Morton, David, 1886-1957 (MSS 50)

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BIOGRAPHY

David Morton was born in Elkton, Kentucky, on February 21, 1886, the son of Thomas Beckwith and Mattie (Petrie) Morton. Following graduation from Vanderbilt University in 1909, he entered newspaper work as a reporter for the *Louisville Evening Post*, later being employed by the Associated Press; and then, he became an editorial writer for the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and the *Louisville Herald*. He contributed editorials to the *New York Sun* and the *New York Evening Post*, also.

From newspaper work, Morton turned to teaching in 1915, and he remained in this profession until his death. He taught English literature at the Louisville Boys’ High School from 1915 to 1918, and from 1918 to 1924 he taught English and history on the secondary level in Morristown, New Jersey. In 1924 he became an English assistant professor at Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, achieving full professorship in 1926 and filling that role until 1945. Morton married Elizabeth Kidder Merrick in 1943. This marriage lasted only a short period of time as separation soon occurred.

After leaving Amherst, he was poet-in-residence at Deerfield Academy, Deerfield, Massachusetts, for a few years. Then in the early 1950s, Morton became Professor of English in the overseas branch of the American International College in the Azores. Ill health forced him to return to New Jersey in 1957, and death came to him on June 13, 1957.

His first published work was *Ships in Harbor*, 1921. Many other books of poems followed. Some of them were: *Harvest*, 1924; *Nocturnes and Autumnals*, 1928; *A Man of Earth*, 1930; *Earth’s Processional*, 1932; *Spell Against Time*, 1936; *All in One Breath*, 1939; *Angle of Earth and Sky*, 1941; *Poems: 1920-1945*, 1945; *Like a Man in Love*, 1955; and *Journey Into Time*, 1958.

Morton compiled anthologies and wrote some books concerning poetry. He was a noted sonneteer, also. Throughout his career, Morton received many honors and won many prizes for his poetry. He lectured at various times at Western Kentucky University, and in 1949 he served as a vice president of The Poetry Society of America. The University of Kentucky conferred an honorary Doctorate of Letters upon Morton in 1952 as did the University of Massachusetts in 1953.
Bibliographical Notes
Browning, Mary Carmel. Kentucky Authors, 1968.

THE COLLECTION

The major portion of the collection is comprised of the writings (essays, books, poems, etc.) of David Morton. The correspondence includes that of the Morton family (sisters and brother of David) with Elizabeth Coombs, the librarian of the Kentucky Library, 1957-1960 (28 items); correspondence of Coombs with Margaret Carpenter, a friend of David Morton, who made arrangements for the publication of, and wrote the foreword to, the book Journey Into Time, 1958-1959 (25); letters to Morton from various friends and authors, 1919-1955 (8); and letters of Morton to his parents in Louisville, written from Ireland in 1929 (typescript, 9), to his sister, and to a friend, 1929-1956 (6).

Among the manuscripts of Morton’s writings are the following: commencement addresses, 193?, 1942 (2); essays, 1952(?); 1956(?); (3); manuscript for book of sonnets to the called “Entries for a Diary,” original typescript with holographic typed copy, and carbon copy (unedited) of the first draft of “The Amateur Listener” -- diary about music and musicians, June 1952-July 24, 1955 (3); poems -- holographic and typescript, 1947-1957 (788); list of poems by Morton which are indexed in Reader’s Guide, 1914-1937 (1); paper entitled “Works of David Morton, 1928-1940” by Katherine Morton, 1940 (1); pamphlets, 1918-1956 (4); photographs (8); and miscellaneous items.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1  MORTON, David, 1886-1957

Folder 1  Correspondence of Morton family and Elizabeth Coombs regarding giving of Morton’s works to the Kentucky Library 1957-1960 27 items

