

A Guide to the Trist-Burke Family Papers

Trist-Burke Family Papers 1825-1936

1825-1936

A Collection in the Special Collections Department 6696
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History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Trist-Burke Family Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

6696

Language

English

Collector

James Eddy, Charles Eddy, and John Eddy

Extent

ca. 150 items

Repository

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
USA

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

Acquisition Information

Purchased by Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation on 1962 January 1 from James Eddy, Charles Eddy, and John Eddy.

Funding Note

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Scope and Content

This collection consists of ca. 150 items, 1825-1936, concerning the Trist family and Burke family descended from Thomas Jefferson. It was purchased by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation for the Library from Messrs. James Eddy, Charles Eddy, and John Eddy of Short Hills, New Jersey, on January 1, 1962.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Burke family letters date from 1876 to 1936. Martha Burke shows her political interests in her July 7, 1859 letter to her husband John Burke. In referring to Louis Napoleon Bonaparte she states, "I am glad the Austrians are getting a lesson, but it makes me sadder to think of the widows and orphans created by the last battle." Mary Randolph writes Martha Burke on February 22, 1863, saying that Mrs. Lesley has tried stimulants for her headache, and indicating that the Lesley family is allopathic in its medical ideas. She refers to anti-Union sentiment in Boston, saying that "Henry Ward Beecher is very caustic and shows his usual talent in some remarks he made on the same subject." A letter from Mary Randolph to Martha Burke on July 17, 1863, mentions summer (draft) riots in New York City, and sends a clipping, "A Southern View of Secession," a fraudulent anti-Confederate speech [said to be] by Alexander Hamilton Stephens (1812-1883) of Georgia. On March 9, 1867, Martha Burke, who lives in Alexandria with her husband, writes to her aunts Mary Randolph and Cornelia Randolph about the "Negro" candidate for mayor, and her fear of the danger of "wiley" politicians using the "Negro" vote. In a May 7, 1895 letter, Martha Burke writes to Mary Randolph on the truth of Frank Leslie's prediction of the demise of the Confederate States of America. On November 16, 1879, Ellen Randolph Dwight writes to Martha Burke with a description of the Jefferson family and Randolph family papers and a plan of the library at Brooks' Mouth. The Burke family correspondence drops off until the late 1920s with the letters of Fanny M. Burke. Her letter to a Mr. Wingfield on January 11, 1923, shows her interest in Burke family genealogy and includes a drawing of the Burke family coat-of-arms. In a February 11, 1923, letter to Ellen [Coolidge], she says she is furnishing copies of these coats-of-arms for \$5 each, and attempts to defend a controversial chapter of her nation's and family's history-- Nicholas P. Trist's decision to make a treaty with Mexico to end the Mexican War. In her July 27, 1927 letter to her niece, she refutes the claim that Thomas Jefferson did not belong to a church. On September 1, 1927, she writes to Mr. H. G. Johnson thanking him for a \$700 donation for the rehabilitation of Monticello and says that temperance is better than prohibition for with the former there is less danger of abrogating the great Anglo-Saxon liberty "Every man's house is his castle." On December 13, 1928, Fanny M. Burke shows her interest in political matters, writing to Ellen [Coolidge], she mentions a dirty bargain in which New England allowed the slave trade to continue in return for Southern support for taxation by the majority [the North]. There are two undated letters from Archibald Cary Coolidge to her when she was studying art in Europe as a young lady, encouraging her to study at Paris.

