

# A Guide to the Papers of the Noel Family,

Papers of the Noel Family

---

A Collection in Special CollectionsThe University of Virginia Library 13371  
Special Collections, University of Virginia Library  
2008

## History

**Processed by:** Special Collections Staff

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Papers of the Noel Family,

**Subtitle:** Noel Family, Papers of the

**Collection:** 13371

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2008 By the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. All rights reserved.

**Publisher:** Special Collections, University of Virginia Library

[Conditions of Use](#)

## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Stephanie Brooks, 1/16/2008

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Accession Number

13371

### Language

English

### 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

The collection was given to the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia by Edgar Estes Noel of 20 Marina Dr., Newport News, Va. 23608-3117 on July 21, 2005.

### Preferred Citation

Papers of the Noel Family, Accession #13371, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

## Biographical/Historical Information

Edgar Estes Noel II was born in Huntington, West Virginia in 1933 to Dr. William Edgar Noel and Lelia Ophelia Wash Noel. They lived in Huntington, West Virginia and then moved to Denbigh, (Newport News) Virginia where Dr. Noel continued his practice as a physician and foot specialist. In later years, Lelia Noel suffered from diabetes as well as asthma, and needed constant care. Dr. Noel treated patients until his death from a heart attack in 1980. Lelia died seven months after him. They were both avid readers and antique collectors and passed these interests on to Edgar.

Edgar attended Phillips Exeter preparatory school and graduated from the University of Virginia in 1954 with a B.S. degree in Education. Following his service in the R.O.T. C. at the University of Virginia, he entered the United States Army Counter Intelligence Corps and served as a Second Lieutenant for four years. As part of his training, he attended Army Language School in Monterey, California (1955) where he studied Japanese for forty-six weeks. He was assigned security detail on Four Star General Lyman Louis Lemnitzer, Commander in Chief of the United Nations, and later with Four Star Generals Isaac D. White, and George W. Decker of the Eighth United States Army in Tokyo, Japan (1956-1957 Camp Zama.)

From 1958 to 1960, after a trip to Europe, he returned to the University of Virginia and received a Masters degree in history. His thesis was on the first Americans in Japan. He also wrote poetry and had several poems published throughout his career. He married Ida Jeanne Thompson in 1959 and she worked as a receptionist at the University of the Virginia Graduate School of Business while Edgar finished school (and worked a part time job in the Reserve room in Alderman Library under the supervision of [Mrs.] Irving). In 1960 Edgar received his first assignment in the United States Information Office in Bangkok, Thailand where their first son, William E. Noel II (Wen) is born.

From 1961 to 1963 Edgar was stationed in Kwangju, Korea with his wife and son. After a visit to Virginia in 1963, their second child, Laura Forsyth Noel, was born in Korea. In 1964 he was assigned to Yokohama, Japan to study more Japanese and their third child, Norbourn William Noel "Bruz" was born. From 1965 to 1971, he worked as the Director of the Fukuoka American Cultural Center in Japan.

In 1972 he accepted the position of Material Development Officer for the Intelligence Agency's Teaching Division in Georgetown, Guyana until 1974 when he was promoted to Deputy Public Affairs Officer in Lagos, Nigeria. In 1979 Edgar was stationed in Bombay, India and was promoted to U.S. Senior Foreign Service Officer in 1981. He retired from Foreign Service in 1984 and moved to their family home in Denbigh, (Newport News) Virginia.

Between 1978 and 1979 the Noel's three children went to boarding schools (and college) in the United States because there was not a high school equivalent in Nigeria. William Noel "Wen" attended Fork Union Military Academy and Virginia Military Institute. Laura Noel attended Staunton Hall School for Girls and Randolph Macon Woman's College, and Norbourn Noel "Bruz" attended Woodberry Forest School and the University of Georgia.

Each member of the Noel families' distinct personalities comes across in their letters. William Noel, as the older brother, is very responsible and dedicated to his plans for a military career. He becomes a Lieutenant Colonel in the Armed Services. Laura Noel is witty, and outgoing. She excels in theatre and stars as the lead role in plays at school (as did her parents). After receiving a B.S. degree in Education from Randolph Macon Woman's College, she worked as a historical interpreter in Colonial Williamsburg and attended classes at the College of William and Mary. Norbourn Noel "Bruz" studied to become a landscape architect and settled in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His letters are frequently accompanied with his own amusing cartoon illustrations of his daily life. He is a talented artist who has a great sense of humor and also cares deeply about everything that is natural and honest. Edgar worked hard, encouraged his children with their studies, supported their individual interests, and frequently suffered from ulcers due to concerns about his work. Jeanne kept the family afloat with her sense of humor, affectionate nature, and devoted attention to Edgar's affairs. The three children and their parents were close and wrote about their relationships, and the events in their daily lives.

There are also letters from Edgar's older sister, Melissa Catherine Adkins Norman who had two marriages and a son from her first marriage, Lee Adkins. Melissa's first husband, Bill Ed Adkins had failing health which caused him an early death. Melissa's second husband did not have any income and after a year of marriage, the Noels discover that she was hospitalized in West Virginia. She moved back to Newport News, studied shorthand, and worked as a manager in retail businesses. After Edgar retired from Foreign Service, she returned to West Virginia to live by herself. Her son, Lee, married and had two children, Mathew, and Lesley.

Edgar's maternal grandparents were Melissa Catherine Jones Wash and Cyreneous O. Wash. His paternal grandparents were Dr. Edgar Estes Noel and Minnie George Noel. There is correspondence to Edgar from both sets of grandparents. There are also letters from Dr. William E. Noel's sister, Mary Virginia Noel Evans. She was married to Brown Evans, and they lived in Washington, D. C. They had two children, a son Andy Brown Evans (also nicknamed Bruz), who had Down Syndrome, and a daughter, Bidley Evans.

