

Look Family Papers

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1875-1907



Title Statement

Look Family PapersLook Family Papers, 1875-1907 Ms.1976.003

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1976.003

Unit Date

1875-1907

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains the papers of the Look family of Wyoming, New York and Marion, Virginia, including correspondence of women's suffragist Susan Look Avery and other family members; cartes-de-visite of Avery and daughter Lydia Avery Coonley; photographs of "Hillside," the Avery family home in Wyoming, New York; and a brochure of the Susan Look Avery Club of Wyoming, New York.

Creator

Look family

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Look Family Papers were donated to Special Collections in 1976.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Look Family Papers commenced and was completed in May 2012.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Look Family Papers, Ms1976-003, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Susan Howes Look, daughter of Samuel and Polly Loomis Look, was born in Conway, Massachusetts on October 27, 1817. Soon after, the Looks moved to the Oneida Lake area of New York; to nearby Herkimer County a few years later; then to Utica. Around age 17, Susan Look enrolled in the Utica Female Seminary; following graduation, she served on the school's faculty for several years. She married Benjamin Avery in 1844, and the couple moved in 1848 to Louisville, Kentucky, where Avery established the Avery Plow Works. The Averys had six children: Lydia, Samuel, Gertrude, George, Helen, and William.

In 1858, the Averys, together with Susan's sister and brother-in-law, Julia and Albert Capwell, purchased "Hillside," a Wyoming, New York estate, for use as a summer residence. The house also became the permanent home of the sisters' parents, Samuel and Polly Loomis Look, who moved there from Virginia. At the outbreak of the Civil War, the Looks were joined in Wyoming by their son, Nathan Loomis Look, and his two daughters. Nathan Look later returned to Virginia and died in Smyth County in 1907.

The Averys remained in Louisville. Following the 1885 death of her husband, Susan Look Avery sold "Hillside" to her daughter, Lydia Avery Coonley. Around this same time, Avery became an outspoken advocate of reformist causes, including women's suffrage, temperance, the free coinage of silver, and anti-imperialism. She was well acquainted with other public figures and reformers of the day, including Susan B. Anthony and Booker T. Washington. Avery was a charter member of Wyoming, New York's Warsaw Equality Club, a women's suffrage organization. The club was renamed in her honor as the Susan Look Avery Club in 1901. Susan Look Avery died on February 1, 1915.

Scope and Content

This collection contains papers--including correspondence, photographs, and printed material--of the Look family of Wyoming, New York and Marion, Virginia. The collection includes six letters between family members, including Susan Look Avery, Samuel J. Look, and Lydia A. Coonley. The letters largely focus on family matters, including current activities and family history. In two letters to her brother, Susan Avery discusses the free coinage of silver, Thomas W. Lawson's *Frenzied Finance*, free trade, and other issues of the day. Also included are cartes-de-visite of Susan Avery and Lydia Coonley, as well as eight views of "Hillside," the Look family home in Wyoming, New York. The collection also contains a Susan Look Avery Club brochure, providing officer names and the 1905-1906 activities program.

Related Archival Materials

See the Lincoln-Look Family Papers, Ms1985-009, also located at Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives.

Keywords

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Women -- History

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by item type.

Description of Subordinate Components

Papers

Unit Date 1875-1907

folder 1