Folder 2  Correspondence regarding the Morton Collection 1858, 1959 27 items

2a - Margaret Carpenter and Elizabeth Coombs 1958, 1959 25 items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Correspondence of David Morton</td>
<td>1919-1955</td>
<td>23 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>From Rittenhouse, Jessie B.</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>From Benet, Stephen Vincent</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>From Gogarty, Oliver St. John</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d</td>
<td>From Braley, Berton</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>From James, Alice Archer Sewall</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f</td>
<td>From niece, Martha</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3g</td>
<td>From Moore, Robert Thomas</td>
<td>1954, 1955</td>
<td>2 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3h</td>
<td>To parents in Louisville written from Ireland (typed copies)</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>9 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3i</td>
<td>To his sister Virginia and her husband, John Adams</td>
<td>1932-1951</td>
<td>5 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3j</td>
<td>To George Abbe</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manuscript – Commencement addresses (1 holographic; 1 typescript with holographic corrections)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>1952?, 1956?</td>
<td>3 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. History of American International College, Azores (holographic)</td>
<td>1952?</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. <em>A New England Devotional</em> (typed copy)</td>
<td>1952?</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. “I Took My Thrombosis to the East” (typed copy)</td>
<td>1956?</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Manuscript for book of sonnets to be called “Entries for a Diary.” (original typescript with holographic corrections)</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item; 56p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date(s)</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1947, 1948</td>
<td>157 items</td>
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<td>10a – Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>43 items</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>94 items</td>
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<td>BOX 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>74 items</td>
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<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Poems (holographic)</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>80 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>95 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1953, 1954</td>
<td>158 items</td>
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<td>4a – Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>69 items</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1955, 1956</td>
<td>150 items</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5a – Poems (holographic)</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>31 items</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5b – Poems (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>33 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Poems (holographic and typescript), alphabetized</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>70 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Poems – Rhyme sheets</td>
<td>1947-1950</td>
<td>30 sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Poems and miscellaneous items</td>
<td>1914-1957</td>
<td>34 items</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8a – Poems, unpublished (typescript)</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>8 items</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8b – Poem (holographic) “Old Farmer’s Almanac(k)”</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8c – Poems, misc. (holographic and typescript)</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>8 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8d – Poems read at funeral service of David Morton</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8e – Poems by David Morton which are indexed in Reader’s Guide</td>
<td>1914-1937</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8f – Poem and sketch by David Morton for inscription on stone for his sister’s garden  n.d.  1 item
8g – “Works of David Morton, 1928-1940” by Katherine Morton  1940  1 item
8h – Review of *Angles of Earth and Sky*, 1941  1941?  1 item
8i – Article about Robert Frost written by David Morton and published in *Outlook*, vol. 135, no. 16 (printed and xerox copies)  1923  2 items
8j – Newspaper clippings and miscellaneous items  1932-1947  10 items
8k – See verso

Folder 9  Pamphlets  1918-1919; 1933; 1954; 1956
9a – *The Poetry Society of America*  1918-1919  1 item
9b – *A Canticle of Praise* by Witter Bynner  1933  1 items
9c – Borstone Mountain Poetry Awards  1954  1 item
9d – *Homage to Lajes Hospital Personnel* by David Morton  1956  1 item

Folder 10  Items pertaining to dedication of chapel door at Lajes Field, Azores  1955  3 items
10a – Photo of the chapel door  1955  1 item

Folder 11  Photographs  8 items

Phonograph Records


Record 1 - 2s. 12in. 78 rpm.  1 item

Part 1 - Spring
   Side 1:  1. “Spring Announcement”
           2. “February Bird” (from *Spell Against Time*)
           3. “Afternoon” (from *Angles of Earth and Sky*)
Part 2 - Summer
   Side 2: 1. “Adoration” (from Earth’s Processional)
          2. “Martin” (from Angels of Earth and Sky)
          3. “Petition” (from Spell Against Time)

Record 2 - 2s. 12in. 78 rpm.

Part 3 - Autumn and Winter
   Side 1: 1. “Once When the Autumn Turned”
          2. “To the Last Leaf Fallen” (from Earth’s Processional)
          3. “Example and Precept” (from Spell Against Time)

   Side 2: Four Love Poems - From a privately published group entitled “This Is For You.”
          1. “Invitation”
          2. “Flight From Autumn”
          3. “Journey Into Danger”
          4. “This At Midnight”

**CATALOG CARD**

MSS  Morton, David, 1886-1957                    1914-1960
50

Correspondence of Morton, correspondence concerning Morton Collection, speeches, essays, manuscript of “Entries for a Diary” and “The Amateur Listener” -- diary, poems, pamphlets, and miscellaneous items of Morton, a poet and English professor born in Elkton, Kentucky.

2 boxes, 22 folders, 1045 items.
1957.14.1

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SEE and SEE ALSO

Carman, Bliss, 1861-1929
See:
   Carman, William Bliss, 1861-1929

Sullivan, Seuman (Seamus), 1879-1958
See:
   Starkey, James Sullivan, 1879-1958