

Moore Family Papers

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1847-1948



Title Statement

Moore Family Papers Moore Family Papers, 1847-1948 Ms.2010.033

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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
specref@vt.edu
URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



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Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2023-08-07 13:43:01 -0400.

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

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2010.033

Unit Date

1847-1948

Language

The material in the collection is in English.

Abstract

A collection of photographs, correspondence, and other documents created by members of the Moore family spans three generations between 1847 and 1948. Most of this collection is comprised of letters that relate family news.

Creator

Moore family

Extent

1.4 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The Moore Family Papers were acquired by Special Collections prior to 2009.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical Note

The Moore family papers include letters and other documents from Moore family members that span three generations.

John Moore (I) is a member of the oldest generation represented in this collection. His parents were immigrants from Europe: his mother, Catherine, came from England and his father, Garret Moore, came from Ireland. Although much of John Moore's extended family lived in Ireland, he grew up in Louisiana on a plantation run by enslaved people. John's first job was teaching. He then became an army surgeon. In 1853, his first post was at Fort Myers, Florida, during the Third Seminole War. Later, John was employed in the United States Army expedition against the Mormons and in the Union Army during the American Civil War. He had three other siblings named Mary, Robert, and Richard (who died in 1908). His two children were named John and Juliet.

John Moore (II) is the elder John Moore's son. He was born on April 12, 1866 in Eutaw, Alabama and was 5'11". From December 5, 1890 to October 3, 1902, he worked in the treasury department of the Internal Revenue Service. There, he started out as a substitute clerk, class D, but was promoted on May 7, 1895. In 1904, he worked for Central Union Telephone Co. In 1895, he married Elizabeth and they had two children: Robert and Mary. He separated from his wife and lived with Mary Kelly, his aunt, in Indiana because of his alcoholism.

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Moore was John Moore's (I) wife; her maiden name was Ford. Born in 1873, she was 5'7", 136 pounds, and had pale brown hair. Mary was twenty-two when first courted by her husband. She had many brothers, including one named Will.

Mary Mead Moore was John and Lizzie Moore's daughter. She was born on September 29, 1906, and graduated from Randolph Macon Women's College in 1929. She kept in contact with Betty, a college friend who lived in Charleston, for the rest of her life. Mary worked in Roanoke as a schoolteacher and was deeply religious and interested in radios.

Robert Garrett Moore was Mary's elder brother. He was born in 1897 and was a clumsy child. As a young man, he was estranged from his father and wanted to become an engineer. In June of 1925, he died at the age of 28: during a reserve officers training camp, he drowned from either cramps or a heart spasm. On the day of his death, he had complained about heart pain and vertigo to his drill sergeant. He is buried in Timber Ridge Church Yard, located outside of Lowery, Virginia.

Juliet Moore is the daughter of John Moore (I). She lived on a cattle farm in Iowa and her husband's name was Burt. They had two sons, John and Gaylord, who both studied medicine at Iowa State University.

Gaylord is the eldest son of Juliet Moore. In addition to attending Iowa State University, he also went to Rush College in Chicago. There, he played trombone in the college band and sang soprano in the choir. In 1938, he became a medical officer for the US Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida. Gaylord was close with his cousin, Robert Garrett Moore.

Mary Moore Kelly was John Moore's (I) sister. She died in late 1921. Based in Bloomington, Indiana, she was a member of Daughters of the American Revolution and interested in family genealogy. In the early 1900s, she tried to construct a family tree with Arthur Walters Cameron Moore and Henry Percival Moore, two distant cousins from Australia. She was married to Captain James R. Kelly, who worked in railroads before serving in

the Indiana's fourteenth regiment during the Civil War; he was mortally wounded in battle and died in a Virginia hospital.

Henry Percival Moore "HP" was born on November 8, 1860 to Robert Walters Moore. He lived in Adelaide, Australia. In 1885, he married his wife Eleanor and they had three children. In 1912, his eldest Robert was stationed in India, his other son Brian was seventeen, and his daughter Mary was nine.

Arthur Walters Cameron Moore was Henry Percival Moore's brother and lived in St. Claire, Australia. He had several daughters and a wife named Sophy, all of which belonged to the Women's Liberal League. In addition to Henry, he had a widowed sister named Louise Gardner.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of fourteen folders of photographs, correspondence, and other documents relating to the Moore family between 1847 and 1948.

The first folder, Australia Moore family and genealogy papers, contains correspondence between Mary M. Kelly and her cousins, Arthur Walters Cameron Moore and Henry Percival Moore during the early 1900s. In addition to relaying family news and bemoaning the onset of World War I, the letters discuss Moore family ancestry, tracing roots back to Ireland and an abandoned Catholic faith. A partial family tree is included in a letter written on January 17, 1911.

The second folder, Captain James R. Kelly and Mary Moore Kelly papers, contains photocopies and a transcript of letters and papers written by the couple during the American Civil War. It includes James R. Kelly's notice of promotion to Captain of the Union Rifles on June 5, 1861 and a partial memoir of his Civil War service as written by his daughter. The correspondence ranges from July 20, 1861 to March 1, 1862 and gives a lot of insight into Civil War soldier conditions. In a notable letter dated July 23, 1861, James tells Mary, "Our scouts surprised a secessionist camp consisting of forty-four men armed and a lot of women. All of the men were killed but ten. They have been brought into our camp; they are hard looking wretches. It is thought they will all be hung." In another dated January 28, 1862, he says, "The Indiana regiments here are regarded as the most reliable on the Potomac while I feel proud of Indiana, and her brave soldiers, at the same time I can plainly see and feel that in order to maintain that proud position, we will most likely be exposed to the most dangerous positions in the army." On February 19, he laments: "I have just been out among the men's tents, and in their quarters, the mud and water is full shoe-top deep. It is most painful to see the poor men cooking in the mud and rain but then it can't be helped, they must cook and eat while they live."