Edgar's wife, Jeanne was the only child of LeRoy (Roy) S. and Jeanette Thompson who lived in Richmond, Virginia and then retired in Fort Myers, Florida. LeRoy Thompson was an expert in stocks and financial

planning. Robert and Vi Forsythe, brother and sister-in-law of Jeanette Thompson moved with them to Florida, and they enjoyed retirement together, frequently going out to dinner and playing cards.

## Scope and Content

The collection consists of the personal and family correspondence of Edgar Estes Noel II from 1952 to 1992. Mr. Noel worked for the Army Counter Intelligence Corps as a Japanese language specialist and the U. S. Information Agency as a Deputy Public Affairs Officer, and Senior Foreign Service Information Officer. The family correspondence begins when Noel was a student at the University of Virginia and continues throughout his career in Bangkok, Thailand; Kwangju, Korea; Tokyo, Japan; Georgetown, Guyana; Lagos, Nigeria; and Bombay, India. It consists of ca. 3,698 items, 3 linear feet in 7 Hollinger boxes.

The collection primarily consists of family letters that describe the personal history of the Noels including some information on the schools that the Noels attended. The school information includes event calendars, football program guides, or comments about a particular school, and is included with the correspondence. The schools mentioned are the University of Virginia, Randolph Macon Woman's College, Virginia Military Institute, University of Georgia, Staunton Hall School for Girls, Woodberry Forest School, and Fork Union Military Academy. There is significant information about the University of Virginia when Edgar was an undergraduate student and writes a column for *The Cavalier Daily* from 1952 to 1955 and later when he is a graduate student in 1958.

Articles and news clippings mentioning important world political events and figures are enclosed with the family letters. The letters from Edgar Noel to his family reveal his passion for learning about other cultures and his commitment to teaching principles of democracy to underdeveloped countries. By 1962 when Noel was stationed in Korea he wrote about his frustration with foreign governments that, he said, blamed the American government and requested American assistance without taking any responsibility for their own situations.

Some of the important world events and individuals mentioned in the correspondence are: the 1960 Civil War in Laos; the 1962 Korean situation with President Park Chung-hee; the visit of Mrs. Jean Kennedy Smith (1961); the visit of Vice President Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson (1962); the 1963 Korean Presidential Election; the death of President John F. Kennedy (1963); the 1964 student demonstrations in Korea; Congressman Thomas N. Downing's amendment to bring prayer into schools; the death of President Harry S. Truman in 1973; Watergate and the resignation of Richard S. Nixon in 1974; Nigeria's high production of oil (1975); an attempted coup in Nigeria (1975); the Presidential debates of Jimmy Carter in 1976; Iranian hostage situation and Iranian demonstrations (1979 November); Russian attack on Afghanistan (1980 January-March); visit of Muhammad Ali in Bombay, India in 1980; and Noel's criticism of Nelson Mandela (1988).

Correspondents include friends and business associates: Norman L. Dobyns; Tweetsie Parker; Letcher H. Reid; Mrs. Pynn J. Finch; Bert Edward McCormick; Ron and Bess Dietrich; Kwangju Christian Hospital; Thomas N. Downing; Byron and Lucille Hess; Nancy Niklos; Harriet Crawford Jones; Mabel Wing Jones; and Suetaka Hatanaka, President of Minamihon Broadcasting Co. There are also letters from Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr., Senator John Warner, and Senator Paul Trible about references for Noel's son, William Edgar Noel "Wen," who was applying to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

There is also correspondence from Edgar's paternal great-grandmother, Mary Hinchman George from 1856 to 1864 which includes letters written during the Civil War. She wrote a letter to her parents on November 19, 1860 about the [presidential] election. In another letter dated April 20, 1861 she mentioned the Battle of Fort Sumter, the capture of Major [Robert] Anderson, and the indecision of some Virginians (now West Virginians) about their loyalties to the Unionists or Secessionists. There is also a letter dated October 21, 1861 describing the death of her brother, William Hinchmen, from typhoid fever. There is a letter dated January 1862 from her sister, Mollie Poage, about the overwhelming number of burnings, robberies, and murders between Unionists and Secessionists in West Virginia. The letter mentions that Colonel Jackson [General Thomas Stonewall Jackson] and General [Joseph] Johnston are searching for the murderers.

There is more correspondence from Edgar's maternal great-grandfather, Alexander Jones, from 1861 and 1863 concerning the Civil War. A letter dated August 17, 1861 from Henry L. Bell (unknown relative) to Catherine [Jones] describes the battle of Phillipi [sic] and the battle of Rich Mountain where Brigadier General Robert Garnett is killed. The second letter, dated February 23, 1863 has advice to Henry T. Bell from his sister about camp life. Some of the letters are accompanied with typed transcriptions.

There are also letters from 1878 to 1888 from Edgar Noel's great-uncle, D. T. Jones to his brother, Alexander Jones, and to D. T. Jones' niece. There is also a letter dated March 30, 1883 from a girlfriend of Edgar's grandfather, Edgar Estes Noel I.

## Arrangement

The letters are arranged chronologically.

## Contents List

### Correspondence of the Noel Family

#### Civil War Letters, 1856-1864

**Box-folder** 1:1

##### Extent

19 letters of correspondence from Mary Hinchmen George and 2 letters of correspondence from Henry L. Bell, an unknown relative of Alexander Jones.

