979). He married Ann M. Kenny (1895 - 1982) in 1920. They had two sons, Robert Marshall Twitchell (1922 - 1988) and John Cushman Twitchell (1926 - 1983). Emmus George Twitchell died the December, 4, 1961. He is interred in the Lakeview Cemetery in Burlington Vermont.

**Homer T. King** was born February 14, 1871 at Starlight Plantation, Louisiana. He lived with his uncle and aunt and his cousins in Kingston. In 1891 he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He died September 5, 1899, and is buried in the Twitchell cemetery in Townsend, Vermont.

**Bert T. Holland** was born in Vermont in 1870. He moved to Louisiana with his parents in 1871. After he was orphaned he moved with his grandmother to Vermont and then to Kingston with his uncle and cousins. He married Mabel Prescott and they had two children, Vetta and Bert, Jr. They settled in Corinth, Vermont. Bert T. Holland, Sr., died in 1950.

**Homer J. Twitchell, Jr.**, was born in Vermont in 1874. After the Coushatta Massacre his pregnant widowed mother had been sent home to Vermont. He was raised by his mother, Lottie, and step-father, Arthur Harvey. He married Myra L. Kingsbury in 1898 and they had three children, Charlotte, Grace, and Arthur. Homer J. Twitchell, Jr., died in 1956.

### Scope and Content Note

While Louisiana Tech University holds many of Marshal Harvey Twitchell's papers, this collection contains many important personal items from Twitchell's life. Much of this collection contains many smaller items such as his signature with his prosthesis, a telegraph saying he had been wounded, his marriage certificate, post cards, memorials, as well as some modern press clippings.

The centerpiece of the collection is Twitchell's personal scrapbook which contains several threatening notes sent to Twitchell while he was in Louisiana including a note from the White League, the Goggled eyed man, and a note of warning from "a true friend." The scrapbook also contains press clippings, notes and letters from Twitchell's life from Louisiana in 1872 until after his death in 1905. There is a partial index in the back. The collection also contains a typescript copy of his autobiography.

A second scrapbook kept by Marshall Harvey Twitchell's son Emmus George Twitchell documents the events of his life and contains a threatening note to one of his father's friends, R. A. Deweese, from the White League. The scrapbook is made on an unused checking ledger from the State of Louisiana School Board.

The collection also contains a family photo album containing original and copy photographic portraits of many immediate family members. A name index has been

created and is filed with the album. The album also contains photographs taken in 1965 by “Cole” (Marshall Coleman, Jr., grandson of MHT) and his wife Laura of a trip they took to Townshend and Newfane, Vermont, and Coushatta, Louisiana. The photographs taken in Louisiana include images of a storehouse built by Twitchell and a pecan grove started by him.

There is also a large photo album of photographic portraits given by MHT to his wife Adele in 1874. The photo albums not only contain pictures of him and his family but of several civil war soldiers.

Letters between Clark and Kate Holland give us a glimpse of the last hours of Clark’s life before he was murdered.

The secondary sources in the collection include fictionalized accounts of Twitchell’s life in Louisiana as well as scholarly works and historical analysis of his part in the Reconstruction.

### **Related Collections**

The Special Collection Department of Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana, holds a large number of Marshall Twitchell’s papers including correspondence, legal records, state documents, and bonds. See: <http://www.latech.edu/specialcollections/collections/m067.shtml>

The Vermont Historical Society library holds many items related to this collection. A copy of Twitchell’s autobiography is at 920 T928 and the 1929 Twitchell family genealogy is at 929.2 T927bt. A search in the VHS catalogs and vertical files will yield numerous books and articles related to M.H. Twitchell.

The VHS museum also holds many items related to this collection including a Civil War sword given to Twitchell by the men of the 109<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Regiment. Researchers should consult museum staff in regard to these items. Accession numbers for Twitchell items in the museum collection include 2010.61, 2010.62, 2011.27, and 2011.32.

### **Inventory**

#### I. Marshall Harvey Twitchell, original documents

Doc 568:01     Bound typescript, “Autobiography of Marshall Harvey Twitchell”  
MSB 80:01     Scrapbook, “Newspaper Clippings in Regard to M.H. Twitchell,”  
1872-1905

*Includes:*

Note from White League (page 26)  
Note from Goggled eyed man (page 39)  
Note of warning from “a true friend” (page 105)

- Doc 568:02 Army service (for 1861 – 1866)  
 :03 Manuscript deed to Starlight Plantation, 1870  
 :04 Pamphlets, “Outrages in the Red River Valley,” 1873, &  
 “The White League in Louisiana,” 1875  
 :05 Telegraph (copy), shooting of MHT, 1876  
 :06 Transcript “Coushatta Affair Committee Report,” 1876  
 :07 Marriage certificate, MHT to Henrietta Day, 1876  
 :08 Signature with prosthesis  
 :09 Undertaker documents, 1905  
 :10 Memorials, 1905

## II. Other family members, original documents

- Doc 568:11 Letters, Clark Holland to Kate Twitchell Holland, 1874  
 :12 Note to from Abney to K.T. Holland, 1874  
 :13 Post Cards, Kate Holland to S.P. Miller, 1875  
 :14 Holland family Bible  
 :15 Practice ledgers, Homer J. Twitchell Jr., 1891(nephew of MHT)  
 :16 Elizabeth Scott Twitchell death certificate and obituary, 1899 (mother  
 of MHT)  
 :17 HDT corpse transit permit, 1902 (second wife of MHT)  
 :18 Letters Marshall Coleman Twitchell to Bert Holland, 1905 – 1906 (son  
 to nephew includes estate of MHT)  
 :19 Scrapbook of Emmus George Twitchell, 1898 to 1935  
*Includes:* life threatening note to R. A. Dewess from The White  
 League

## III. Photographs

- Doc 568:20 Photo album given to Adele Coleman Twitchell from MHT, 1866  
 21 Photo album Twitchell Family  
 22 Photos Henrietta Day Twitchell and Lottie Miller Twitchell

## IV. Secondary sources

- MSA 645:01 Book, *History of the Town of Newfane*, 1876  
 :02 Book, *Wild Work; The Story of the Red River Tragedy* by Mary E.  
 Bryan, 1881 (copy 1)  
 :03 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (copy 2)  
 :04 Book, *The Vixens* by Frank Yerby, 1947  
 :05 Thesis, “The Coushatta Massacre” by Ida Waller Pope, 1968  
 :06 Dissertation, “Carpetbagger Extraordinary: Marshall Harvey  
 Twitchell, 1840 – 1905” by Jimmy G. Sholmire, 1969  
 :07 College Paper, “Carpetbaggers: A Revisionist Model Evaluation” by  
 Joannes Anderson, 2007

V. Modern accounts

- Size C Newspaper, *The Coushatta Citizen*, Historical – Educational Edition, 1938 (2 copies)
- MSA 645:08 Press Clippings 1993 – 2002
- Video C-359 *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*, PBS, 2004 (videotape)  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (DVD copy)
- Video C-361 Ted Tunnell, talk at Twitchell family reunion, 1986 (DVD)
- Video C-373 “Marshall Harvey Twitchell: Perspectives from Vermont and Louisiana,” Twitchell family reunion at Vermont History Center, 2011 (DVD)
- MSA 645:09 Genealogies, 2011

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TwitchellMH.doc