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## Taliaferro Collection (MSS 51)

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### Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Taliaferro Collection (MSS 51)" (2008). *MSS Finding Aids*. Paper 363. [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_mss\\_fin\\_aid/363](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid/363)

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

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 51 TALIAFERRO Collection**

½ box. 6 folders. 103 items. 1815-1956. Originals, typescripts, carbon copies.

1942.21.1

***BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE***

Elizabeth “Betsy” M. B. Williamson (1800-1850) was born in Lexington, Kentucky, the daughter of David and Susannah Williamson. She evidently received a good education and was interested in cultural affairs, but nothing is known of her formal education. The Williamson family was living in Versailles, Kentucky, when Betsy and James Govan Taliaferro (1798-1876) were married there on 7 May 1819. Taliaferro moved to Louisiana from Virginia when a small child, and he came to Kentucky to study law at Transylvania College. Following their marriage they moved to Louisiana, where Taliaferro eventually served as a judge on the Louisiana Supreme Court. They had several children, but only six lived to maturity.

***THE COLLECTION***

The collection focuses on a copy of the diary that Betsy Taliaferro kept from 20 March 1839 to 8 April 1839 of a trip she made from Harrisburg (Catahoula Parrish), Louisiana, to her former home at Versailles, Kentucky. (The original diary is presumably still the property of the Taliaferro family in Lafayette, Louisiana.) Betsy was accompanied by her husband; sons Robert, age 8, and David, age 4; and Kitty, their African-American nurse, on the steamboat trip to New Orleans for a short visit. They then retraced their route up the Mississippi River, with Taliaferro disembarking at Natchez, Mississippi. Betsy and her party continued their steamboat journey to Louisville, Kentucky. From Louisville, they traveled by stagecoach to Versailles. Betsy vividly describes many aspects of the trip such as life in New Orleans, transportation on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and steamboat races.

Included is a typescript manuscript based on the diary, with holographic notes, prepared by Mary T. Moore, first librarian of the Kentucky Library at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky, for the University of Kentucky Press Fellowship Committee Contest, with notes and drafts of a letter to accompany the 1955 entry (12 items). Other materials collected by Moore are holographic and typescript notes for articles, speeches and stories, and Williamson family data (52); holographic and

typescript biographical sketches taken from various sources (7); clippings and printed items, 1895-1956 (6); and a negative of a lottery ticket of David Williamson of Lexington, Kentucky, dated June 14, 1815.

### ***SHELF LIST***

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>TALIAFERRO Collection</b>	<b>1815-1956</b>	<b>103 items</b>
Folder 1	Correspondence of Mary T. Moore re: the Taliaferro Collection	1941-1955	22 items
Folder 2	Diary of Betsy Taliaferro (typescript and carbon copy)	March 20, 1839- April 8, 1839	2 items; 26 p. each
Folder 3	Diary of Betsy Taliaferro (carbon copy with holographic notes of Moore)	March 20, 1839 April 8, 1839	1 item; 85 p.
Folder 4	Manuscript prepared for University Press Fellowship Committee Contest and Moore's notes (holographic and typescript)	n.d.	12 items
	4a - Drafts of Moore's letter to the committee	1955	4 items
Folder 5	Moore's notes for articles, speech, and story (holographic and typescript)		52 items
	5a - Williamson family notes, etc.		25 items
Folder 6	Biographical sketches, clippings, printed items, etc., collected by Moore	1815-1956	14 items
	6a - Biographical sketches taken from various sources (holographic and typescript)		7 items
	6b - Clippings and printed items	1895-1956	6 items
	6c - Lottery ticket of David Williamson, Lexington, Kentucky (negative)	June 14, 1815	1 item

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS TALIAFERRO Collection 1815-1956  
51

Copy of a diary kept by Betsy (Williamson) Taliaferro (1800-1850) from 20 March 1838 to 8 April 1839, concerning her trip from Harrisonburg, Louisiana, to New Orleans and then to Versailles, Kentucky her native home, by steamboat and stage-coach. Includes correspondence, notes, clippings, etc. of researcher Mary T. Moore regarding the diary.  
½ box. 6 folders. 103 items. Originals, typescripts, and carbon copies.  
1942.21.1

**SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

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 Baylor, Orval William, 1894-1958 F1  
 Boats and boating – Mississippi River, 1839 F3, p.2-70  
 Boats and boating – Ohio River, 1839 F3, p.71-78  
 Booth, Junius Brutus, 1796-1852 F3, p.11,25-27; F4; F6a  
 Brand, John, 1775-1849 F3, p.42; F4; F6a  
 Cave-in-Rock, Illinois, 1839 F3, p.72-73  
 Celeste, Madame, 1815-1882 F3, p.20-21; F4; F6a  
 Chickasaw Bluffs, Tennessee, 1839 F3, p.61,64  
 Clothing – New Orleans, Louisiana, 1839 F3, p.11-13  
 Coleman, John Winston, Jr., 1898-1983 F1  
 Costumes – New Orleans, Louisiana, 1839 F3, p.11-13  
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 Earthquakes – New Madrid, Missouri, 1811 F3, p.67-68  
 Economic conditions – Louisiana, 1839 F3, p.1-48  
 Economic conditions – New Orleans, Louisiana, 1839 F3, p.8-27; F4  
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 Moore, Mary (Taylor) Leiper, 1885-1973 F1,4  
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Jeffrey 07/16/2012