##### Scope and Content

There is a letter dated November 19, 1860 from Mary Hinchmen George to her parents about the consequences of the Republican Party winning the 1860 [presidential] election, and another letter dated April 20, 1861 from her to her parents about the battle of Fort Sumter; taking Major [Robert] Anderson prisoner; and the decision of Virginians to support either the Unionists or the Secessionists.

There is also a letter dated October 21, 1861 in which Mary Hinchman describes the death of her brother, William Hinchmen, from typhoid fever, and a letter dated January 1862 from Mary's sister, Mollie Poage about murders being committed against Unionists supporters. The letter mentions that Stonewall Jackson and General Joseph Johnston would like to find the men who are committing these murders.

There is a letter dated October 23, 1861 from [a cousin, J. A. Symms] to [Mary Hinchmen] about marching in the rain, day and night from Saltville, Virginia to Bristol, Tennessee. There is also a letter dated December 5, 1864 from family members about General [William Tecumseh] Sherman and "Old Bobbie Lee" that mentions the Georgia Expedition.

There are 2 letters of correspondence from Henry L. Bell, one to Catherine [Wash Jones] Edgar's great-grandmother (Lelia's grandmother), about the Battle of Phillipi [sic], the battle of Rich Mountain, and the death of Brigadier General Robert Garnett dated August 17, 1861. There is also a letter dated February 23, 1863 from the sister of Henry L. Bell giving him advice regarding the sinful temptations of camp life.

#### Family Letters, 1878-1888

**Box-folder** 1:2

##### Scope and Content

Correspondence of Mary Hinchmen George and correspondence from D. T. Jones to Alexander Jones; a letter from John W. [Ellis] and a letter from a girlfriend of Edgar Estes Noel.

#### Correspondence to Edgar Estes Noel I from Mary Robert Webb Noel and to other family members, 1895-1922

**Box-folder** 1:3

##### Extent

8 letters.

##### Scope and Content

There is a letter from Mary Robert Webb Noel (Edgar's great-grandmother) to her son Edgar Estes Noel I, (Edgar's grandfather). There is also a letter dated December 24, 1900 from Thomas George (brother of Mary Robert Webb Noel) to his niece; and a letter dated May 2, 1904 from Mary George (great-maternal grandmother of Edgar Estes Noel II) to her niece. There is another letter dated September 28, 1922 from John L. George (great-uncle of Edgar Estes Noel II) to his niece, Mary Noel Evans.

#### Parents of Edgar Estes Noel II, 1925-1945

**Box-folder** 1:4

##### Extent

28 letters.

##### Scope and Content

Letters from William Edgar Noel (father of Edgar Estes Noel II) to his future wife and mother of Edgar, Lelia Ophelia Wash Noel; letters to William E. Noel and Lelia Ophelia Wash Noel from their parents;

letters from Lelia's brother Cy during World War II about how he misses his wife Jamie and the family; an invitation for six-day old Edgar Estes Noel II to his sister, Melissa's, birthday party.

## **University of Virginia, 1946-1952**

**Box-folder** 1:5

### **Extent**

56 letters.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Dr. William E. Noel to his sister, Mary Virginia Noel Evans; notes on a trip to New York City by Mary Virginia Noel Evans; letter of acceptance from Phillips Exeter Academy for Edgar Noel; letters from Edgar to his parents while he attended the University of Virginia, some with the letterheads of the University of Virginia or Sigma Chi. There is a program of the Sweetheart Banquet of Sigma Chi.

## **University of Virginia and R.O.T.C., 1953**

**Box-folder** 1:6

### **Extent**

52 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar at the University of Virginia and R.O.T.C. Summer Camp at Fort Eustis to his parents regarding his academics, social life and finances (his new car); his articles in *The Cavalier Daily* which include his opinions about President Darden, fraternities, and drinking at the University; letters to Edgar from his mother, Lelia Noel, about family news and travels.

## **Sigma Chi Meeting Notes, 1954-1955**

**Box-folder** 1:7

### **Extent**

1 item.

### **Scope and Content**

A large collection of annotated notes from Sigma Chi meetings after Edgar's graduation that mentions many of his friends and peers.

## **Norman L. Dobyns; Army Service in Baltimore, Maryland, 1954**

**Box-folder** 1:8

### **Extent**

50 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Fort Holabird, Baltimore, Maryland. Letters between Edgar and his parents including a discussion of a possible marriage proposal which does not pan out; letters from Edgar's best friend, Norman L. Dobyns "Dob." Edgar made Dean's List and writes about an "A" that he received in English from his professor, Arthur Kyle Davis which he describes as a high honor.

## **Army Language School, 1955**

**Box-folder** 1:9

### **Extent**

71 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters between Edgar and his parents, discussing his sister's loss of her pregnancy, his parent's new house, and his trip to Monterey, California where he attended Army Language School to study Japanese; Edgar writes that army life broadens the mind and he says that he and his classmates are "fed up with the narrow mindedness of their state toward segregation."

There are also letters from his maternal grandfather, Cyreneous O. Wash and his friend, Norman Dobyns.

## **Arrival in Japan, 1956**

**Box-folder** 1:10

### **Extent**

92 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents describing his trip to Tokyo via Hawaii, and his first impressions of Tokyo. He was assigned security detail on Four Star Generals Lyman Louis Leminzer and Isaac D. White who were in the United Nations Command, and the Eighth U. S. Army. He writes about the devastation from World War I fire bombings, the luxurious treatment of American soldiers overseas by the U.S. Government, and the election news of Eisenhower defeating Adlai Stevenson. He also made a comparison of the Russian Government to Adolph Hitler. He mentions that he received the latest news on the Hungarian Revolution. He also writes about the Japanese strike against the United States for tightening its employee restrictions. Edgar writes that the Japanese have no right to complain since they lost the war.