The letters of Thomas Jefferson Trist date from 1840-1886, and n.d. The letters from 1840 through 1846 pertain to his sojourn at school in Philadelphia. A letter dated August 28, 1840, to his sister, Martha Jefferson Trist, first mentions his schooling and his apparent longing for family. Thomas Jefferson Trist mentions that he would like to visit his father, Nicholas P. Trist, in Havana, Cuba, where he is stationed. On February 10, 1842, he writes to Martha Jefferson Trist acknowledging receipt of two gifts from his parents, *Adventures of John Smith* and *Robinson Crusoe*, and mentions that he still has *Life of Franklin*. In a October 12, 1843 letter, he mentions his interest in Napoleonic military operations, preferring the French army to the English and Prussian. An August 22, 1844 letter to Martha Jefferson Trist shows the young man's interest in politics, "I am for [James K.] Polk, Dallas, Texas and Oregon." His letter of November 6, 1845 reveals that he is taking drawing lessons from Mr. Holmes. He mentions receiving Plutarch's *Lives* and a \$2 1/2 gold piece for Christmas. In his February 12, 1846 letter to his sister he mentions he has been given an autographed picture of Gen. [Zachary] Taylor. On May 8, 1846, Thomas Jefferson Trist writes to his father, requesting a "port-folio" for his drawings. In a January 12, 1849 letter to his sister, we learn that Thomas Jefferson Trist's interest in art continues and that he is studying drawing under Mr. Aime at [Bohmon's]. Thomas Jefferson Trist's multivariied interests continue in his later years. Writing to his sister on April 2, 1876, he mentions that he took a cold after delivering a lecture before a literary association entitled "Hans Christian Anderson." He also writes her on November 27, 1886 saying that he has no intention of parting with his [John] Trumbull [portrait of Thomas Jefferson?], and hoping that it will always be in the possession of Thomas Jefferson's descendents. The Coolidge family has the original Stuart profile, and Thomas Jefferson Trist has a photograph of it as well as a photograph of the Thomas Sully portrait, the last one taken of Thomas Jefferson.

The Trist family correspondence dates from 1835 to 1874, and pertain to the Trists family's social world and to family difficulties. Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist, the wife of Nicholas P. Trist, writes to her sister, Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, on November 26, 1835, from Washington where Nicholas P. Trist, a diplomat, is stationed, mentioning the "brilliant party at the president's on Christmas." In a letter marked "Confidential," dated November 14, 1862, Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist and her sister, Mary Jefferson Randolph, write to Nicholas P. Trist mentioning a concern for Martha Burke's baby. The Trist's daughter Martha Trist married John Burke in the 1850s and had a daughter Frances "Fanny" Burke. Writing to Virginia Trist on July 4th, 1863, Mary Randolph mentions a chest of drawers containing Thomas Jefferson's drawing book and two pictures which she wants Virginia Trist to give to Nicholas P. Trist.

The letters of the Trist family and Burke family date from 1864 to 18[80]. Martha Burke shows a concern for the health of her child, as evidenced in a letter to her father, November 12, 1862, where she is concerned over Fanny Burke's continued high fever. The Civil War is discussed throughout several letters. On June 14, 1863, Virginia Trist writes to Martha Burke and tells her of fighting in Pennsylvania, and, on four days later, mentioning that the possibility of a rebel attack on Harrisburgh has come to naught. A few weeks later, Nicholas Trist writes to Martha Burke to say that the rebel cause is hopeless, that Vicksburgh had fallen to "Unconditional Surrender" Ulysses S. Grant, and the Union advances are progressing well. On August 15, 1863, Nicholas Trist writes to Martha Burke quoting from the *London Times*, "the only thing now that can protract the [] rebellion is Copperheadism. There is also an undated letter, containing another reference to northern Copperheadism. In a letter dated only "1863," Virginia Trist tells Martha Burke about a visit with Bennett Taylor who had been wounded and taken prisoner at Gettysburg; and showing her anti-Confederate sentiment: "Jefferson Davis' cruel, savage policy calls for retaliatory measures on the part of our government." In a letter of January 29, 1864, to his daughter, Nicholas Trist discusses a theory disallowing the justification of treason (secession). Virginia Trist writes to Martha Burke on February 7, 1864, saying that she has heard that the "freed-man" villages at Arlington and elsewhere were becoming intelligence offices for their neighbors. Nicholas Trist writes to Martha Burke on February 8, 1864, mentioning that Mobile had been captured. In a letter dated April 9, 1872, Nicholas Trist answers a request from Edmund Burke. He had been asked, as a reminiscence, what he felt about the Wilmot Proviso. He claims that he could not have voted for it as it forbade slavery in a state after it became such, yet what state--he says--would have been inane enough to establish slavery if it was kept out when the state was a territory; and, says that he would have chosen the Wilmot Proviso over "Calhounism."

