

A Guide to the Papers of John Moffitt, 1852 (1906-1987) 1987

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

9806-v

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

This collection consists of 700 (ca.) items.

Repository

Special Collections, University of Virginia Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

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

Acquisition Information

This collection was bequested by the Estate of John Moffitt, Orange, VA on 1988 March 25.

Preferred Citation

Papers of John Moffitt, Accession #9806-v , Special Collections Dept., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

Index of Names

Biographical/Historical Information

Taken from *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series*, Vol. 10, pp. 333-334.

Scope and Content Information

This addition to the papers of John Moffitt (1908-1987) consisting of ca. 7,000 items (23 Hollinger boxes, ca. 8 linear shelf feet), 1852, 1861, and 1906-1987, contains the literary work of John Moffitt including articles, manuscripts and poetry; the literary work of other individuals, usually sent to Moffitt for criticism or in gratitude for his advice; correspondence; financial and legal papers; photographs; and miscellaneous papers and printed materials.

The first series of papers consists of the literary work of John Moffitt. Topics found among his articles and talks include Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, meditation, poetry, ecumenism, and mysticism.

Moffitt's manuscript subseries includes several short stories, *Adam's Choice*, *The Road to Now*, and several unpublished books, such as *Arrivings Selected Poems, 1944-1985*, *Having Found You- The School of Loving*, *Malcolm or Clarissa ?*, *Son of the Sun*, and *This One Instant*.

Moffitt's poetry subseries contains several groupings of poetry. These include autograph and typescript copies of his poems arranged chronologically according to when the poems were composed, poems arranged alphabetically for possible submission to magazines for publication, a separate comprehensive collection of poems selected by Moffitt for his literary executor to publish a volume of "A Collected Works" upon his death, miscellaneous poems, and copies of published poems.

Series two is comprised of the literary output of others and includes essays, plays, and poetry, including poetry submitted to John Moffitt as *AmericaPoetry* Editor. Especially of note to those interested in the Neale family or "Rocklands," Gordonsville, Virginia, is a biographical booklet by Joan Miller Klalo concerning Doris Kellogg Neale.

The third series consists of correspondence. Subseries A is chiefly personal correspondence arranged alphabetically. The second subseries contains the chronological correspondence of John Moffitt as *AmericaPoetry* Editor and a few personal letters of the Moffitt family.

Correspondents in the alphabetical subseries include:

Topics in the alphabetical correspondence include: the Ramakrishna order and ecumenism (C: 1987 May 5, April 8, January 9 & 24; 1986 December 21 & 2, October 8, June 22, May 5, and April 22; and G: 1986 June 9, May 26, Apr 14); Indian politics and anti-United States sentiment (B: 1987 June 9, January 29; 1986 August 16, May 31; and P: 1986 June 15); Malachi Martin and his book concerning the Jesuits (D: 1987 April 3); discussion of Henri Frederic Amiel's *Journal Intime*(D: 1986 May 5); Special Olympics and the Kennedy family (D: 1986 January 4); South Africa (G: 1986 December 25, June 14); *Plains Poetry Journal*(G: 1986 February 23); Thomas Merton (H: 1986 August 12, May 17, April 3); the Catholic Church and Pope Paul II (L: 1986 October 21); John Moffitt's conversion to Catholicism (Mc: 1987 June 6); Pol Pot (M: 1987 March 25); Cambodian refugees (M: 1986 Sep 23 & 1, August 25, March 5); biographical information concerning John Moffitt (M: 1982 Sep 19); the Brazilian land situation (P: 1986 July 29); Vivekenanda (S: 1986 February 6); the United States bombing of Libya (T: 1986 May 27); United States foreign policy (T: 1986 February 23); the representative selection of Moffitt's poems entitled *Arrivings*(1986 August 4); homosexuality and the Catholic Church (Z: 1986 November 29 & 17); and Jiddu Krishnamurti (Y: 1986 March 3).

Moffitt's *America*correspondence consists of letters from individuals who wanted their poetry to be

considered for publication in *America* and Moffitt's arrangement of this correspondence has been maintained.

The Moffitt family correspondence includes several letters from two Belgian soldiers, Arthur De Ridder and Stanley Van Euckevort, to Mrs. Edith Moffitt during World War I. There is also a letter from John Moffitt, Jr. (August 30, 1930) concerning his stay in Paris.

Financial and legal papers of John Moffitt comprise the fourth series of this collection. These include bank passbooks, income and expense records, lease agreements with Doris K. Neale of "Rocklands" and Kathleen Blackwell of Unionville, both of Virginia, passports, birth certificate, publisher's permissions, records of telephone calls, and royalty statements.

Of special note are the bequests made to Moffitt from the estates of Edith Kelker Moffitt, Mary Anna Kelker, and Henry A. Kelker, and the legal papers pertaining to the estate of Swami Nikhilananda (Dinesh Chandra Das Gupta) who died in 1973. John Moffitt was one of the executors named in the will of Swami Nikhilananda, which was probated October 25, 1973. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, Inc. was the sole residuary legatee named in the will.

The fifth series consists of photographs of John Moffitt, his family, including a family photograph album, 1913-1946, and friends and acquaintances in the United States, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Thailand.

The last series contains miscellaneous papers and printed materials, including appointment calendars, autograph book, biographical data, including a paper "John Moffitt: A Poetry of the Changed Life" by Frank Lonergan, a chart of his published poems, a diary of Edith Kelker Moffitt, genealogy, musical scores, obituaries and eulogies, printed material, artwork, rubbings, and two Civil War items.

The Civil War items consist of a brief diary belonging to Private Edward Lawrence Witman of Company F, 25th Pennsylvania Volunteers ("Lockhill Grays"), and his notes concerning the recruitment of the unit. Company F was recruited at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on April 18, 1861, and mustered on May 2, 1861, for three months. Officers included Captain Henry McCormick, 1st Lt. William W. Jennings, 2nd Lt. George Fisher, and 1st Sergeant James Kemble. The company was mustered out on August 1, 1861.

The notes about recruitment describe the recruitment process, drills, social events, and day-to-day events from May 2-16, 1861.

The men were shipped out of Harrisburg to Baltimore on the sixteenth of May, and left Baltimore for Washington City soon after their arrival.

According to E.L. Witman's diary the "Lockhill Grays" were the first company to carry the United States flag through Baltimore following an attack upon Massachusetts troops. The diary describes the same time period as Witman's notes, but also includes Company F's routine during their actual stay in Washington City from May 16-June 13. On June 10 they were ordered to the Arsenal to ship guns to Arlington. The diary does not describe any participation in actual battles.

Organization

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