There are also letters from Edgar's best friend, Norman L. Dobyms, who was serving in the Department of the Army, and a thank you letter from Edgar to Dobyms's girlfriend, Tweetsie Parker. In addition there is correspondence from Edgar to his future wife, Ida Jeanne Thompson, the roommate of Tweetsie Parker.

## **Camp Zama, Japan, 1957**

**Box-folder** 1:11

### **Extent**

85 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters between Edgar and his parents about his security detail for Four Star Generals Isaac D.White and George H.Decker. Much of his time was spent sight-seeing or escorting the wives of the Generals and their friends to antique shops and restaurants. He saw a film on World War II from the Japanese perspective and was impressed at the massive bombing (855 bombers per day) and the power of the United States. He also mentions that the Japanese think that the warm weather was a result of the Atom Bomb tests, but he writes of his skepticism. Edgar disparages the Japanese workshop of [Nobesuki] Kishi.

Other correspondence includes a letter to Edgar from his grandmother [Mamma] about the death of his grandfather, Cyreneous O. Wash; letters from Ida Jeanne Thompson to her parents [Leroy S. and Jeanette Thompson] from her trip abroad in France and Italy.

## **End of tour of duty in Japan; Trip to Europe; Graduate School at the University of Virginia, 1958**

**Box-folder** 2:1

### **Extent**

42 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters between Edgar and his parents and to Jeanne Thompson about his travels, wanting to see Jeanne, his job in Alderman Library; and winning 1st place in an All Japanese Fine Arts Show. He also writes about the student riots at the University; the closing of the Charlottesville Schools; the students' dislike of UVA President Colgate Darden; his studies; and the good impressions he has made upon University of Virginia Professor Edward Younger.

## **June-July Travel letters Europe, 1958**

**Box-folder** 2:2

### **Extent**

39 items.

## **Travel letters Europe, 1958 August**

**Box-folder** 2:3

## **Extent**

14 items.

## **UVA; Edgar Noel and Jeanne Thompson, 1959**

**Box-folder** 2:4

### **Extent**

60 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters to his parents and Jeanne about their engagement; letters to his parents about his heavy work load at the University; his thesis on Americans in Japan; his job in Alderman Library; and the popularity of the University of Virginia President, Edgar F. Shannon.

Other correspondence includes a letter from his grandmother [Mamma]; his friend Bert McCormick, (at Oxford) congratulating Edgar and Jeanne on their engagement; other congratulatory letters on their engagement; a photocopy of a news clipping announcing their engagement; an invitation from their wedding; and a honeymoon schedule.

## **Bangkok, Thailand, 1960**

**Box-folder** 2:5

### **Extent**

24 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about graduation; an invitation to Bert Edward McCormick's graduation ceremony from Oxford; a letter from McCormick to Edgar's parents about Berts' plans for traveling; Edgar's new job with the United States Intelligence Agency in Bangkok, Thailand; traveling to Bangkok; Jeanne's pregnancy; and the civil war in Laos.

## **Kwangju, Korea, 1961**

**Box-folder** 2:6

### **Extent**

74 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar and Jeanne to their parents about having Charlie Jenkins, a two time gold medalist in track from the 1956 Olympics, over for dinner and their first impressions of Korea. Edgar writes about being able to use propaganda against Russia since he was a press writer and an article is enclosed in which he writes about the Russians being a world threat. There is also information on the civil war in Laos; the opening ceremony of the New Friendship Highway that the United States built in Thailand; a 14 nation conference in Geneva; and a visit of the Vice President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson, Lady Bird Johnson, and John F. Kennedy's sister, [Mrs. Jean Kennedy Smith].

There is a telegram announcing the birth of their son, William E. Noel II "Wen;" a letter from Edgar and his family to his cousin, Andrew Brown Evans who has Down Syndrome and is the son of Mary Virginia Noel Evans. There are printed materials including a copy of the *Fortnightly* paper, published by USIS in Bangkok; an article written by Edgar Noel for the international USIA file about the visit of Ladybird Johnson; USIA Correspondent newsletter vol. 3, no. 6 June-July 1961 with an article about Edgar going on a bamboo raft traveling down the Ping River.

## **Kwangju, Korea, 1962-1963**

**Box-folder** 2:7

### **Extent**

61 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about Korean food and customs; a political situation in which the Korean Military Government (Park Chung Hee) wants to remain in power and the civilian government wants to take over. Edgar writes about his own frustration with the corruption in the Korean government and wishes that they would stop blaming America while simultaneously asking for American aid. Other

events that he mentions are a cholera epidemic in Korea; floods in Sun Cho; and the death of President John F. Kennedy.

Other correspondence includes a telegram announcing the birth of Edgar and Jeanne's second child, Laura Forsyth. There is also a letter from Bess Dietrich, and letters from family members including Jeanne's grandmother, J. G. Steiner. Edgar asks his father to leave a greater portion of the Noel estate to his sister, Melissa. Edgar, Jeanne and the children visit their parents in their new home in Newport News, Virginia. There are also photographs of Wen, Laura, and their friend Sarah Dietrich. There are printed materials including news clippings about Edgar's talk at the Northampton Lions Club meeting; and an article about Mrs. Ah-ra Cho, executive director of the Kwangju YWCA, who visited Edgar's parents in Newport News, Virginia. There is also a church service program for Emmanuel Church in Richmond, Va. that welcomes Wen and Laura as new members.

