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Morton, David, 1886-1957 (MSS 50)

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

Descriptive Inventory

MSS 50 MORTON, David, 1886-1957

2 boxes. 22 folders. 1,045 items. 1914-1960. Originals.

1957.14.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

David Morton was born in Elkton, Kentucky, on 21 February 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; he then became an editorial writer for the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and the *Louisville Herald*. He also contributed editorials to the *New York Sun* and the *New York Evening Post*.

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, but the marriage lasted only a short period of time.

After leaving Amherst, Morton 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 he died on 13 June 1957.

His first published work was *Ships in Harbor*, 1921. Many other books of poems followed, including *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 also a noted sonneteer. 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.

Morton, David. *Journey Into Time*, 1958. Forward by Margaret Carpenter.

Who's Who in America, 1950-1951, 1915.

COLLECTION NOTE

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 be 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	1919-1960	
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
	2b - From Kelsey Flower to Miss Coombs and to Kelsey Flower from Miss Coombs	1958	2 items

Folder 3	Correspondence of David Morton	1919-1955	23 items
	3a - From Rittenhouse, Jessie B.	1919	1 item
	3b - From Benet, Stephen Vincent	1933	1 item
	3c - From Gogarty, Oliver St. John	1934	1 item
	3d - Form Braley, Berton	1935	1 item
	3e - From James, Alice Archer Sewall	1945	1 item
	3f - From niece, Martha	1952	1 item
	3g - From Moore, Robert Thomas	1954, 1955	2 items
	3h - To parents in Louisville written from Ireland (typed copies)	1929	9 items
	3i - To his sister Virginia and her husband, John Adams	1932-1951	5 items
	3j - To George Abbe	1956	1 item
Folder 4	Manuscript – Commencement addresses (1 holographic; 1 typescript with holographic corrections)	193?, 1942	2 items
Folder 5	Essays	1952?, 1956?	3 items
	1. History of American International College, Azores (holographic)	1952?	1 item
	2. <i>A New England Devotional</i> (typed copy)	1952?	1 item
	3. “I Took My Thrombosis to the East” (typed copy)	1956?	1 item
Folder 6	Manuscript for book of sonnets to be called “Entries for a Diary.” (original typescript with holographic corrections)	n.d.	1 item; 56p.
Folder 7	Manuscript – “The Amateur Listener” – Diary (original typescript with holographic corrections)	June 1952	1 item; 95 p.
Folder 8	Manuscript – “The Amateur Listener” – Diary (typed copy)	June 1952	1 item; 93p.
Folder 9	Manuscript – “The Amateur Listener” – Diary (carbon copy – [unedited] of first draft)	June 1952	1 item; 79p.

Folder 10	Poems (holographic and typescript)	1947, 1948	157 items
	10a – Poems (holographic and typescript)	1947	43 items
Folder 11	Poems (holographic and typescript)	1949	94 items
BOX 2	MORTON, David	1914-1957	
Folder 1	Poems (holographic and typescript)	1950	74 items
Folder 2	Poems (holographic)	1951	80 items
Folder 3	Poems (holographic and typescript)	1952	95 items
Folder 4	Poems (holographic and typescript)	1953, 1954	158 items
	4a – Poems (holographic and typescript)	1953	69 items
Folder 5	Poems (holographic and typescript)	1955, 1956	150 items
	5a – Poems (holographic)	1956	31 items
	5b – Poems (holographic and typescript)	1956	33 items
Folder 6	Poems (holographic and typescript), alphabetized	n.d.	70 items
Folder 7	Poems – Rhyme sheets	1947-1950	30 sheets
Folder 8	Poems and miscellaneous items	1914-1957	34 items
	8a – Poems, unpublished (typescript)	n.d.	8 items
	8b – Poem (holographic) “Old Farmer’s Almanac(k)”	1957	1 item
	8c – Poems, misc. (holographic and typescript)	n.d.	8 items
	8d – Poems read at funeral service of David Morton	1957	1 item
	8e – Poems by David Morton which are indexed in <i>Reader’s Guide</i>	1914-1937	1 item
	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 <i>Angles of Earth and Sky</i> , 1941	1941?	1 item
	8i – Article about Robert Frost written by David Morton and published in <i>Outlook</i> , 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	4 items
	9a – <i>The Poetry Society of America</i>	1918-1919	1 item
	9b – <i>A Canticle of Praise</i> by Witter Bynner	1933	1 items
	9c – Borstone Mountain Poetry Awards	1954	1 item
	9d – <i>Homage to Lajes Hospital Personnel</i> 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

David Morton reading his own poems. New England Seasons in verse. Recorded for the Poetry Room, Harvard College Library, 1944. The Harvard Vocarium Records, Cambridge, Mass.