Miscellaneous correspondence dates from 1833 to 1879, and n.d. Several of these were written by Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge. In a letter dated January 27, a copy made by Ellen Coolidge, who also wrote the original dated 1833/34, Ellen Coolidge explains that Thomas Jefferson died as he had lived, a "Christian philosopher," and that the Gospels were the basis of his ideas. A copy of a letter written by Ellen Coolidge to her brother Benjamin Randolph on February 6, 1861 (copy made by Martha Burke on December 3, 1897) mentions that the "idea of civil war makes all the blood in my body run cold." She understands the South's complaint, but says the Union is "too sacred" to be cast aside; and, that since the states of the upper South are not dominated by cotton, Virginia and other border states will be out of place in a Confederate States of America. Ellen Coolidge claims to be a true Southern woman, but loves the Union and the stars and stripes "which are the only things around which all Americans can rally." There is a copy made by Martha Burke on November 30, 1897 of a letter from July 13, [] written by Ellen Coolidge to Elizabeth Wormley, which shows that her affection for southern friends has been strengthened, and her fear of Boston's hatred of the South. She writes "I never approved of secession. But I am a daughter of the South," saying she wears the horrors of the (Civil) War like a penitent's iron belt. She avoids newspapers--"those purveyors of falsehood, hatred,

malice."

MISCELLANEOUS

The architectural drawings are chiefly undated. There is a drawing entitled the "Parlor floor at Monticello, " copied from Thomas Jefferson's original by [M. T. J. B.] on August 5, 1880. There are other drawings, including the plan of the original Jefferson house on Monticello before additions. There is also a list of the ten University of Virginia pavilions and the type of column of each and the classical source for each pavilion's styling. A drawing of the ancestral Trist family home, " Tristford, " in Devonshire, England is also included.

Material pertaining to the Jefferson family and Monticello consists of typed lists and transcripts. There is correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Joseph Cabell in 1816 on the subject of what flora makes the best live hedge. They discuss experiments, by a Mr. Maine, using Haws as hedges. A modern list of plants, and one flowers, which Thomas Jefferson had at Monticello, is present. Also, there are copies of the inventory of the estate of Peter Jefferson with an appraisal; although his book collection was small, there are some interesting volumes in it such as Trent's Astronomy and A Secret History of Queen Anne's Ministers. The inventory and appraisal of the estate of Jane Jefferson Jr., Thomas Jefferson's sister, deals primarily with the apportionment of slaves. The last will and testament of Jane Jefferson, Peter Jefferson's wife and Thomas Jefferson's mother, deals primarily with this as well. There is also the last will and testament of Peter Jefferson with the apportionment of his lands between his sons, Randolph Jefferson and Thomas Jefferson, and the lands to be held jointly by them.