## **Kwangju, Korea; Yokohama, Japan, 1964**

**Box-folder** 2:8

### **Extent**

59 items.

### **Scope and Content**

There are letters from Edgar and Jeanne to their parents about students demonstrating against the corruption in Korea. Edgar complains about the backward tendencies of the Koreans including their beliefs in the use of herbal medicines and acupuncture. He expresses relief at leaving Korea and mentions their next location of Yokohama, Japan.

There is also news that they are having another child, Norbourn "Bruz." There is correspondence between Edgar and his parents about the genealogy of the Noel Family including a letter from Edmund (Ned) Berkeley, a former UVA classmate who worked at the Virginia State Archives. Edgar is researching his ancestor, [Norbon Noel] a Confederate doctor in the Civil War. There is also a personal letter from Congressman Thomas N. Downing to Edgar's parents in support of legislation to allow prayer in schools.

Other correspondence includes a letter from Minnie Agnes George (Edgar's grandmother) to Edgar's parents, a letter from Bess Dietrich, and a printed brochure on the Kwangju Christian Hospital and Graham Tuberculosis Center.

## **Yokohama, Japan, 1965**

**Box-folder** 3:1

### **Extent**

48 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about learning Japanese; about his next assignment in Fukuoka, Japan; about the publishing status of Edgar's poem and children's book; letters from Edgar's father which include a disparaging joke about Lyndon Johnson; a photograph of Wen and Laura with Santa Claus.

## **Fukuoka, Japan, 1966-1967**

**Box-folder** 3:2

### **Extent**

86 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about his work and the many activities that he must attend including the Japan-America Cultural Conference; his efforts to encourage support for the Vietnam War; his meeting with the Governor and Vice-Governor of Nagasaki and invitations for the Peace Corps to Nagasaki.

Other correspondence includes a letter from Jeanne's father, LeRoy S. Thompson [Roy] to Harriet Crawford Jones concerning genealogy information; and letters from Suetaka Hatanaka, the President of Minamihon Broadcasting Co., thanking Edgar's parents for hosting him while he was in the United States. There are news clippings of Edgar in his role as the director of the Fukuoka American Cultural Center and brochures of the Shiroyama Kanko Hotel and Nagasaki.

## **Fukuoka, Japan; Bethesda, Maryland; Georgetown, Guyana, 1968-1971**

**Box-folder** 3:3

### **Extent**

66 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar about his new title as Consul and Secretary of the Embassy; the response of the Japanese press to atomic powered submarines; the death of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, as well as the reaction of shock from the Japanese concerning such violence; an anti-Vietnam lecture by Edgar Snow; Edgar's attendance at a ceremony at the White House for the Japanese Prime Minister Sato; and a letter where Edgar describes "Negroes" and "East Indians."

There are also letters from Edgar's parents telling him that Bill Ed Adkins, husband of his sister, Melissa, was dying; a letter from Edgar's sister; letters from Jeanne and Edgar's parents about genealogy; news that Edgar's book of poetry was to be published by the Fukuoka Japan-America Society; a letter from Lee Adkins to his grandparents Noel; letters from Ronnie and Bess Dietrich at the Kwangju Christian Hospital; and a letter from Aunt Mary (Mary Virginia Noel Evans) to Edgar's parents. There is an excerpt of Edgar's article, *Stephen Crane: A Realist who Painted with Words* 1970.

## **Georgetown, Guyana, 1972**

**Box-folder** 3:4

### **Extent**

73 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about Georgetown, Guyana; his feelings of disappointment with the foreign service; his attempts to counter anti-Vietnam War propaganda; comparisons of Surinam and Guyana and their relationship with the Dutch; and negative comments about "Bush Negroes" as Africans.

Other family letters mention the Nixon and McGovern Presidential election, as well as Ronald Reagan, and Barry Goldwater; Jeanne writes about "Hippies-Zippies" impeding the delegates access to the convention, and terrorism at the Olympic Games. Edgar's parents complain about "blacks" moving into the neighborhood and express excitement about men landing on the moon. The children write to their grandparents. There is a letter from the Dietrich's, and a news clipping about the death of Edgar's aunt, Mary Virginia Noel Evans. There are photographs of Edgar's new home in Georgetown.

## **Georgetown, Guyana, 1973**

**Box-folder** 3:5

### **Extent**

117 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar and Jeanne, and their parents supporting Nixon during Watergate. Edgar also writes about how the press ignores the progress that America has made in civil rights. In other letters, he mentions budget cuts; Senator J. William Fulbright; Democracy; Fidel Castro, and Cuba's close relationship with the Soviet Union. His letters also mention Prime Minister Burnham, the elections in Guyana, and how the parties are divided between the Blacks and the East Indians. Edgar also mentions Cheddi Jagan, a famous communist leader, who blames America for the setbacks of the local government, but then turns to America when Guyana needs money. Edgar writes that President Nixon is less tolerant of this behavior than President Kennedy.

Jeanne writes a letter of praise about her former professor, Jon Kirby, to Randolph Macon Woman's College. There are also report cards for the children.

## **Georgetown, Guyana, 1974 January-July**

**Box-folder** 3:6

### **Extent**

65 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar about his next assignment and promotion as Deputy Public Affairs Officer in Lagos, Nigeria; his resentment at having so little personal time with his family; his description of a corrupt

Guyana government that runs out of money, taxes its people, and allows muggings to occur without any policing; and letters from Jeanne and Edgar's parents about their visit to Fort Myers; Edgar's mother, Lelia Noel, has a stay in the hospital with a broken hip. There is also a letter from Edgar's sister, Melissa, about her happiness and her marriage to Don Norman; and a letter from Melissa's son, Lee Adkins to Edgar.

