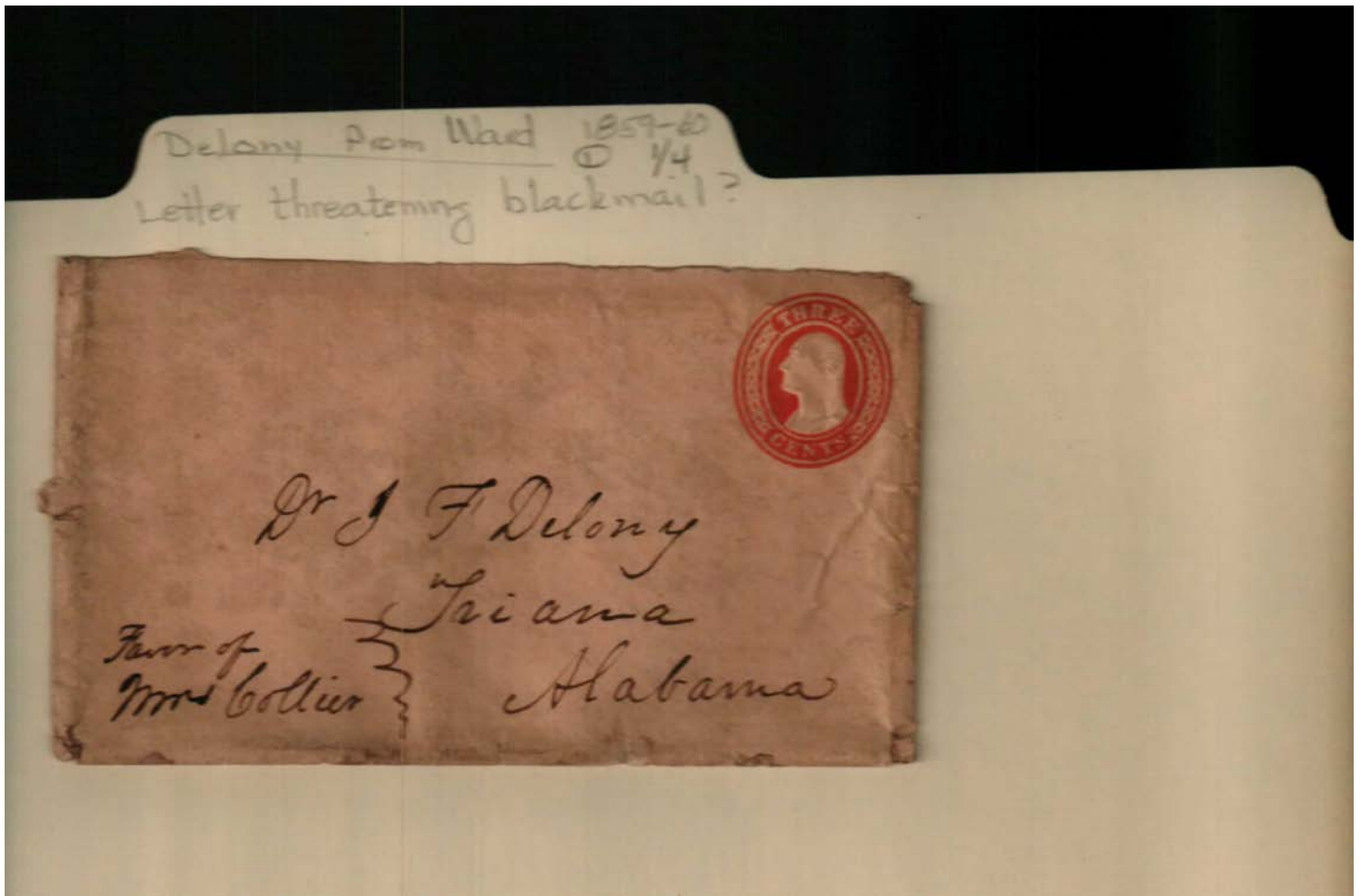


Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 1, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 1

Legal and court documents, 1860 (1 of 4) - Letter threatening blackmail?

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**Names:**

Collier, Mrs.

Delony, J. F., Dr.

