

## **Lilith Morton Collection 2. The Courtship Period Letters. Letters dated November 1901 through June 1902.**

---

Collection 2 includes all the letters from the period of Lilith Morton and John William Elliott's courtship. They include the letters from Will Lovan wanting to introduce Lilith and John in November 1901 through the letters planning the elopement of Lilith and John on the 18 June 1902.

Lilith Annastasia Morton was born 13 March 1884 in Mortons Gap, Kentucky, the third of seven children born to Mandelbert Mansfield Morton and Melvina England Fugate. Her father, Bert Morton, was a successful farmer who raised tobacco and lived on a farm outside Mortons Gap, Kentucky. Bert Morton, was 48 when he married her mother who had been 28 at their marriage. Lilith's mother, Melvina and her baby brother, Simon, died in June 1890 when Lilith was six years old. Bert's unmarried sister, Huldah, came to live with the family in Mortons Gap and helped to raise Bert's six surviving children.

Lilith was introduced to John William Elliott by Will Lovan in November 1901. John William Elliott, born 31 October 1877 in Franklin County, Illinois, was a telegraph operator for the railroad working in Earlington, Kentucky. Lilith's father liked John but thought their relationship was moving too fast. He did not give permission for her to marry. John and Lilith eloped on 18 June 1901 marrying on 19 June 1902 in Carmi, Illinois. John and Lilith Elliott had seven children.

Mrs. Lilith (Morton) Elliott carried a small box throughout her life containing letters and papers. Upon her death on 12 December 1973, the box came into the possession of her daughter, Mrs. Johnnye (Elliott) Gill. Mrs. Gill passed them to her grand daughter, Gail Jackson Miller (425 Midcrest Drive, Bowling Green, Kentucky). The original letters are currently (2020) in the possession of Mrs. Miller.

Lilith's box contained letters dating from 1897 through 1914. The letters included correspondence and notes from friends, relatives, girlhood boyfriends, and more serious suitors. The letters from her future husband show the progression of their relationship from their



John William Elliott. Photograph in the possession of Gail Jackson Miller, 2020.

introduction to their plans to elope. Later letters from her husband show their movements and difficulties during their early years of marriage.

Lilith's box contained several other keepsakes. It contained a small, red leather wallet containing various receipts and financial papers. These appear to be from her father, Mandelbert Mansfield Morton's papers. The wallet also contained a small, ivory-handled knife. The box also contained a photograph of her father taken prior to the Civil War and a small pin with a photograph of an unknown young man. There were also calling cards, post cards, and a bundle of small pieces of material probably from special items of clothing.

The Lilith Morton Collection has been divided into five parts:

Collection 1, The Teen Year Letters, 1897 through December 1900;

Collection 2, The Courtship Period, November 1901 through June 1902;

Collection 3, The Early Married Years, July 1902 through October 1914;

Collection 4, Keepsakes and papers pertaining to Lilith's father, Mandelbert Mansfield Morton [1832-1913]; and

Collection 5, Miscellaneous keepsakes special to Lilith Morton.

The current collection is mostly made up of letters from John William Elliott to Lilith Morton. Will Lovan introduced the couple in November 1901. John wrote numerous letters to Lilith. She obviously answered the letters but only two letters from her to him are included in the collection. It should be noted that some of Lilith's close family called her "Bill." Several of the letters use this name. During the period between John and Lilith's first encounter there were only two other letters included. One letter was from Lilith's cousin Amy and the other was from Bishop Kelly, Lilith's earlier serious suitor.

John and Lilith were already discussing marriage by the Spring of 1902. John was trying to set a date for their elopement by May. He first proposed an elopement date of June 4 but Lilith delayed until June 18<sup>th</sup>. Lilith's letter of 21 May 1902 suggests a plan for how Lilith can get away from home with the help of Cousin Lula Edwards.

