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Thomas, Robert Young, Jr., 1855-1925 (MSS 167)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
Department of Library Special Collections
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

Descriptive Inventory

MSS 167 THOMAS, Robert Young, Jr., 1855-1925

½ box. 9 folders. 90 items. 1853-1931. Originals.

2007.88.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert Young Thomas, Jr. was born near Russellville, Kentucky, on 13 July 1855. He received his Bachelor's degree in 1878 from Bethel College in Russellville. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1881 and commenced practice in Central City, Kentucky; he also worked as a journalist. He served as a member of the Kentucky General Assembly as a representative in 1886 and 1887; was elected Commonwealth attorney for the seventh judicial district of Kentucky in 1903 for a term of six years; was elected as a Democrat to the Sixty-first and to the eight succeeding Congresses and served from 4 March 1909, until his death at Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee on 3 September 1925. He is interred in the Evergreen Cemetery in Greenville, Kentucky.

Mr. Thomas had a rather colorful life. He was said to be rather "notorious for his non-political fights in which he became engaged. In one of these he was accused of drawing a knife on a House doorkeeper whom he met in a Washington hotel."

COLLECTION NOTE

The bulk of this collection consists of letters sent from Congressman Thomas to his wife, Annie Lee (Barber) Ragsdale, who he married in 1899 (she later married William James Barber), and to his daughters Barber Nell Thomas and Annie Lee Thomas. Most of the letters were written after the couple divorced (1914) and are chiefly written to his children. Another significant set of letters was sent from Mrs. Barber to John W. Moore, who was assisting her in obtaining a small appropriation from Congress for the two children. The collection also includes a small number of letters from the Helm and Kuykendall families of Butler County. The majority of these letters are addressed to W. A. Helm of Morgantown, Kentucky. Several of the letters discuss the real estate market and business environment of Kansas City, Missouri, and Independence, Missouri. One last item of interest is a letter written in 1931 from a young girl, Martha Belle Moore, to General Richard E. Byrd congratulating him after one of his South Pole exploratory trips.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Robert Y. Thomas, Jr.	1853-1931	90 items
Folder 1	Inventory	n.d.	1 item
Folder 2	Biographical information; calendar of papers	n.d.	5 items
Folder 3	Letter from W.A. Chapman to Miss L.A. Boadley of Morgantown, Kentucky	1853	1 item
Folder 4	Kuykendall and Helm family - Correspondence	1872-1926	12 items
Folder 5	Thomas, Robert Young, Jr. - Letters to his wife and children	1913-1914	5 items
Folder 6	Thomas, Robert Young, Jr. - Letters to his ex-wife and children	1914-1920	29 items
Folder 7	Thomas, Robert Young, Jr. - Correspondence with his children	1921-1925	24 items
Folder 8	Letters from various Barber family members to John W. Moore	1917-1926	12 items
Folder 9	Letter from Martha Belle Moore to Admiral Richard E. Byrd	1931	1 item

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS THOMAS, Robert Young, Jr., 1853-1931
167 1855-1925

Chiefly letters written by Robert Young Thomas, Jr. to his wife, Annie Lee Thomas, and his two children, Barber Nell Thomas and Annie Lee Thomas. The majority of these letters are to the children and were written after Mr. and Mrs. Thomas divorced in 1914. Also included is correspondence of the Helm and Kuykendall families of Butler County, Kentucky.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Barber, Annie Lee (Barber) Ragsdale Thomas, 1866-1927 – Correspondence
 B1,F5,6,8

Boadley, Lydia Amanda, 1836-1870 – Letter to B1,F3

Byrd, Richard E., 1888-1957 – Letter to B1,F9

Chapman, Willis N., 1834-1864 B1,F3

Charleston, Missouri – Travel and description, 1853 B1,F3

Helm, William Avilette, 1857-1921 – Letters to B1,F4

Independence, Missouri – Travel and description, 1887-1891 B1,F4

Kansas City, Missouri – Travel and description, 1887-1891 B1,F4

Kuykendall, M. W. B1,F4

Moore, John William, 1877-1941 – Letters to B1,F8

Ragsdale, Ferne, 1887-1923 – Correspondence B1,F6,7

Thomas, Annie Lee, 1910-1986 – Letters to B1,F5-7

Thomas, Barber Nell, 1907-1979 – Correspondence B1,F5-8

Jeffrey 05/2007