**Places:**

Triana, AL

**Types:**

envelope

**Dates:**

1859-1860

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 1, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 1  
Legal and court documents, 1860 (1 of 4) - Letter threatening blackmail?

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Delay Pen Mad 25-2  
Letter threatening blackmail?

By letter of 3 Inst I notified you of my determination to disclose the fact that you showed me a letter from a friend in Philadelphia giving an account of an interview with a lady now married and living in Kentucky: That the lady was seduced by you at Bathany Va and to prevent exposure was carried by her father to Europe: Where she gave birth to a male child: that the lady informed your correspondent where the child was and engaged him to bring it to America and now it educated: The lady had been informed and believed that you were dead: And that her husband was a man of wealth and standing in Kentucky and ignorant of the fact of his wife's previous history: You answer of 10 Inst has relieved me of considerable uneasiness by furnishing written proof of the correctness of my statement: I was seriously apprehensive that you would deny having made such communication to me - make it a question of morality between us and implicate its decision by a court of law in an action against me for a libel or resort to trial by combat - either of these alternatives would have been disagreeable to me - the former on account of the inconvenience in hunting up proof and the latter on account of danger to personal safety: From similar considerations I imagine of convenience and safety you have concluded to be satisfied with making mouths at me from a distance (which I will submit to so long as the distance is a proper one) and appealing to the community to condemn me for betraying a confidential communication.

1860

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

1859-1860

Delaware Pen Road 1857-60  
Letter threatening blackmail?

Having you notice of the case I intended to  
pursue me an implied acknowledgment of  
your right to satisfaction which I am willing  
to give in the measure you seem to desire  
By submitting the whole affair to the criti-  
cism of the community.

You admit making the communication to  
me - I confess to believing it - You don't  
censure me for crediting your report but  
only for divulging it. You would argue  
I suppose that confidential communica-  
tions should be held sacred: that the desire  
to accomplish individual good is not a  
sufficient justification for violating them.  
That it is better that individual sacrifices  
should be made than a general rule  
of conduct broken. I answer that  
such a rule can't hold when the matter  
is such that its concealment enables the  
party to injure or impose on others: that  
were a man to inform me of his purpose  
to commit murder or robbery it would be  
my duty to report the purpose and prevent  
its accomplishment. Were I about betraying  
the marriage of a man I knew had a wife  
living ought I to stand silent and see the  
woman sacrificed and the man commit  
the crime of bigamy simply because I  
had received my information from him?  
No - the rule should be that the obligation  
of secrecy ceases when the party is about  
to accomplish something that he could  
not effect without such secrecy whether  
of something criminal or only indiscreet.

Such I consider a fair statement of the issue  
between us and upon it I am willing to go to the  
country

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

1859-1860

Delany Pen Mad 1859-60  
Letter threatening blackmail?

"The letter from your Philadelphia friend you say was fabricated to test my reliability." What! confess to setting a snare to entrap a man you held in such high estimation and for whom you entertained such a strong friendship! And then censure him so severely for doing what you purposely lead him to do! The feeling you manifest and other corroborating circumstances are in conflict with this explanation. Would it not have been more plausible to have said the affair was fabricated to give yourself credit for spirit and gallantry?

I doubt whether the community will consider the affair more to your credit in this light than that of its being true: but this is a point on which you have the right to judge for yourself and as you seem to think it to your interest to discredit your own statement I will make the necessary inquiries and hold myself ready to report my conviction of its truth or falsehood - The "fabricated" letter of your Philadelphia friend will materially facilitate the investigation as it gives names time place and circumstance - Please therefore inclose it to me to guide in prosecuting the inquiry -

And until further developments appear I remain  
Yours Respectfully

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

1859-1860

Delany Pen Used 1857-60  
Letter threatening blackmail?

Mr Hundly, withholding the letter from his Philadelphia correspondent has prevented me from making a speedy and thorough investigation in relation to the affair above alluded to. For I had forgotten the names of the parties.

I remembered however that he said the lady was the one that he was admitted to have married while at College - I accordingly had the files of the advertisements examined and found in its issue of 13<sup>th</sup> June 1855, the following advertisement:

"Married at Bethany on 17<sup>th</sup> May by Rev. A. Campbell Mr J. H. Hundly formerly of North Alabama to Miss A. C. daughter of the Hon. J. M. Meek of Bethany Va."