The third folder, Elizabeth Moore correspondence, contains family news as well as condolences about her son's death in 1925. Many of the letters are written to her from her husband; they lament about his estranged relationship with Robert, her cold behavior towards him, and his unhappiness with himself. In a letter dated August 12, 1909, he tells her:

"I feel that my life is wholly broken-maybe forever. I'm sorry for it all as it has been and has turned out. It has greatly saddened and soured me to see it thus-but maybe there is yet one more turn in life's ever changing kaleidoscope that will bring us together as one again. But fate is sometimes so cruel and unkind-but with me off life's checkerboard you'll be free and happy I hope, and will find someone who more nearly deserves your love and devotion than I do. I have richly earned your contempt and don't wonder you inwardly despise me when you recall the past and the horrors that lurk in its deepening shadows. The awful thoughts and the pangs of regret haunt me every hour of the course will be the burden of my torment in hell. Oh! That I never been born! I am afraid to be alone. Sometimes I wonder if I am going insane! I deserve it."

The fourth folder, Gaylord pictures, contains three pictures: one of him as a little boy and two of him dressed in Navy uniform.

The fifth folder, John Moore (I) correspondence, includes photocopies and a transcript of letters written between 1847 and 1862 that chronicle his career transition from a teacher in Louisiana to an army surgeon in the Third Seminole War, Army expedition against the Mormons, various Native American battles, and the Civil War. The letters hold strong opinions and their subjects include the famine in Ireland, slavery, and his Army experiences. On October 20, 1854, he wrote about meeting Billy Bowlegs: "I was out in the woods some distance about a week ago, with the Indian agent, to see King Bowlegs and twenty or thirty of his warriors. He was very polite, spread skins for us on the ground and an awning overhead to keep off the sun. When Billy spoke all the others kept a respectful silence." On July 24, 1859, he wrote the following about the Mormons: "The details of their domestic life are disgusting and revolting beyond anything you can imagine. How long are such a people to be not only tolerated but furnished with the means of growing rich beyond that of any proportion of the people in the States?" On Dec 13, 1862 he was in the midst of the Battle of Fredericksburg and penned, "One of the most bloody battles of the war will probably come off here today. I don't know what will happen to me. If you fancy the approach of such a battle depressed the spirits of men or officers you are greatly mistaken. I have never seen more mirth and joking than among the hundreds of

officers assembled about this building, which is used as the HD. Quarters of General Burnside, and within range of the rebel guns."

The sixth folder, John R. Moore (II) correspondence, contains letters written to family. His main recipients were his sister, Juliet, and aunt, Mary Kelly. He wrote about family news, his disappointment in his son, his alcoholism, his separation from his wife, and his work. A notable letter is one penned on March 2, 1895 to his future in-laws asking them for Elizabeth's hand in marriage. In another, written in Nov 1898, he tells his aunt: "I cannot suck happiness out of a bottle." On July 14, 1919, he laments about his son to his sister, "He has a fat chance to become an engineer. He should be a preacher- they don't do any work." In a sobering letter written to his aunt on June 20, 1925, John reveals that he first learned about his son's death from a newspaper clipping, after the funeral had already occurred.

The seventh folder, John R. Moore (II) documents & pictures includes items such as account books, tintype portraits, Homestead papers, and Civil Service Commission papers.

The eighth folder, General Moore family photographs, contains sixteen photographs of various generations of Moore family members. It includes pictures of the family at the beach, posing in front of enslaved workers, and a portrait of Robert Moore taken on 25 December 1894.

The ninth folder, Mary M. Kelly papers, contains correspondence relating family news and other documents such as real-estate warranty deeds, tax receipts, and a list of ancestry for Daughters of the American Revolution membership requirements.

The tenth and eleventh folders, Mary Mead Moore correspondence, include letters she received between 1902 and 1948. They mainly relate news of family and friends, information on radios, and advice about finances. Many letters written during the summer of 1925 convey condolences for her brother's death. Mary's main correspondent was her college friend, Betty.

The twelfth folder, Mary Mead Moore pictures, holds twenty-six photographs, mainly portraits, of Mary taken throughout her life. Included is a portrait of her posing in a college graduation gown with her mother and a stark black and white picture of middle-aged Mary with a serious expression and the word "soul" penciled on the back.

The last two folders, other correspondence and additional papers and ephemera, include materials created between 1880 and 1921. The letters talk about family news. One interesting letter addressed to Robert Moore in Blacksburg from an unknown sender on February 1, 1922, contains two lines: "If a body write a body, and meet with no reply; might a body write a body, and ask a body why? Bob Moore, you're such a mess!!!" Documents include such items as calling cards, receipts, newspaper articles, and report cards.

Keywords

Civil War

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Women -- History

Moore family

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by creator and material type.

Description of Subordinate Components

Australia Moore family genealogy papers

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Captain James R. Kelly papers (photocopies & transcript)

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Elizabeth Moore correspondence

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Gaylord pictures

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

John Moore (I) correspondence (photocopies & transcript)

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

John R. Moore (II) correspondence

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

John R. Moore (II) documents & pictures

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

General Moore family photographs

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Mary M. Kelly papers

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Mary Mead Moore correspondence

Unit Date 1902-1931

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Mary Mead Moore correspondence

Unit Date 1932-1948

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Mary Mead Moore pictures

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Other correspondence

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Additional papers & ephemera

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)