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 *Angles 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"

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

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

Correspondence of Morton, 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. 1,045 items. Originals.
1957.14.1

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Abbe, George, 1911-1989 – Letters to, 1956 B1,3j
Abbey Theater – Dublin, Ireland, 1929 B1,3h
Adams, Virginia (Morton) B1,1&3i; B2,8f
African Americans – Attitude towards, 1958-1959 B1,2a
Allen, Mary (Morton) B1,1&2
"The Amateur Listener," 1952-1955 B1,7-9
American International College – History – Azores, 1952(?) B1,5
Amherst Common – Amherst, Massachusetts – Photos B2,11
Architecture – Chapel Door – Photos, 1955 B2,10a
Authors – Kentucky
Azores B1,5; B1,10
Azores – American International College History, 1952(?) B1,5
Azores – Chapel door – Lajes Field – Photos, 1955 B2,10a
Barley, Berton, 1882-1966 B1,3d

Benet, Stephen Vincent, 1898-1943 B1,3b
 Bibliography – “Works of David Morton, 1928-1940” B2,8g
 Bynner, Witter, 1881-1968 – Relating to B1,3i; B2,9b
A Canticle of Praise, 1933 – Bynner, Witter B2,9b
 Carman, (William) Bliss, 1861-1929 – Relating to B1,3i
 Carpenter, Margaret Haley B1,2a
 Clagett, Marjorie, 1900-2000 B1,1
 Conkling, Grace (Walcott) Hazard, 1878-1958 – Photos B2,11
 Coombs, Elizabeth Robertson, 1893-1988 B1,2a
 Desegregation – Public schools – Virginia, 1958-1959 B1,2a
 Diaries – Morton, David, 1952-1955 B1,7-9
 Diaries – Music, 1952-1955 B1,7-9
 Dunsany, Edward John Moreton Drax Plunket, 18th baron, 1878 B1,3h
 Education – Higher, 1952(?) B1,5
 “Entries for a Diary,” n.d. B1,6
 Essays, 1952(?) B1,5
 Ficke, Arthur Davison, 1883-1945 – Relating to B1,3i
 Francis, Robert, b. 1910 – Relating to B1,3i; B2,11
 Francis, Robert, b. 1910 – Photos B2,11
 Frost, Robert, 1874-1963 – Relating to B2,8i
 Gogarty, Oliver St. John, 1878-1957 B1,3c&3h
 Griffith, William, 1876-1936 B1,3i; B1,12
 Higgins, Frederick Robert, 1896-1941 – Relating to B1,3h
Homage to the Lajes Hospital Personnel, 1956 B2,9d
 Hyde, Douglas, 1860-1949 – Relating to B1,3h
 Ireland – Literature and literary affairs, 1929 B1,3h
 Ireland – Travel and description, 1929 B1,3h
 James, Alice Archer Sewall, 1870-1955 B1,3e
 Literature and literary affairs – 20th century
 Moore, Robert Thomas, 1882-1958 B1,3g
 More, Sir Thomas, 1478-1535 – Relating to B1,3h
 Morton, David, 1886-1957 – Photos B2,11
 Morton, Katherine – “Works of David Morton, 1928-1940” B2,8g
 Page, Curtis Hidden, 1870-1946 – Photos B2,11
 Poetry B1,9-11; B2,1-10
 Poets – Amherst, 1938 B1,3i
 Poets – Irish, 1929 B1,3d&3h
 Poets – Kentucky
 Poets’ papers B1,9-11; B2,1-10
 Rittenhouse, Jessie Belle, 1869-1948 B1,3a
 Robinson, Lennox, 1886-1958 – Relating to B1,3h
 Russell, George William, 1867-1935 B1,3h
Spectra, 1916 B1,3i
 Speeches – Commencement, 193?, 1942 B1,4
 Starkey, James Sullivan, 1879-1958 – Relating to B1,3h
 Theaters – Abbey Theater – Dublin, Ireland, 1929 B1,3h

Theobald, John – Relating to B1,3h; B2,11
Theobald, John – Photos B2,11
Whicher, George Meason, 1860-1937 – Relating to B1,3i; B2,11
Whicher, George Meason, 1860-1937 – Photos B2,11
“Works of David Morton, 1928-1940” B2,8g
Yeats, William Butler, 1865-1939 – Relating to B1,3h

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