

2-26-2014

Parker Family Papers (MSS 118)

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Recommended Citation

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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 118 PARKER Family Papers

1 box. 18 folders. 165 items. 1841–1990. Originals.

2003.103.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Liddell and Spencer families

Freeman H. Liddell, a physician in Buena Vista, Alabama, was born in 1816 in South Carolina to Moses Liddell (1795-1858) and Mary Polly (Hardy) Liddell (1795-1870). He married Amanda (1817-1875), also a native of South Carolina. They had five children: Mary E. (1842-1914), Franklin (b. 1847), James F. (b. 1850), Moses Lafayette (1852-1909) and Albert M. (1859-1939).

Mary "Molly" E. Liddell married William F. Spencer (1875-1919), the son of Oliver H. Spencer (b. 1839). The couple lived in Buena Vista, Monroe County, Alabama and are buried in the Buena Vista cemetery.

Laura V. Carpenter was born on 6 September 1872 to Minnie Lee (Senter) Carpenter (1846-1942). Laura married Samuel A. Parker (1875-1946) on 12 December 1899. They lived most of their married lives in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Samuel died in 1946 and Laura in 1958; they are both interred in Bowling Green's Fairview Cemetery. Laura's sister was Ida Lorena (Carpenter) Mair (1869-1945) of Colorado Springs, Colorado. She is interred in Colorado Springs's Evergreen Cemetery. Laura received several letters from Willie and Bess Spencer, but it is unclear if the families were related in any way.

Laura V. (Carpenter) Parker and Samuel A. Parker had two girls who never married: Elizabeth Dunbar Parker (1904-1998) and Lorena Virginia Parker (d.1991). Elizabeth, a native of Gibson County, Tennessee, taught for many years and retired from T.C Cherry School in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Lorena, a native of Colorado Springs, Colorado, was a trust officer for American National Bank in Bowling Green until her retirement. Both sisters attended Bowling Green's First Baptist Church and both are interred in Bowling Green's Fairview Cemetery. Rubye Smith Parker was married to Joseph Burns Parker; she was a teacher and later principal of Bowling Green's Center Street School. She died in 1963 and was buried in Fairview Cemetery. Bowling Green's Parker-Bennett School was named for her and fellow life-long educator Mackie (Smith) Bennett.

William Jerry Parker – Collector

These materials were chiefly collected by William Jerry Parker, a lifelong resident of Bowling Green, Kentucky, born to Rubye David (Smith) and Joseph Burns Parker. He was a graduate of Western Kentucky University, the Bowling Green College of Commerce (the Bowling Green Business University) and Vanderbilt University School of Law. He served in the U.S. Air Force. He was admitted to the Kentucky and Tennessee bar associations in 1959 and was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1966. He began his law practice with the firm of Coleman, Harlin & Orendorf, focusing on civil litigation and estate planning. At the time of his death, he was a member of Harlin Parker law firm. He served on the Kentucky Bar Association Board of Governors from 1969 to 1982 and was state bar president in 1980 and 1981. Parker was chairman of the KBA Continuing Legal Education Commission from 1983 to 1989 and was a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

He was a lifelong member of the State Street United Methodist Church, where he was a past chairman of the board of trustees and administrative council and also co-chaired a major renovation project at the church in 1989. Parker was a director for the War Memorial Boys Club, the Salvation Army Advisory Board and the WKU College Heights Foundation.

Parker served as trustee and co-chair of the building committee for the Bowling Green Public Library in the 1970s. He was an active Rotarian, serving as president of the Noon Rotary Club, district governor for District 6710 of Rotary International, a Paul Harris Fellow and national permanent fund advisor the Rotary Foundation.

Parker met Eva Jane Martin, a native of Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, while a student at the Bowling Green College of Commerce. They married on 19 December 1954. Their four children included: Jane Beth Parker, Jo Martin Parker, William Jerry Parker, Jr., and Frederick Smith Parker.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists of a wide array of material collected by William Jerry Parker. The material relates chiefly to the Liddell, Spencer, and Parker families. The Liddell and Spencer families are related through the marriage of Mary E. Liddell and William F. Spencer. Although Laura Carpenter corresponded with members of the Spencer family, it is unclear if they were related in any way. Laura married into the Parker family.

The Liddell family material contains an interesting letter from 1841 (Folder 2) to Freeman H. Liddell from his father Moses Liddell in which he receives a letter of transfer from the Fairview Church in Gwinnett County, Georgia to an unnamed Presbyterian Church in Alabama. The letter is filled with religious references but also contains family news, in particular the details of a Moses' leg being amputated and the prosthesis that he is working with.

Folder 2 also contains a newsy political letter, 1860, from Thomas H. Skidmore of Georgiaville, Texas to Freeman Liddell, in which Skidmore discusses land acquisition and Texas politics with several remarks about the political career of Sam Houston and about the 1860 election. The last letter in Folder 2 is sent to A.M. Liddell from James F. Liddell in Idaho in 1886. He talks about his unsuccessful mining excursion into Alaska and the mining that he is doing in Idaho.

Folder 3 contains the correspondence of Mary "Molly" E. Liddell of Buena Vista, Alabama with family and friends. A number of these letters were written during and just prior to the Civil War and mention public opinion about the war; one 1861 letter written to Molly by O.H. Spencer does contain comments about John Brown. Folder 4 includes some of Molly's compositions written while she was a student at Judson Institute (Judson College) in Marion, Alabama, 1856-1851. The folder also contains a 1906 commencement program for Judson College.

Folder 5 includes letters from the Spencer family of Wilcox and Monroe counties in Alabama, chiefly letters written to Mollie E. Liddell from a suitor, M.L. Brown, and several letters to Oliver H. Spencer. Of interest is a birthday celebration invitation from a Sunday School class in Sally, Alabama dated 1904. Two letters to O.H. Spencer are from J.W. Anderson, Covington, Georgia, in which he renews his Civil War acquaintance with Spencer and makes remarks about the time that he served as a prisoner of war at Point Lookout, Maryland.