## **Identification of friends and family mentioned in the correspondence dated November 1901 through June 1902.**

**John William Elliott**, son of Thomas Carlton Elliott and Mary Elizabeth Huffstutler, was born 31 October 1877 in Franklin County, Illinois. His father, Thomas C. Elliott, was born in 1844 in Garrard County, Kentucky and died between 1880 and 1882 in Hamilton County, Illinois. John's mother, Margaret Elizabeth Huffstutler, was born in 1852 in Hamilton County, Illinois and died 25 April 1892 in Benton, Illinois. John's parents had three children together: Eliza Jane, who was called Ida, born 1872; John William, born 1877; and Marion Francis, a baby boy, born about 1880, who died at less than two years old.

After Thomas C. Elliott died, his wife, Margaret Elizabeth, remarried to Jonathan Capps, a widowed man who had three children from his first marriage to Nancy Emeline Purtle. These included: Wilburn Alonzo or Lonnie Capps, born 1869; Anna Capps, born 1872 who married

James Hicks; and Dora Capps, born 1875 who married Hiram Henson. Jonathan Capps and Mrs. Margaret Elizabeth Elliott married on 9 October 1882 in Hamilton County, Illinois. They had two children together: Waymon Clide Capps [1883-1908] and Susan Capps [1889-1931], who married 1) Courtland Glover and 2) Andrew Bailey. Margaret Elizabeth (Huffstutler) Elliott Capps died 25 April 1892. Jonathan Capps remarried to Mary Ann Williams 9 December 1882.

**Amy Dorris Fugate** was born 1 December 1881 and died 31 August 1902. She was the daughter of John Robert Fugate and Emily Kane. She and Lilith were first cousins. They shared the same grandfather, George W. Fugate. George W. Fugate had first married Miranda Lovan and had a daughter Melvina England Fugate who was Lilith's mother. George's second marriage to Emeline Coleman produced John Robert Fugate, Amy's father.

The John Robert Fugate family lived in Providence, Kentucky. Amy lived near the Sallie Fern Williams and her sister, Effie Williams. All three girls wrote to Lilith at different points and mention each other in their letters. Lilith's brother, Philip Stafford "Bud" Morton was boarding with James Fugate, John Robert Fugate's brother in 1900. James also lived in Providence in the same neighborhood. Bud was also mentioned in several letters. Amy's last letter mentions a visit from Sallie and her baby Anna Murel. The letters also mention Amy's brother, George Fugate. Friends and family mentioned in her letters include: Lilith's siblings, LeVert and Bud; Emma, probably Emma Sisk; Nola Kennedy and Clarence Kennedy; Amy's boyfriend, Willie; Sallie's boyfriend, John, probably John Cannady or Kennedy; Kate Wilson; and Roy Robinson and Bishop Kelly, Lilith's boyfriends.

Amy's letter written 24 April 1902, describes her schooling. At that point, she was apparently studying to be a teacher. She was in a "normal" school and describes some of the activities. Amy's last letter to Lilith, written on 23 July 1902, stated that she had spent a week in Sturgis and had been very sick since she had returned home. She asked Lilith and her new husband, Mr. Elliott, to go to Kirkwood Springs, the first Sunday. One wonders if they went or if the sickness Amy contracted in Sturgis killed her. Amy died on 31 August 1902.

**Bishop Morton Kelly**, son of Lemuel Michael Kelly and Julia Zuleska Slaton, was born 8 October 1883 in Hopkins County, Kentucky and died 13 August 1955 in Beltsville, Prince George's County, Maryland. In 1900 when the census was taken, Bishop Kelly was living in Morton's Gap in the household of Julia (Littlepage) Morton, widow of Henry H. Morton with his mother and siblings. He, his mother, and siblings were all listed as nephews and nieces. The relationship is not exactly correct since Julia Zuleska Slaton was the daughter of Julia (Littlepage) Morton's sister, Margaret Elizabeth (Littlepage) Slaton. But the listing of the relationships was typical of how relationship terms were used by the Morton family and associated families. In at least one of the letters from Bishop Kelly to Lilith Morton, he refers to her as "cousin." Since Julia (Littlepage) Morton was Aunt Julia to Lilith Morton because she was the wife of Henry H. Morton,



Bishop Kelly about 1901. Pin in the possession of Gail Jackson Miller, 2020.