## **Georgetown, Guyana, 1974 August-December**

**Box-folder** 3:7

### **Extent**

53 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar about finishing his annual efficiency reports on his staff; and preparing for an Alister Cooke TV series, "America." He also writes about Nixon's resignation and his hopes for the upcoming Ford presidency. He mentions his concerns about the kidnapping of a United States Information Agency officer and close friend, Barbara Hutcheson, in Santo Domingo. There is a news clipping from the local paper that attacks Edgar and the U. S. Government for supporting the Reynolds Aluminum Mines. Edgar accuses the Guyanese government of being like children who want to play when there is work to be done. He writes about the laziness of the "negro" and hopes the United States Government will "dump the whole lot."

Other correspondence includes a letter from Lee Adkins, son of Melissa Noel Adkins, to his grandparents Noel; postcards from Edgar, Jeanne, and the children during their trip to England; and letters from Edgar and Jeanne's parents.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1975**

**Box-folder** 4:1

### **Extent**

57 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about the need for Washington to recognize Nigeria as a major oil producer and as the most important country in Africa; descriptions of the various people living in Nigeria from well educated, and oil "rednecks" to the local people. He also writes about Harmatan dust storms, seeing a camel caravan, and his meeting with "the Oba (King) of Benin." He also mentions Mrs. Coretta King's visit and writes that he would rather honor Robert E. Lee over Martin Luther King any day. He also says, "I hope to never serve in Africa again-it will be difficult just to go in to Newport News. I'm not impressed with the blacks."

Letters from his parents indicate that his sister, Melissa Adkins, is rescued from Weston Mental Hospital, and is separated from her new husband. There has been little news from her son, Lee. There is also a letter from Edgar's friend, Bert E. McCormick, who is now a minister at The First Church in Albany.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1976**

**Box-folder** 4:2

### **Extent**

127 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Letters from Edgar to his parents about an attempted coup by Lieutenant Colonel Buka Suka Dimka against General Murtala Muhammed. The attempted coup was in response to Muhammed's anti-corruption campaigns and opposition to United States policy in Angola. Edgar's letters describe the aftermath of the coup, the imposed curfew, and false accusations that blame the attempted coup on "the dark hand of the CIA." He writes that Nigeria "has become rampant xenophobic," but assures his parents that his family is safe. Edgar repeats his comment that the underdeveloped countries always blame America. He suggests, "that we close our Embassies in half of them, especially in Africa and go home." He also mentions the 1976 presidential debates and his disappointment with Jimmy Carter.

There is also an article titled "Goldwater Blows the Whistle on His Mates;" *U. S. News & World Report* February 16, 1976 and other news clippings, discussing the attempted coup and the subsequent execution of the Commissioner for Defence, Major General Illiya. There is also a copy of Nigeria's largest daily publication, *The Daily Times* for Friday, March 12, 1976.

There is also information on boarding schools, Fork Union Military Academy and Staunton Hall School for Girls, as there is no school beyond 10th grade in Nigeria. Edgar's sister, Melissa, has a good job and has moved into her own apartment. Her son, Lee Adkins, is getting married; There is also a letter from Bess Dietrick.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1977 January-August**

**Box-folder** 4:3

### **Extent**

98 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about the Second World Black Arts Festival that was being hosted by the Nigerians. He is concerned that it will be poorly run because of the lack of services (water, electricity, sewage) in Nigeria. The food was being flown in by Swiss Air at a cost of two million dollars per day for six weeks. He writes, "How about that for waste, inefficiency, and having more oil money than brains." He also writes that "American Blacks" will not like the conditions very much, especially the local robberies. He even mentions that dead bodies of people who have been murdered are found in the water near his backyard. He writes that he is frustrated with the "bad conditions, corruption, stupidity and disregard for human rights and democracy" in Lagos and other underdeveloped countries. He also writes about his disdain for President Jimmy Carter. On a positive note, he highly praises the work of Alex Haley in "Roots."

Other correspondence between family members reveals that Laura Noel starts school at Staunton Hall for Girls, in Virginia and Wen Noel starts school at Fork Union Military Academy also in Virginia. Jeanne's parents relocated to Fort Myers, Florida.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1977 September-December**

**Box-folder** 4:4

### **Extent**

109 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about the International Trade Fair in Lagos which was a huge success. He received high praise for the USIS part of the exhibit. There is also excitement about President Jimmy Carter and First Lady, Rosalind Carter, visiting Lagos. However their visit was postponed. Edgar writes more about the savage behavior of the people and that the society was better when it was under British rule.

There is also correspondence with Wen and Laura while they attended Fork Union and Staunton Hall for Girls. Wen was made First Class Sargent with five stripes after only a few months and Laura was the star in a play production at school. Correspondence also reveals that Edgar's mother, Lelia Noel, was suffering a great deal with asthma.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1978 January-April**

**Box-folder** 4:5

### **Extent**

71 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about his promotion to Foreign Service Information Officer Two which is a top ranking in the agency. He mentions the visit of President Carter and his family to Lagos, and the performance of jazz pianist, Memphis Slim in Nigeria. Edgar writes that the Nigerians do not like jazz as they "are barely above the tom-tom level in music appreciation." Concerning the visit of President Carter, Edgar writes, "I wish Carter would stay home and solve the coal strike, handle the Panama issue, get an energy bill passed, and in general look after our own country rather than mess around here in Africa. The Democratic Party really needs the Black vote I guess since they may lose the Jewish vote."