Guided by this single clue I have obtained from my informant only "an indistinct impression that a few years ago a girl called Meek of low position and light character lived about Bethany." Of the honorable character of her parentage - her high social position - her trip to Europe and subsequent marriage with a Kentuckian of wealth and standing there was no recollection. I feel reluctant to conjecture this unfortunate lady (daughter of the Hon. J. M. Meek) with unpleasant conjugal in her retirement from the business of the world - I imagine her to have borne her full share of the buffings of adversity - To have lost her high social position and the memory of her honorable parentage - to be reduced to straitened circumstances and forced by penury and want to yield to the conquest of a fascinating young man is surely a fate hard enough. It would be cruel to deprive her of the melancholy pleasure she enjoys in feeling unfortunate - in attributing her present destitution and want of future provision for her orphan

**Names:**

Hundly, J. H., Mr.

Meek, A. C.

Meek, J. M.

**Places:**

Bethany, VA

North Alabama

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

1859-1860

Delany Pen Ward 1859-60  
Letter threatening blackmail?

by to the untimely death of a worthy and generous  
Southern who won his missing affections from  
promiscuous attachments to constancy and  
happily -

Under these circumstances I speak to <sup>all of</sup> the story's  
being a fabrication except that ~~some~~ years ago  
Miss A C daughter of the Hon. J M Meek lived about  
Bethany occupying a low position and bearing  
a light character. This partly remembered fact  
and the conclusions which naturally follow it are  
all that I except from a fabricated origin.

There is an other instance known in which  
I can accord him unqualified <sup>credit</sup> ~~credit~~ as a fabri-  
cator - name - In his explanation that it was first  
up to test my veracity - In this case his  
credit for skill is not compromised by a single  
fact - And that his fame may  
not rest on my admission alone - I will  
give the corroborating proofs

**Names:**

Meek, A. C.

Meek, J. M.