Lilith's father's brother, one can almost see how the term "cousin" could have been derived even though there was not biological relationship between Bishop Kelly and Lilith Morton.

The first letter from Bishop Kelly was written to Lilith on 2 February 1900 while he was still living in Morton's Gap. Letters to her followed in March 1900. By 13 May 1900, Bishop Kelly's letter was postmarked Madisonville, Kentucky, but his letter on 16 July 1900 shows that he probably was still living in Morton's Gap. By November 1900, Bishop was probably living in Cadiz, Kentucky. He stated that he was working in a factory. The next letter, dated 18 December 1900 shows him still living in Cadiz, Kentucky. He appears to be wrestling with not being able to see Lilith as often as he wants and that she is seeing other suitors. About a year later, she is introduced to her future husband. The next letter from Bishop was dated 7 February 1902 and postmarked, Jackson, Mississippi. He is still writing to her as a sweetheart but this was his last letter to her. A number of letters in Lilith's collection from other friends and relatives mention their relationship.

**Will Lovan's** exact identity is not known. His letters suggest that he and Lilith may have been distant kin. Lilith's mother, Melvina England Fugate was the daughter of George Fugate and Miranda E. F. Lovan. Miranda E. F. Lovan was the daughter of Gabriel G. Lovan and Frances Wilson. Will Lovan does not seem to be the son of any of Miranda's brothers. However, there were numerous Lovan families in the area and he was not doubt some sort of distant kin. He may have been the son of James Marion Lovan and Louisa Virginia Bone, born 29 October 1877 or 1879.

**Huldah Morton**, called Aunt Huldah, was the unmarried sister of Mandelbert Mansfield Morton. She was born 27 January 1840 in Mortons Gap, Kentucky and died 24 April 1913. She lived in her brother's household after his wife, Melvina, died and took care of his children.

**LeVert Morton**, Lilith's oldest sister, was born 12 January 1883 in Mortons Gap, Kentucky. She married Polk Lafoon Shaw on 26 April 1905. After her father's death, she inherited the Morton home place near Mortons Gap, Kentucky on the Barnsley Loop. She died 12 April 1957.

**Mandelbert Mansfield Morton**, the son of Thomas Morton and Mary Elizabeth Graddy, was born 25 October 1832 in Mortons Gap, Kentucky, died 22 February 1913 in Mortons Gap, and was buried in the Flat Creek Cemetery in Hopkins County, Kentucky. He married Miss Melvina England Fugate on 22 December 1880 in Hopkins County, Kentucky. He was a successful tobacco farmer, handler, and shipper. He shipped about 100 hogsheads annually. Melvina died in 1890 leaving him with six children. His unmarried sister, Huldah Morton, came to live with him to help care for his children.

**Lula Edwards** was born 14 July 1888, the daughter of Mary Elizabeth Sisk and Auley Edwards. She married Leslie Key Hickman on the 3 July 1906 in Robertson County, Tennessee. Leslie was one of the original owners of the Baker and Hickman Department Store in Madisonville, Kentucky. Lula and Leslie had one daughter, Helen Morton Hickman born 27 August 1910. Lula was always called "Cousin Lula" by the family.



Morton homeplace near Mortons Gap, Kentucky about 1918. The home was inherited by Levert (Morton) Shaw at her father's death. Her family is in front: [left to right] Mattie, Lucy, Wilburn, Polk, Virginia, and Levert Shaw. Photo in the possession of Lucy Shaw in 1993.