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1978 May-September**

**Box-folder** 4:6

### **Extent**

82 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about showing the mini-series "Roots" in Nigeria and the attitudes of Nigerians towards

Edgar writes about showing the mini-series *Roots* in Nigeria and the attitudes of Nigerians toward African Americans. Edgar and his father write about their support for Proposition 13, a bill in California to cut property taxes.

Other correspondence is from the Noel children, Norbourn (Bruz) writes from Woodberry Forest School, William (Wen) writes from Fork Union Military Academy, and Laura writes from Staunton Hall for Girls to their parents and grandparents.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1978 October-December**

**Box-folder** 5:1

### **Extent**

131 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about a possible new position in Bombay, India. He also mentions a hepatitis and meningitis scare, as well as the horrible news of a mass suicide in Guyana with Jim Jones. Edgar also writes about an intelligence agent who was pretending to be a student, and was asking questions about American Intelligence.

Other correspondence mentions that Wen makes the National Honor Society. There are also programs for Woodberry Forest School Parents Weekend and a Fork Union Military Academy football program.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1979 January**

**Box-folder** 5:2

### **Extent**

54 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Jeanne Noel writes that the Nigerians are obnoxious and Jeanne's mother writes about her concern over the demonstrations of the Iranian students. Jeannette also mentions her frustration with the democrats. Edgar's father writes that President Carter is abusing Virginia because the state did not vote for him. He writes, "The place for him is back in Georgia gnawing peanuts."

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1979 February**

**Box-folder** 5:3

### **Extent**

109 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar mentions visitors, David Rockefeller, president of Chase Manhattan Bank, who flew in on his private jet; and Maynard Jackson, Mayor of Atlanta. Edgar is writing an article on Townsend Harris, the first American diplomat in Japan. There is also a news clipping about the attack of the United States Embassy in Tehran by a group of leftist Guerillas.

## **Lagos, Nigeria, 1979 March-April**

**Box-folder** 5:4

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar praises Mayor Maynard Jackson of Atlanta for his great speaking voice and sense of humor. In other news from home, Edgar's uncle, Jim Wash, dies. Wen was promoted to First Lieutenant. There are also photographs of the family at spring break in Fort Myers, Florida.

## **Bombay, India, 1979 May-October**

**Box-folder** 5:5

### **Extent**

110 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar accepts a new position in Bombay, India. He describes the Indians as being efficient and friendly, although he says that Indian bureaucracy "beats any other country's." Jeanne's mother writes that there are odd and even days for obtaining gas in the United States. There is also a news clipping about Edgar

titled, Noel, USICA Director, in *The Free Press Journal*.

Edgar's friend, Dob. writes about helping Wen get accepted into Westpoint. There are also letters from Harry F. Byrd, Jr. and John W. Warner in reference to Wen's application to Westpoint.

## **Bombay, India, 1979 November-December**

**Box-folder** 5:6

### **Extent**

80 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about violent demonstrations by Iranian students; and Americans that were burned and murdered in Islamabad. Edgar's Christmas letter gives a description of the politics in India. President Carter stopped oil shipments from Iran to the United States. Edgar writes that the Noels feel safe because of the excellent police security in Bombay. Jeanne writes a description of New Delhi and Old Delhi to Norbourn (Bruz).

There are more letters regarding referrals for Wen from John Warner, Harry F. Byrd, Jr., Paul Trible, Ralph E. Martin, staff assistant for Vice President, Walter Mondale, and from K. T. Whitescarver, president of Fork Union Military Academy. Laura is accepted into Randolph Macon Woman's College. There is a photograph of Wen at Fork Union.

## **Bombay, India, 1980 January-March**

**Box-folder** 5:7

### **Extent**

109 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes about his concern that Indira Gandhi is supportive of Russia and has been elected Prime Minister Gandhi. He compares Russia's attack [on Afghanistan] to Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939. He also mentions that the Indians are worried about the United States sending arms to Pakistan. He writes that he is surprised that the Indians are afraid of a natural event, such as a solar eclipse, but are sophisticated enough to make an atom bomb.

Edgar mentions Muhammad Ali who came for a boxing exhibition and departs for Africa to discuss the Olympic boycott. He writes that "Ali must never read the papers to be so dumb about the African South Africa situation." Edgar also describes a dinner with former Attorney General, Archibald Cox, and describes him as " a delightful man and easy to talk to."

Letters from Jeanne's parents indicate that they believe that Wen is accepted into Westpoint and the Noels are ecstatic. (It turns out that only an interview has been granted.)

## **Bombay, India, 1980 April-September**

**Box-folder** 6:1

### **Extent**

112 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes that he becomes angry when the Indians say that the Russians were invited to Afghanistan and people blame the United States for arming the rebels. Many American Offices were closed due to the heightened tensions from Iranian students. There was a failed attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran. Edgar is concerned that there might be a third world war. The American Center in Delhi was besieged with Iranian students and they burned an effigy of President Carter. He also writes that he feels that the United States Intelligence Agency is treating the agents in the field unfairly.

Edgar's father, William Noel, died of a heart attack. Enclosed with other letters is a newsletter and calendar from Virginia Military Institute.

## **Bombay, India, 1980 October-December**

**Box-folder** 6:2

### **Extent**

89 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes that India abstained in the United Nations vote requesting Russian troops to leave Afghanistan. He is very disappointed in the Indians lack of belief in "justice, morality and non-alignment." He also writes that Prince Charles of Wales is in Bombay for a visit.