Folder 6 contains the correspondence of Shelley L. Spencer, with the majority of it from his mother. She talks of family matters, discusses religious affairs including an incident in which Shelley was found dancing, and always expresses her desire that Shelley remain near home.

Folder 7 includes letters sent to Laura V. Carpenter Parker from various correspondents, but chiefly from her mother, Minnie Lee (Senter) Carpenter.

Folder 8 holds speeches made before the Adelphi Society of Howard College in Marion, Alabama, by an anonymous author, but believed to be Oliver H. Spencer. The dates of the speeches are not known. Howard eventually became Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama.

Folder 9 contains two letters written to Mrs. J.L. Whittle, one by her husband in 1903 in Pueblo, Colorado, in which he pines for communication with her. The other missive is a consolation letter written by a friend, Myra Wilson of Sulphur Springs, Texas, upon the death of Mr. Whittle.

Folder 10 includes business letters from the Consolidated Mines Syndicate of Bosie, Idaho with Ida Lorena Mair of Colorado Springs, Colorado. She was obviously a major stockholder and the letters often address concerns she has with the business.

Folder 11 houses material that Lorena Virginia Parker had kept in a small three-ring binder. The contents include small poems written by or copied by Parker; most are credited to the original author. It also includes a few short stories and speeches prepared for a missions group, probably the Woman's Missionary Union at First Baptist Church.

Folder 12 houses a program for the third quarterly meeting of the Woman's Missionary Union of Central Association, Tennessee.

Folder 13 includes letters written to Lorena Parker by Rosie Bedsole, a missionary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Her husband Jerry Paul Bedsole served as a vocational missionary, dividing his time between his veterinary practice and religious education and hunger relief. Occasionally she will mention political and social events occurring in country, and often refers to the challenging life of being a mother of three boys in an under-developed and drought-struck country.

Folder 14 includes a Life Graduate State Teaching Certificate from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Florida, 1930, for Elizabeth Dunbar Carpenter.

Folder 15 contains some miscellaneous items related to Elizabeth Dunbar Parker including a schedule and fares for a trip from Bowling Green, Kentucky to Daytona Beach, Florida via the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in April 1935.

Folders 16 and 17 include material related to World War II. Folder 16 houses a five-year diary (Parker used it from 1941 to 1944) in which Parker notes family matters, church affairs, and local public opinion about the war effort. Folder 17 houses letters to Rubye David (Smith) Parker from several service men involved in World War II and the Korean War. A consolation letter to a Kathleen Essie related to the death of her son, Thomas, is of note. Mrs. Essie also writes a letter of appreciation to Ms. Parker for writing her son during the war. Several letters written by "Ray" during the Korean War describe the landscape and people of Korea.

Folder 18 includes four lengthy and beautifully constructed letters from "Joe Bennett," who is helping run a homeless shelter in New York City during the Depression, to his mother, Ida Lorena (Carpenter) Mair, the sister of Laura Virginia (Carpenter) Parker. His last letter is written from The City of St. Jude, Montgomery, Alabama, where he has moved to help establish an administrative arm of the mission in that city.

SHELF LIST

Box 1

Folder 1	Inventory and biographical Information		7 items
Folder 2	Liddell family – Correspondence	Feb. 28, 1841- Oct. 12, 1886	3 items
Folder 3	Mary "Molly" E. Liddell – Correspondence	Sept. 8, 1854- April 1901	12 items
Folder 4	Mary "Molly" E. Liddell – Compositions written at Judson Institute	March 1856- April 1861	37 items

Folder 5	Spencer family – Correspondence	Nov. 9, 185?- Feb. 13, 1905	14 items
Folder 6	Shellie Spencer – Correspondence	March 20, 1885- Oct. 18, 1899	6 items
Folder 7	Laura Carpenter Parker – Correspondence	March 1, 1891- Oct. 18. 1912	21 items
Folder 8	Speeches written for the Adelphi Society Howard College by an anonymous author	18--?	8 items
Folder 9	Whittle family – Correspondence	1903; 1908	2 items
Folder 10	Consolidated Mines Syndicate – Correspondence	Sept. 30, 1932- Feb. 12, 1940	23 items
Folder 11	Lorena Parker – Collection of original and copied poetry and prose	n.d.	1 item
Folder 12	Lorena Parker – Program from The Womens Missionary Union of Central Association	May 3, 1911	1 item
Folder 13	Lorena Parker – Correspondence with Rosie Bedsole, a missionary in Africa	Aug. 4, 1980- Aug. 20, 1990	11 items
Folder 14	Elizabeth Dunbar Parker – Florida life graduate state certificate	Aug. 20, 1930	1 item
Folder 15	Elizabeth Dunbar Parker – Miscellaneous Items	1932-1936	4 items
Folder 16	Elizabeth Dunbar Parker – Five year diary	1941-1945	1 item
Folder 17	Rubye (Smith) Parker – Incoming WWII and Korean War letters	Aug. 21, 1943- Apr. 27, 1953	9 items
Folder 18	Letters – Written by Joe Bennett to his mother Ida Mair	May 5, 1933 - Oct. 10, 1934	4 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

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A wide array of materials, chiefly correspondence, of the Liddell and Spencer families of Alabama and the Parker family of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Of particular interest are Civil War letters written to Mary E. "Mollie" Liddell, items related to Howard College and Judson Institute in Marion, Alabama, letters to Lorena Parker from a missionary in Ethiopia, and a letter mentioning Texas politics in 1860.

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Jeffrey 02/26/2014