Miscellaneous folder material dates from 1816 to 1907, and n.d. There is a collection of riddles written by "grandmama Randolph and aunts," some written in French. Envelopes addressed to Thomas Jefferson at Monticello are included with this collection. An unusual piece is a set of German maps: "Sachsen (Lower Saxony) and Palestina (Palestine in the time of Jesus)," with "Browse Trist" and "Christmas 1845" on the cover. From 1856, there is a pamphlet from the Republican party in support of their presidential candidate John C. Fremont entitled "The `Sons of Liberty' in 1776, and in 1856." It maintains that the descendants of the colonial period "Sons of Liberty" ought to oppose the slave owners in the same manner as their noble forefathers opposed the British. Dated October 8, 1858 is a marriage certificate for Thomas Jefferson Trist and Ellen Lymansigned by Thomas Gallaudet, rector of St. Anne's[] for deaf-mutes in New York. On June 5, 1890, there is a list of resolutions adopted by the Pennsylvania Institute for Deaf and Dumb, concerning the death of Thomas Jefferson Trist, who was a teacher at the Institute for thirty-five years. He is eulogized as "a faithful teacher, a man of high culture, intelligence, refinement and moral worth, and a true Christian, in his daily walk and deportment." There is also a copy of the inscription on the desk (identical to the one on which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration) Thomas Jefferson gave to Joseph Coolidge who married his granddaughter Ellen Wayles Randolph: "Politics will give imaginary value to this relic for its association with the Declaration [of Independence]." There is also an undated note from H. B. Trist, of Washington which mentions President Martin Van Buren's and Colonel Burton's praise of Nicholas P. Trist. There is also a description of the Jefferson family and Jefferies family coats-of-arms, and descriptions of Trist family and related family coats-of-arms. There is also a lithograph of a blind beggar, with a French inscription underneath. There is an undated photocopy of Nicholas P. Trist's justification for his part in helping to formulate the treaty to end the Mexican War, which he says he did for the sake of his country and his family, not out of "noble ambition."

The newspaper clippings date from 1863-1888, 1938, and n.d. Some of these concern Nicholas P. Trist's involvement with the treaty to end the Mexican War and later when Trist's deserved pension was held up partly due to bad feeling created by his action. Some of the clippings give historical and anecdotal information on the founding fathers. Other articles pertain to Thomas Jefferson's descendants, and Monticello, including pleas for the saving of the latter. There are also a number of Civil War pieces most which pertain to military action.

BOUND VOLUMES

The diary of Martha Burke is in two volumes, dating (1878-1881) 1886 and 1885(1887-1889). There are numerous references to the deaths and funerals of family and friends. At the end of the first volume are genealogies of the Burke family, with a description and drawing of the Burke family coat-of-arms.

The scrapbook kept by Martha Burke is dated 1875 on its cover. The items in this include articles on politics, world events, the founding fathers, the "Trist Mission," and suggestions for moral living. A copy of the " Star-Spangled Banner" with a couplet not sung today is included.

There is also an autograph volume made as a tribute to John Woolfolk Burke, one of the original trustees and directors of the Charlottesville Railroad, on his death in 1907.

Container List

CORRESPONDENCE

Burke Family.

Unit Date 1859-1936, n.d.

Container Box 1

Thomas Jefferson Trist.

Unit Date 1840-1886, n.d.

Container Box 1

Trist Family.

Unit Date 1835-1874

Container Box 1

Trist-Burke Family.

Unit Date 1858-18[80]

Container Box 1

Miscellaneous.

Unit Date 1816-1879, n.d.

Container Box 1

MISCELLANEOUS**Architectural Materials.**

Unit Date 1880, n.d.

Container Box 1

Byron's "Enigma" in Thomas Jefferson's hand; mileage chart for Monticello, Poplar Forest, and Campbell Co. Court House in Jefferson's Hand

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 1

Jefferson Family/Monticello Materials

Unit Date 1757-1777, n.d.

Container Box 1

Extent (typed lists and transcripts).

Miscellaneous.

Unit Date 1834-1907, n.d.

Container Box 1

Newspaper Clippings.

Unit Date 1863-1938, n.d.

Container Box 1

BOUND VOLUMES**Commonplace Book kept by Fanny Maury Burke.**

Unit Date 1847-1904

Container Box 2

Diary of Martha Burke.

Unit Date (1878-1881)1886

Container Box 2

Diary of Martha Burke.

Unit Date 1886(1887-1889)

Container Box 2

List of Monticello Relics by Martha Burke.

Unit Date 1907-1908

Container Box 2

Scrapbook kept by Martha Burke.

Unit Date 1875

Container Box 2

Tribute to John Woolfolk Burke.

Unit Date 1907

Container Box 2