

Kraft, Christopher, Letter to Plank, Elizabeth

Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank

1945



Title Statement

Kraft, Christopher, Letter to Plank, Elizabeth Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank, 1945 Ms.2024.065

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2024-07-23 LM Rozema made minor edits, expanded Plank's bio note, added info about grant, and added several subjects.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2024.065

Unit Date

1945

Language

The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection consists of a letter from Christopher Kraft in Connecticut to Elizabeth Plank in Blacksburg, Virginia. The envelope is stamped with the date of January 10, 1945. In the letter, Kraft reflects upon his time in Blacksburg and some of his thoughts of Connecticut.

Creator

Kraft, Christopher C. (Christopher Columbus), 1924-2019

Creator

Plank, Elizabeth Bartram Temple, 1903-1982

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

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Source of Acquisition

The Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank was donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 2022.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank was completed in June 2024.

The processing, arrangement, and description of this collection was created as part of the project, "Piercing the Veil: Creating Access to the Archives of American Aerospace Exploration at Virginia Tech," funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) from 2022 to 2024.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank, 1945, Ms2024-065, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note - Christopher Kraft

Christopher Columbus Kraft, Jr. was born on February 28, 1924, in Phoebus, Virginia. He received his B.S. degree in aeronautical engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) in December 1944.

Kraft joined the Langley Aeronautical Laboratory of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) in 1945 as a flight engineer. In October 1958, he was selected as one of the original members of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Space Task Group, which had been established to manage Project Mercury, the nation's first project to put a man in space. In the early phases of Project Mercury, Kraft was a prime contributor to the development of many of the basic mission and flight control techniques used in manned space flight. He personally served as Flight Director for all the Mercury missions and many of the Gemini missions. During the latter phase of Project Mercury, he directed the design and implementation of the Mission Control Center at the Johnson Space Center (originally the Manned Spacecraft Center) in Houston, from which all of NASA's manned space flights have been conducted. Kraft was named deputy director of the Manned Spacecraft Center in 1970, and later director in 1972. He retired from NASA in 1982 and subsequently served as a consultant for various corporations. In 2001, Kraft's autobiography, *Flight: My Life in Mission Control* was published.

Kraft has been the recipient of a number of awards and honors, including three honorary doctorates (Indiana Institute of Technology, 1966; St. Louis University, 1967; and Villanova University, 1979); the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, 1963; the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, 1969; the American Astronautical Society's Space Flight Award, 1970; and the Ambassador of Exploration Award, 2006. In 2011, the Johnson Space Center renamed its Mission Control Center the Christopher C. Kraft Jr. Mission Control Center in his honor.

Kraft died on July 22, 2019, at the age of 95.

Biographical Note - Elizabeth Plank

Elizabeth Bartram (also Bartran) Temple Plank was born to Edward and Lucy Temple on November 21, 1903, in Pennsylvania. She married Reyzon Floyd Plank (1893-1977) on October 17, 1922, in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. The couple moved to Blacksburg, Virginia. R.F. Plank was a businessman and realtor, acquiring multiple properties in Montgomery County, including Plank's Flying Duck Farm in 1942. They had two daughters, Lucy B. Plank Forrestel and Ellen T. Poss.

Elizabeth Plank died on January 29, 1982, in Salem, Virginia.

External Sources:

U.S. Federal Census, 1910-1950.

"Elizabeth Bartram Temple" in the U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/2075275:2189>, accessed July 23, 2024.

"Elizabeth Temple Plank" in the Virginia, U.S., Death Records, 1912-2014, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/1566663:9278>, accessed June 6, 2024.

"Elizabeth Bartram Temple Plank" entry, Findagrave.com, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/74335438/elizabeth_bartram_plank, accessed July 23, 2024.

"National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet," United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/060-0574_North_Fork_Valley_RHD_2021_Update_NRHP_FINAL.pdf, accessed June 6, 2024.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of a letter from Christopher Kraft in Connecticut to Elizabeth Plank in Blacksburg, Virginia. The envelope is stamped with the date of January 10, 1945. In the letter, Kraft reflects upon his time in Blacksburg staying with the Planks and some of his thoughts about Connecticut. Kraft writes that he loved his time with the Planks, expressing some homesickness and desire to be in Blacksburg instead of Connecticut. He ends the letter with the hope that he will soon see the Planks again, asking Mrs. Plank to "remember [Kraft] to Mr. Plank."

Related Archival Material

See the Christopher C. Kraft Papers, Ms1985-001, and Christopher Kraft and Neil Armstrong Collection, Ms2024-064, both also at Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives.

Keywords

Aeronautical engineers

Archives of American Aerospace Exploration (AAAE)

Blacksburg (Va.)

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Science and Technology

Students and alumni

United States -- National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics -- Officials and employees

United States -- National Aeronautics and Space Administration -- Officials and employees

University History

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Description of Subordinate Components

Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank

Unit Date 1945-01-10

folder 1