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Upton, Larry Thurman, b. 1940 (MSS 553)

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Stella Phelps Minton was born on 25 January 1892 in Butler County, Kentucky. Her husband, Allen Thurman Minton, was born 31 August 1888 in Butler County, Kentucky. They eloped to Clarksville Tennessee to marry on 8 May 1909. They lived in several Kentucky communities prior to settling down in Bowling Green in 1953. Allen died on 6 June 1975 and Stella on 29 December 1986.

Stella and Allen had nine children: Hurdel, Gateward, Marjorie, Opie and Opal (twins), Hayward, Evan, Gay, and Bettie. In November 1918 the entire family came down with the influenza during the great epidemic that swept across the United States; Stella lost her sons Gateward and Opie in a span of six days.

Stella and her family practiced the Mormon faith, and she was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for 60 years. She donated money to begin construction of the church in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Stella had several hobbies: quilting, writing letters to her children, researching genealogy history of her family, and reading. As she got older two of her daughters, Marjorie and Opal, began to help her quilt after they retired from their jobs. In her later years she became a member of the Diamond Club which was a social club for senior citizens in Butler County. She won three awards from the club: having the longest marriage at 66 years, having the most living descendants at 118, and for being the oldest woman.

Most of the letters in this collection was addressed to Betty Upton, who was born on 18 May 1919 near Jetson in Butler County, Kentucky. She was the daughter of Stella and Allen Minton. She eloped with her husband Lattney on 12 February 1938 to Franklin, Simpson County, Kentucky. She moved to Arizona with her husband in 1954 due to his asthma. She died at the age of 90 in 2009, her husband died in 1996 at the age of 83.

Betty was a member of the Mormon church all of her life, and after her husband was baptized in 1949 missionaries began to use their house as a second headquarters. Her chief hobbies were quilting and writing poetry. [One of her quilts won her an award at the Graham County Fair in Arizona] Her poetry was used to reminisce about her home and family in
Kentucky. She won an award from Eastern Arizona College for a paper she wrote titled “Fifty Years of Relief Society.”

Larry Thurman Upton, the son of Betty and Lattney Upton, was born in Bowling Green in 1940. He enjoyed a long career in finance. He is the author of three books: *Bowling Green Stock Car Racing*, *Historic Manzanita Speedway in Phoenix*, and *Memory is a Wonderful Thing: The Life and Letters of Stella Minton*. He also wrote a two-act play titled *Great Trial of the Wham Robbers* which is based on the court trial an army paymaster robbery by a group of Mormons near Pima, Arizona.

**COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists chiefly of letters written by Stella Minton to her daughter Betty (Minton) Upton. They discuss family matters, local happenings in Bowling Green and Warren County, church affairs in the local Mormon congregation, quilting, gardening, and cooking. The letters are included in Box 1 and Box 2, Folders 1-3. A diary by Betty Minton from the years 1937-1941 can be found in Box 2, Folder 4. The diary gives a brief insight into Betty’s daily life. Box 2, Folder 5 includes copies of poems composed by Betty Minton; the poetry covers a wide array of topics such as tributes to family members, family events, and various jobs held by Upton, as well as more esoteric topics such as love. Notes and research related to the production of “Memory is a Wonderful Thing” by Larry Upton are contained in Box 2, Folders 6&7, which provides information about the Upton family.

Box 3 contains information about the development of racing, with an emphasis on the early years of drag racing, at Beech Bend Raceway Park in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Folder 1 includes news clippings and correspondence, much of it related to Larry Graham winning the Kentucky Regional Stock Car Championship in 1951 at Beech Bend. Folder 2 contains photos from the Park, including a number of snapshots of races, as well as a studio portrait of Larry's father, Lattney Earl Upton. Fourteen separate biographies for men who raced at Beech Bend are included in Folder 3; these pieces, printed on colored paper, include a biography and photograph and were intended to be distributed to race attendees. Folder 4 includes two race programs, tickets, and a pit pass from races in the early-1950s. Folder 5 contains a short recording of a radio show in which the 1951 championship stock car race is called on the air; it includes a short interview with the winner Larry Graham and with the car's owner Lattney Upton.

**SHELF LIST**

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<tr>
<th>BOX 1</th>
<th>Letters from Mother</th>
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<td>Folder 1</td>
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<td>Letters from Mother</td>
<td>1955-1969</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Letters from Mother</td>
<td>1970-1971</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Letters from Mother</td>
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<td>Larry Upton – Correspondence</td>
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<td>Writings by Larry Upton</td>
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<td><strong>BOX 3</strong> <em>Beech Bend Raceway Park Material</em></td>
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<td>Beech Bend Raceway Park – Racer bios</td>
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*Manuscripts & Folklife Archives – Library Special Collections – Western Kentucky University*
Folder 4  Beech Bend Raceway Park – Miscellaneous  1951-1953  6 items
Folder 5  Beech Bend Raceway Park – Recording of the 1951 championship race being called on a radio program  1951  1 item

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS  UPTON, Larry Thurman, b. 1940 –  1955-2014
553  Collector

Letters from Stella Minton to her daughter, Elizabeth Allen “Betty” Minton, about family matters, local happenings in Bowling Green and Warren County, church affairs in the local Mormon congregation, quilting, gardening, and cooking. Includes research notes by Larry Thurman Upton for his book *Memory is a Wonderful Thing* that goes over the history of the Upton family. In addition the collection contains information about the beginning of stock car racing at Beech Bend Raceway Park in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

2 ½ boxes. 24 folders. 616 items. Originals, photocopies, and photos.
SC2015.109.1&2

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

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Beech Bend Raceway Park – Bowling Green  B3
Buttermilk – Recipe  B1,F5
Diamond Club – Butler County – Comments about  B1,B2
Greencastle – Comments about  B2,F2
Folk medicine  B1,F2
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Halley’s Comet – Comments about  B2,F2
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Luber, Doris Gay (Minton) Schanklin, b. 1928 – Comments about
Luber, Howard E., 1924-1995 – Comments about
*Memory is a Wonderful Thing* (Book) – Relating to  B2,F6-7
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Minton, Evan Attewall, 1924-2011 – Comments about, B2,F6
Minton, Gateward Thurman, 1913-1918 – Comments about, B2,F6
Minton, Hurdel Effert, 1911-2012 – Comments about, B2,F6
Minton, Opel Reade, 1916-1918 – Comments about, B2,F6
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Temple View Church – Butler County – Comments about B1,F9
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Upton, Elizabeth Allen “Betty” (Minton), 1919-2009 – Letters to B1; B2,F1-3,9
Upton, Elizabeth Allen “Betty” (Minton), 1919-2009 – Relating to B2,F6-7-8
Upton, Elizabeth Allen “Betty” (Minton), 1919-2009 – Photographs B2,F8
Upton, Larry Thurman b. 1940 – Correspondence B2,F9
Upton, Lattney Earl, 1913-1996 – Relating to B2,F8,10; B3,F5
Upton, Lattney Earl, 1913-1996 – Photographs B2,F8; B3,F2

SEE and SEE ALSO

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
   See:
      Mormons

   See:
      Upton, Elizabeth Allen “Betty” (Minton), 1919-2009

Schanklin, Doris Gay, b. 1928
   See:
      Luber, Gay (Minton) Schanklin, b. 1916

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