

# Lathrop, Harriet Eliza, Reminiscences

Harriet Eliza Lathrop Reminiscences

1937



## Title Statement

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

Ms.1988.011

### Unit Date

1937

### Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

### Abstract

This collection includes the photocopied typescript of the reminiscences of Harriet Eliza Lathrop, a native of New York who moved to Tazewell County, Virginia with her husband, employed there to oversee the opening of the Pocahontas Coal Field.

### Creator

Lathrop, Harriet Eliza

### Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

### Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

# Administrative Information

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## Source of Acquisition

The Harriet Eliza Lathrop Reminiscences were donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 1988.

## Processing Information

The processing and description of the Harriet Eliza Lathrop Reminiscences commenced and was completed in November 2018.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Harriet Eliza Lathrop Reminiscences, Ms1988-011, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

# Biographical Note

Harriet Eliza Williams, daughter of Charles F. and Eliza Campbell Williams, was born in New York City on July 26, 1856. On March 21, 1881, she married William Lathrop, and the couple had one daughter. Harriet Eliza Williams Lathrop died on May 30, 1939, and was buried in Montrose Cemetery, Kingston, Pennsylvania.

William Arthur Lathrop, son of Dr. Israel B. and Mary Elizabeth Bolles Lathrop, was born August 4, 1854. He graduated from Lehigh University with a degree in civil engineering in 1875. From 1881 to 1884, he served as superintendent and engineer of the Southwest Virginia Improvement Company, establishing the Pocahontas coal fields and the town of Pocahontas in Tazewell County, Virginia. In 1885, he was named superintendent of the bituminous coal department of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company. The company promoted him to general superintendent at Wilkes-Barre three years later. In 1901, Lathrop became president of the Webster Coal & Coke Company; when Webster merged with Pennsylvania Coal & Coke, Lathrop became president. In 1906, Lathrop was named manager of the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company, and he was elected president the following year. He also served as president or director of a number of other companies and as president of Lehigh University's board of trustees. William Lathrop died in Wilkes-Barre on April 12, 1912.

# Scope and Content

This collection consists of a photocopied typescript ([27] leaves) of the reminiscences of Harriet Eliza Williams Lathrop, a native of New York who, during the 1880s, lived with her husband (William Arthur Lathrop) in Tazewell County, Virginia from 1881 to 1884 while the latter was employed by the Southwest Virginia Improvement Company to oversee the opening of the Pocahontas Coal Field and the building of the town of Pocahontas. Included is a foreword, written by Lathrop's daughter, Helen Lathrop Thompson, in 1948 (Lathrop's reminiscences seem to have been written around 1936).

Lathrop's reminiscences commence with the couple's arrival in Dublin, Virginia on November 21, 1881. From there, Lathrop describes the couple's stops in Pearisburg and Princeton, before reaching their destination in Tazewell County, where they initially boarded with the Moore family.

Lathrop documents her interactions with local inhabitants (re-creating the dialogue in dialect), the couple's diet and living quarters; and her daily housekeeping routine. She also notes her husband's activities in overseeing the building of the town and the opening of the coal mines. She describes the initial development of the town of Pocahontas and the 1884 Laurel Mine explosion that killed 114 miners. Lathrop's reminiscences end around June, 1884, with the couple leaving Pocahontas for Snow Shoe, Pennsylvania, where William Lathrop had accepted a position as superintendent of the bituminous department of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company.

## Keywords

Coal mines and mining  
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South  
Tazewell County (Va.)  
Women -- History

## Existence and Location of Copies

Images are available online.

## Rights Statement for Archival Description

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## Description of Subordinate Components

### **Reminiscences**

**Unit Date** 1937

**folder** 1