**Places:**

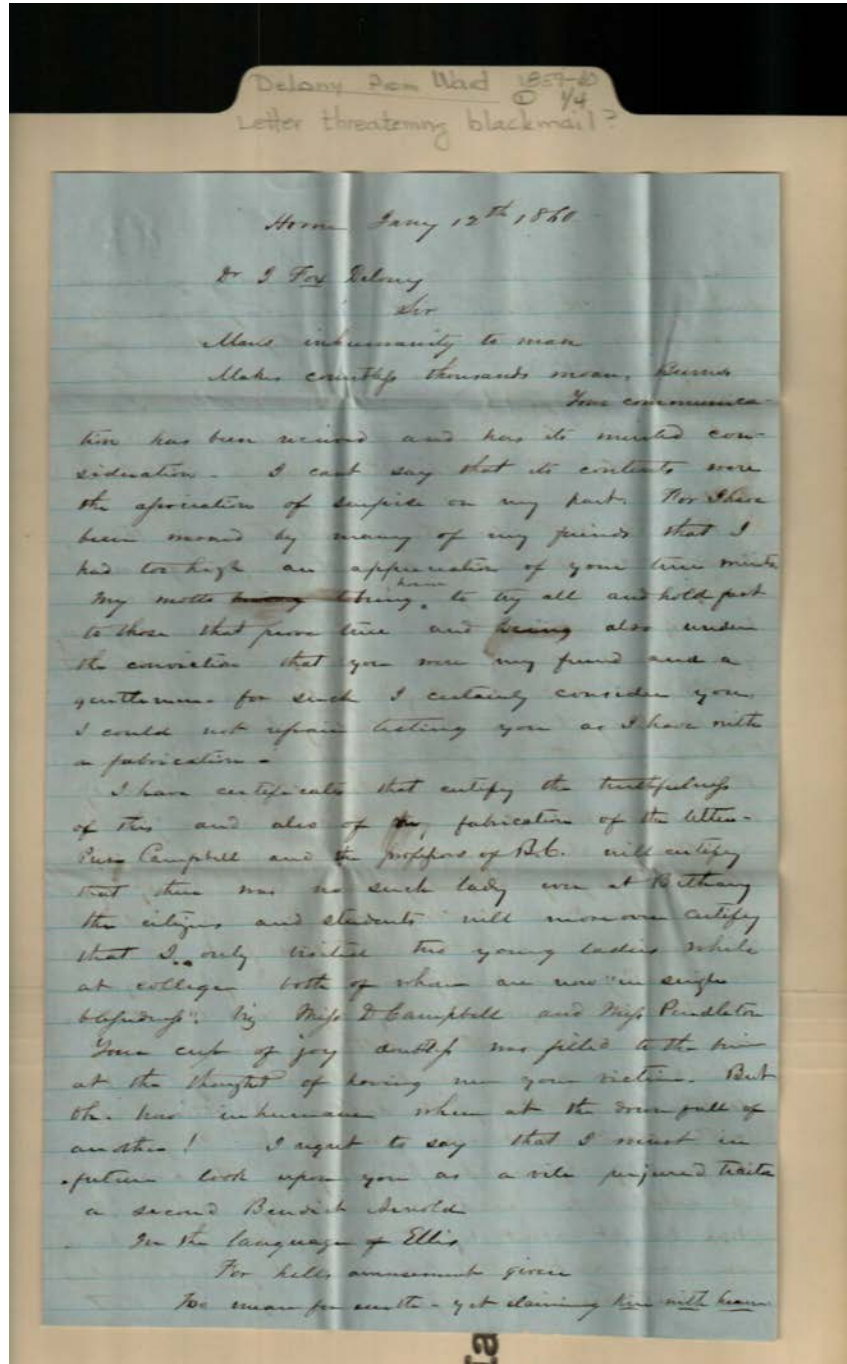
Bethany, VA

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

1859-1860



**Names:**

Campbell, D., Miss

Campbell, Pres.

Delony, J. Fox, Dr.

Pendleton, Miss

**Places:**

Triana, AL

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

January 12, 1860

Delany: Pen Ward 557-0  
1/4  
Letter threatening blackmail?

See not even now the fire of agonizing remorse  
burning in thy blood; the monetary voice of  
a struggling conscience is in thy ears, and  
are you not beginning to experience the  
entirely strange of a monster hell? I do  
not in the language of Becher consider  
you worthy to walk the burning trail of  
hell.

How it not for the solicitation of those  
I hold most dear and the high regard  
I have for your aged mother I would now  
hold you up to public scorn when so possibly  
you would realize the words of Salla Booth that  
you are full in sight of Paradise  
Beholding heaven and feeling hell  
When you think proper you can make  
the matter known as I shall then give publicity  
to the world what I know - I can't in my better  
conscience without making a remark as to the  
blackness, paying selfishness and inhumanity of  
your heart. How can you be so devoid  
of conscience and essential respect so selfish  
so wanting in piety and humanity as you  
thought to disgrace my aged parents to leave  
me and burden their tottering frames upon  
the way of an unknown eternity in the  
lost act in the great drama of this life  
with clouds of sorrow ready on the plea  
to justify yourself finally of the accusation  
of selfishness and impiety when it  
was brought about by the sacrifice of all hours  
on your part. Oh how my conscience  
is that have been false of yours - that

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

January 12, 1860



Delony, Pen Nod 857-6  
Letter threatening blackmail?

man the aspect of such my mind increases?  
The glittering host of hell here and will rejoice  
over the commission of so vile and damning  
a transgression of all that is true and  
something in a professed Christian and  
gentleman. But I feel my degradation  
too heavily to deal longer with such a  
subject. Could I not show to the  
world that you thought me as black  
as you thought me to be and that you  
were only restrained in action?  
But I have not told this to my most  
intimate friend. I still hope that prosperity  
may attend you through a long life and  
happiness with your wife and  
children.  
Yours ever in the love of humanity  
(Signed) J. Henry Hundly  
Dr. J. Fox Delony  
Triana

**Names:**

Delony, J. Fox, Dr.

