

# Barry-Parker Family Letters

Barry-Parker Family Letters

1855-1860



## Title Statement

Barry-Parker Family Letters Barry-Parker Family Letters, 1855-1860 Ms.1991.052

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## Publication Statement

**Publisher:** Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries (0434)  
560 Drillfield Drive  
Newman Library, Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
Business Number: 540-231-6308  
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URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



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## Profile Description

**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2023-08-07 13:39:41 -0400.

**Language Usage:** Description is written in: English, Latin script.

**Descriptive Rules:** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

Ms.1991.052

### Unit Date

1855-1860

### Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

### Abstract

Letters of the Barry, Parker, and related families of Holly Springs, Mississippi; Somerset, Kentucky; and elsewhere, focusing on family matters, including lengthy, detailed accounts of the illnesses and deaths of John G. Parker and Ann Barry Dewey, who both died in Somerset in 1856.

### Creator

Barry family

### Creator

Parker family

### Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

## Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

# Administrative Information

## Conditions Governing Access

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## Source of Acquisition

The Barry-Parker Family Letters were purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1991.

## Processing Information

The processing and description of the Barry-Parker Family Letters commenced and was completed in October, 2022.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Barry-Parker Family Letters, Ms1991-052, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

# Biographical Note

John G. Barry was born in Virginia on April 17, 1786. In 1799, he became a printer's apprentice at the *Metro District Gazette* in Nashville, Tennessee. By 1810, he had married Mary G. Zilephro (1795-1865); the couple would have at least nine children, including among them Elizabeth A. Barry Parker (ca. 1816-1859), Mary A. W. (1818-1880), Harriet (1825-1906), Margaret (1818-1880), Louisa and William T. (both b. 1833). Following his apprenticeship, Barry is said to have established the *Gallatin Record* in Gallatin, Tennessee, though no record of the newspaper can be found. The 1850 federal census lists the Barrys as Nashville residents, with the household including--among others-- William T. and Louisa H. Barry, both 17-year-old natives of Tennessee. In 1855, the Barrys, including William T. and Louisa, moved to Holly Springs (Marshall County), Mississippi. In 1868, John Barry left Holly Springs to work as a printer in Vicksburg. John G. Barry died in a wagon accident near Holly Springs on February 2, 1871. At the time, he was reportedly the second oldest printer in the United States, his brother William being the oldest.

Elizabeth A. Barry, daughter of John G. and Mary Z. Barry, was born in Davidson County, Tennessee, around 1816. By 1850, she had moved to Pulaski County, Tennessee. She married George Parker, and the couple reportedly had seven sons, including John (d. 1856). The Parkers remained in Pulaski County when Elizabeth Parkers parents moved from there to Mississippi. Elizabeth A. Parker died in Pulaski County, Kentucky, on October 3, 1859.

Louisa H. Barry, daughter of John G. and Mary Z. Barry, was born in Davidson County, Tennessee, ca. 1833. She moved with her family to Pulaski County, Tennessee, in the early 1850s, and again with them to Holly Springs (Marshall County), Mississippi, by 1850. Louisa Barry married William Barker in Marshall County on January 2, 1867.

# Scope and Content

This collection contains correspondence of the Barry, Parker, and related families of Holly Springs (Marshall County), Mississippi; Somerset (Pulaski County), Kentucky; and elsewhere. The collection includes 11 letters from Elizabeth Barry Parker (ca. 1816-1859) and her husband George, of Somerset, to Elizabeth's parents and sister Louisa H. Barry, of Holly Springs. The letters focus largely on family matters, including marriages, illnesses, and deaths. Several of the letters provide lengthy, detailed accounts of the illnesses and deaths of George and Elizabeth's son, John G. Barry, and Elizabeth's sister Ann Barry Dewey in 1856. Within the narrative of Ann's death are accounts of the neglectful, and at times abusive, behavior of her husband "Gid" (probably Gideon) Dewey. (The contents of one letter suggest that Dewey removed Ann from her sister's care following the accusation that Dewey had "run after" an enslaved woman, working in the Parker's

kitchen.) The collection also contains four letters from Ann Barry Dewey, one discussing a local election and fighting at the polling place, and another chronicling the death of her nephew John G. Parker and enclosing a lock of hair. Letters of George W. Parker include brief mentions of his work with copper; his attempts to collect debts on behalf of his father-in-law, John G. Barry; and the 1856 presidential campaign. A letter from J. S. Wallace to his aunt Louisa includes a lengthy complaint about mosquitos in the area ("[T]here is so many here that I can take a pint cup and catch a quart.") and news of spring planting. Writing from DeSoto City, Mississippi in 1857, M. A. W. [Mary Ann Williams] Wallace mentions that she has "got all the Negroes cloath made" and that all the cotton is rotting. Other correspondents include John G. and Mary Z. Barry, Louisa [Barry], W. [William] T. Barry, G. T. Dewey, and Mollie Romans. Also included is an unstamped envelope addressed to "John G. Barry Esqr, Herald Office, Holly Springs, Miss."

## Keywords

Women -- History

## Rights Statement for Archival Description

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## General

This collection had been purchased, accessioned, and originally cataloged as the Parker Family Letters, but a closer inspection of the contents during processing in 2022 suggested that the Barry-Parker Family Letters would be a more accurate title.

## Description of Subordinate Components

### Letters

**Unit Date** 1855-1860

**folder** 1