**Mary Elizabeth Sisk or "Lizzie"** was born 17 May 1863 in Hopkins County, Kentucky. She was Mandelbert Mansfield Morton's niece and the first cousin of Lilith Morton. Her mother, Narcissa Isabel Morton who had married Andrew Jackson Sisk, died in 1864 when Lizzie was less than two years old. Lizzie was raised in the household of her grandparents, Thomas Morton and Mary Elizabeth (Graddy) Morton more or less as a sister to Mandelbert Mansfield "Bert" Morton. Later she lived at various points in the household of Bert Morton. She first married Clinton E. Morton in 1880, a distant cousin. That marriage did not work out and she married Auley Edwards in 1884. She had two children with Auley Edwards: Lillie Edwards born about 1886 and Lula Edward born in 1888. Lillie died sometime during her late teenage years. Lula married Leslie K. Hickman in 1906. The family called both Lizzie and her daughter, Lula, "Cousin"; Cousin Lizzie and Cousin Lula. Mary Elizabeth (Sisk) Edwards died 4 November 1944 in Madisonville, Kentucky and was buried there in the Odd Fellows Cemetery.

**Sallie Fern Williams** was the daughter of Thomas Givens Williams and Mary Kane. She was the sister of Effie Williams and friend of Amy Fugate both of whom also wrote to Lilith. The Williams family and the Fugate family lived near each other in Providence, Kentucky. Sallie was a little older than Lilith and Effie was a little younger. Sallie married John Cannady or Kennedy on 27 September 1899 in Providence, Kentucky.

Lilith has at least two letters from Sallie. The first letter has no date but probably was written sometime in 1897 or 1898. It mentions her boy friend, Willie S. [probably William Prewitt Sisk], brother to A. D. S. of Madisonville [probably Alvin Duval Sisk]. She says he is nothing like that “Willie Sisk from up there” referring to the Willie Sisk who wrote to Lilith. She said that her Willie was there going to school.

Sallie’s second letter to Lilith written 18 February 1899 mentions a number of people going to school in Providence including her sister, Effie, and Mertia Fergurson. She also described a number of fires in Providence. One of the fires destroyed one of the large tobacco factories and another damaged Mr. Head’s hotel. She also sent regards to Helen, Lilith’s youngest sister.

## **Letters in Lilith Morton Collection 2.**

The letters were mostly written by John William Elliott to Lilith Morton. They include letters of introduction by Will Lovan, John Elliott’s first letter to Lilith, many love letters, his e numbered as Letter 25 through Letter 67, during the period of 1 November 1901 through 17 June 1902. There are eight letters not written by John William Elliott. These include two letters written by Will Lovan who introduced the couple; one invitation to a dance; one letter written by Bishop M. Kelly, an earlier suitor; one letter written by Lilith’s cousin, Amy Fugate; two letters written by Lilith Morton to John William Elliott; and one envelope missing the letter address to John William Elliott from Lilith Morton.

- Letter 25. 1 November 1901. From Will Lovan to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 26. 6 November 1901. From Will Lovan to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 27. 18 November 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 28. 3 December 1901. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 29. 23 December 1901. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 30. 23 December 1901. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 31. 24 December 1901. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 32. 26 December 1901. From Lilith Morton to John William Elliott.
- Letter 33. 6 January 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 34. 11 January 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 35. 13 January 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 36. 20 January 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 37. 23 January 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 38. 31 January 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 39. 6 February 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 40. 7 February 1902. From Bishop M. Kelly to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 41. 17 February 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 42. 22 February 1902. Invitation to “The Tacky Ball” addressed to Levert Morton & Sister.
- Letter 43. 24 February 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 44. 2 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 45. 5 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 46. 6 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.
- Letter 47. 10 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.

Letter 48. 15 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 49. 24 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 50. 27 March 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 51. 17 April 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 52. 21 April 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 53. 24 April 1902. From Amy Fugate to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 54. 1 May 1902. From Lilith Morton to John William Elliott. [Envelope only.]  
Letter 55. 2 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 56. 6 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 57. 9 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 58. 13 May 1902. From Lilith Morton to John William Elliott.  
Letter 59. 19 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 60. 21 May 1902. From Lilith Morton to John William Elliott.  
Letter 61. 22 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 62. 26 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 63. 28 May 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 64. 5 June 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 65. 12 June 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 66. 16 June 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.  
Letter 67. 17 June 1902. From John William Elliott to Lilith Morton.