Hundly, J. Henry

**Places:**

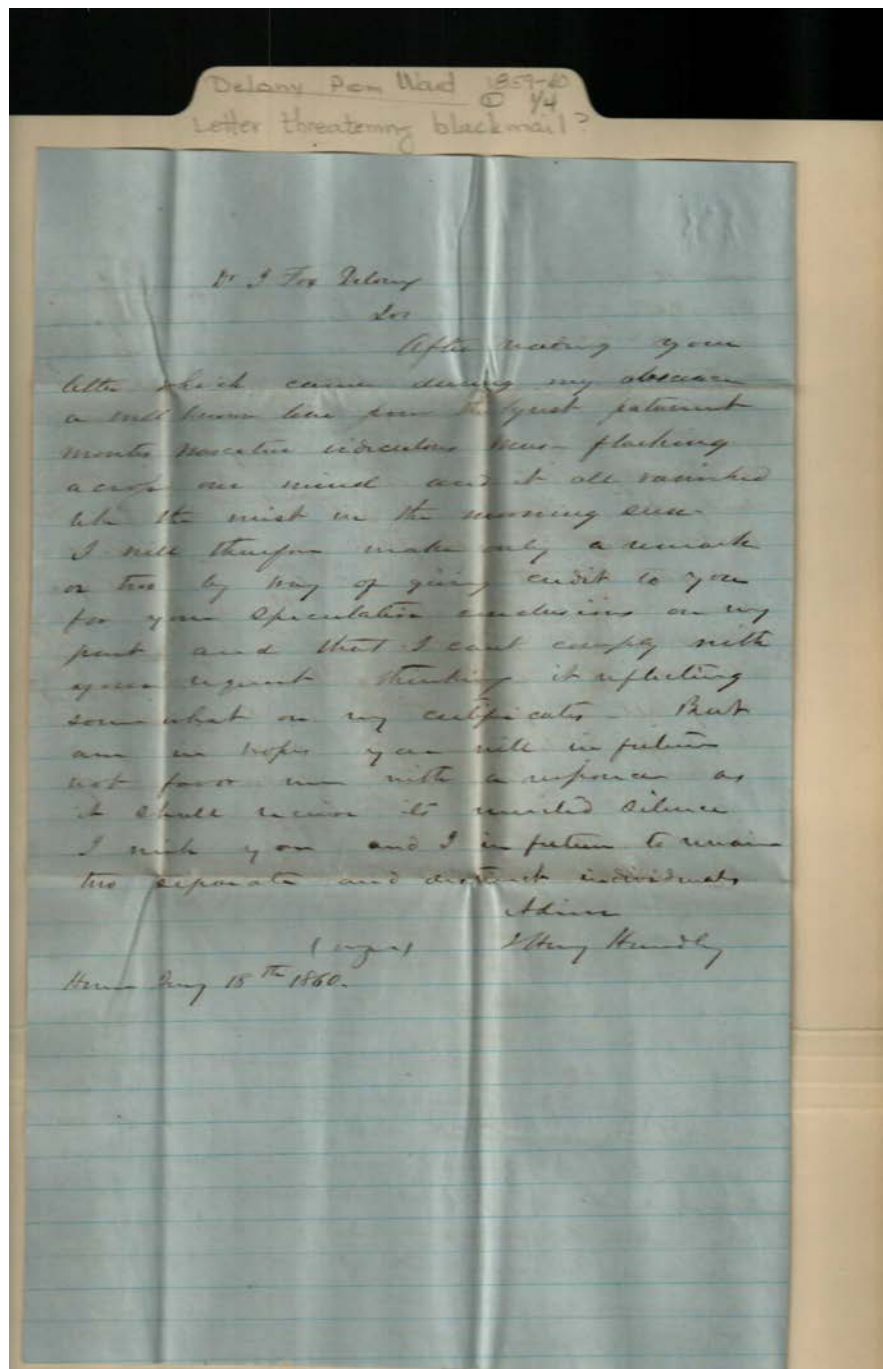
Triana, AL

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

January 12, 1860



**Names:**

Delony, J. Fox, Dr.

Hundly, J. Henry

**Types:**

letter

**Dates:**

January 18, 1860

**Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 1, Subseries B, Box 5, Folder 1**  
**Legal and court documents, 1860 (1 of 4) - Letter threatening blackmail?**

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# Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

**Preferred Citation:** Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

**Collection Scope and Content:** The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

**Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions:** None

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