Included in the correspondence is a theatre program of a play at Randolph Macon Woman's College.

### **Bombay, India, 1981 January-May**

**Box-folder** 6:3

#### **Extent**

103 items.

#### **Scope and Content**

Correspondence refers to confirmation hearings on General Alexander Haig, as the Secretary of State. The Noel's give high praise for Haig and criticize Lyndon Johnson. The letters also mention President Reagan's budget cuts and the attempted assassination on Reagan's life.

Jeanne writes to her parents about the death of Edgar's mother, Lelia Noel. Norbourn (Bruz) writes that Joe Theisman visits his school, Woodberry Forest.

### **Bombay, India, 1981 June-December**

**Box-folder** 6:4

#### **Extent**

63 items.

#### **Scope and Content**

There is mention of the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Other correspondence includes a letter of commendation for Wen from Virginia Military Institute and a VMI Calendar of Events.

### **Bombay, India, 1982 January-July**

**Box-folder** 6:5

#### **Extent**

103 items.

#### **Scope and Content**

There was a mob attack on the American Consulate in Bombay. Laura writes to her parents about her speaking out against Jerry Falwell in a debate between Sam Brown and Moral Majority spokesperson, Cal Thomas at her school.

### **Bombay, India 1982 August-December**

**Box-folder** 6:6

#### **Extent**

90 items.

#### **Scope and Content**

Jeanne writes to Laura about the birth of Lee and Carol Adkins' new baby, Lesley (Melissa's granddaughter).

### **Virginia Military Institute Grade Report, 1981-1982**

**Box-folder** 6:7

#### **Extent**

5 items.

#### **Scope and Content**

Report card.

## **Bombay, India, 1983 January-May**

**Box-folder** 6:8

### **Extent**

130 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Jeanne writes to Laura about Edgar's retirement. Wen writes to his parents about [the bombing] in Beirut. Edgar writes to Bruz that author and historian Daniel Boorstein is visiting in Bombay.

## **Bombay, India, 1983 June-December**

**Box-folder** 7:1

### **Extent**

77 items.

### **Scope and Content**

There are letters about the United States invasion of Grenada. William (Wen) writes about his girlfriend, Ann. Laura writes that she is student teaching.

## **Bombay, India, 1984 January-June**

**Box-folder** 7:2

### **Extent**

102 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Jeanne's mother, Jeanette, writes about the death of Yuri Andropov. Edgar writes that he is frustrated with his job and will retire from the State Department in September. Edgar also writes that India is in the news with the insurrection in Punjab.

## **Bombay, India, 1984 July-December**

**Box-folder** 7:3

### **Extent**

65 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Jeanne's mother mentions the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the candidacy of Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferrero. Norbourn "Bruz" writes that he is going to the World's Fair in New Orleans. William "Wen" writes that he is in Army Artillery School and has been named Artillery Officer.

## **Denbigh, Virginia, 1985**

**Box-folder** 7:4

### **Extent**

45 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Photograph of Wen's girlfriend, Beth [Wisotckey]. Wen is stationed in Germany. Bruz is studying architecture in Italy. Laura receives a marriage proposal from her boyfriend from India. Leroy Thompson mentions tobacco stocks and how they will be affected by lawsuits against tobacco companies.

## **Denbigh, Virginia, 1986**

**Box-folder** 7:5

### **Extent**

90 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar writes to local delegate, Herbert H. Batemen, in support of freedom fighters in Nicaragua. Wen is stationed in Camp Lejeune and is engaged to Beth. Laura has a new boyfriend and Bruz is interning as an architect in Melbourne Australia.

## **Denbigh, Virginia, 1987-1988**

**Box-folder** 7:6

### **Extent**

80 items.

### **Scope and Content**

Edgar buys a boat and names it the Ida J. He writes occasional letters to the editor of *The Daily Press*. In other correspondence, there is a copy of a letter written by famous scientist Arthur C. Clarke. Jeanne writes about her genealogy. Wen is performing artillery practice exercises in France, Morocco, Spain, and Lisbon. He breaks up with Beth due to conflicts in their careers and marries Kim Waters Noel. She becomes pregnant with their first child. His next station is in New York City. There is a photograph of Wen in his airplane. There are church programs from the Abingdon Episcopal Church (where Edgar is mentioned as a candidate for praying and laying of the hands) and Saint Raphael's Church.

## **Denbigh, Virginia, 1989-1992**

**Box-folder** 7:7

### **Extent**

90 items.

### **Scope and Content**

There are various political letters and correspondence including letters between Edgar and the Right Reverend Peter James Lee, Diocese of Virginia, about Nelson Mandela; a letter from Chuck Robb regarding crimes committed by Oliver North; and a letter from Herbert H. Batemen, House of Representatives, about Edgar's support for H. R.1227 (a bill that supports prohibition of imposing taxes on out of state residents). Bert McCormick writes to Edgar about events in China. . . There is a news clipping about the celebration of the USS Newport News; a brochure about Paris; and a juror handbook.

Wen and Kim have two daughters, Caroline and Tara. Bruz is working architectural jobs in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and is engaged to Kimberly Lynne Woods.

## **Genealogy, 1994**

**Box-folder** 7:8

### **Extent**

3 items.

### **Scope and Content**

There is a form filled out with the lineage of Edgar Estes Noel II from 1599 to 1988. There is also a history of William Edgar Noel (1897-1981) and Edgar Estes Noel II (1933-present [1994]) which includes Wen, Laura, and Bruz, as well as their spouses and children.

OS *Daily Times* newspaper March 12, 1976 and greeting card [1974] from Laura Noel to her father.