

John E. Allen, Jr., Collector, Two Photographs of Melville Davisson Post and Other Material, ca. 1920s A&M 3727

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Abstract

Two photographs of Melville Davisson Post, a novelist and short-story writer noted for his writing in the detective story genre. Includes portrait of Post posing with polo stick and dog at his feet. Also includes photo of Post mounted on horse as a polo player among group of three other polo players. There are also two frames (ca. 1920s) that contained the M.D. Post photos, and a photo of an unidentified woman (1924).

Extent

0.25 Linear Feet Summary: 3 in. (1 flat storage box)

Physical Location

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West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

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Biographical / Historical

Melville Davisson Post was born on April 19, 1869, the son of Florence May Davisson (1843-1914) and Ira Carper Post (1842-1923). Florence and Ira Post married in October 1866 and had five children: Maud, Melville, Emma, Sydney, and Florence. Ira raised cattle in Harrison County, West Virginia, and held numerous herds of cattle as well as pasture land. In 1878 the Posts built a new home, "Templemoor," where Melville spent the rest of his youth.

Melville Post attended the Academy in Buckhannon, West Virginia, in 1885 and took courses in Morgantown the following year. He formally entered West Virginia University in 1887 and graduated in 1891. He returned for a year of legal studies, and received his LL.B. in 1892. Post served as a prosecuting attorney in Wheeling, West Virginia, and was also involved in the state's Democratic Party.

Post began writing short stories while in Wheeling, and his first work centered on the character of Randolph Mason. *The Strange Schemes of Randolph Mason* was published in 1896, followed by *The Man of Last Resort*, of the *Clients of Randolph Mason* one year later. Other books included *Dwellers in the Hills* (1901), *The Corrector of Destinies* (1908), *The Gilded Chair* (1910), and *The Nameless Thing* (1912).

In 1903, Post married Ann Bloomfield "Bloom" Gamble Schoolfield. The couple lived in Grafton, West Virginia, where Post had formed a law partnership with another attorney. They had one son, Ira C. Post II, who died in 1906. Melville and Bloom left Grafton and from 1907 to 1914 spent their time traveling in Europe and enjoying extended stays with their families.

Beginning in 1908, Post's crime stories as well as his legal writing began to appear frequently in American popular magazines, including the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. One of Post's most well-known characters, Uncle Abner, first appeared in 1911; Uncle Abner continued to figure prominently in Post's stories, and in 1918 a collection of stories featuring Abner was published: *Uncle Abner, Master of Mysteries*. Post's later work included *The Mystery at the Blue Villa* (1919), *The Sleuth of St. James Square* (1920), *The Mountain School-Teacher* (1922), *Monsieur Jonquelle: Prefect of Police of Paris* (1923), *Randolph Mason, Corrector of Destinies* (1923), *Walker of the Secret Service* (1924), *The Man Hunters* (1926), *The Revolt of the Birds* (1927), *The Bradmoor Murder* (1929), *The Garden in Asia* (1929), and *The Silent Witness* (1930). He also continued to publish stories in serial publications.

Post built a home near Clarksburg, West Virginia, in 1914-1915 that was based on Swiss architecture and that he nicknamed "The Chalet." Bloom died of pneumonia in 1919. Melville Davisson Post lived at the Chalet until his death from a horse accident in 1930. He is buried in Clarksburg.

Keywords

Authors, American -- West Virginia
Post, Melville Davisson, 1869-1930