Descriptive Summary

Title: Lynch Family Letters
Dates: 1926-1980
Collection Number: Consult repository.
Creator: Lynch, Dorothy
Extent: 10 boxes 4.2 linear ft
Repository: California State University, Dominguez Hills Archives and Special Collections

Abstract: This collection consists primarily of the personal letters of Dorothy Lynch to her older sister, Faye Bell. The letters chronicle the lives of Dorothy Lynch and of her immediate family in Long Beach, California, over the decades from 1926 to 1980; the letters also provide a glimpse of the lives of Dorothy Lynch’s immediate and extended family in California and in other states. The correspondence covers the complexities of family life, marriage, child rearing, and Dorothy’s life as a homemaker; her employment with the Douglas Aircraft Company during World War II and in sales after the war; job scarcity and the search for employment during the Depression; Dorothy’s husband’s employment in the oil industry; and other topics, including gender and work; illness; fashion, and body image. Along with correspondence, the collection contains photographs and newspaper clippings.

Language: Collection material is in English

Access
There are no access restrictions on this collection.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
The materials were donated to California State University at Dominguez Hills in June, 2010 by Ken Barker and Jeff Stookey, executors of the estate of John Quitman Lynch.

Processing Information
This collection was processed by Juan Tellez in 2010.

Biography
Dorothy Lynch (1909-1992) and Faye Bell (1900-1987) were sisters who kept in contact through letters from 1926 to 1971. Dorothy Lynch, a life-long resident of Long Beach, California, graduated from Long Beach Polytechnic High School in 1927. She married Louis Quitman Lynch (1902-1979 [referred to in the letters as Quitman or as Jack]), and the couple raised their children, Richard L. Lynch (1929-1978), John Q. Lynch (1931-2008 [referred to at times in the letters as Jack], and Thomas E. Lynch (1941-1986), in the same North Long Beach neighborhood in which she grew up. Dorothy Lynch was a homemaker for much of her life. She also worked outside the home during World War II, as an employee at the Douglas Aircraft Company in Long Beach; and after the war, as a salesperson in the silver trade. In addition, along with her husband, she owned and managed various properties in the Long Beach area. Faye Bell was a resident of several states, primarily California and Oregon. She was the primary recipient of the Lynch family letters.

Scope and Content
This collection documents the lives of two women, Dorothy Lynch and her sister, Faye Bell, over the course of five decades, as seen through their original correspondence. Most of the collection consists of letters from Dorothy Lynch to Faye Bell, though some of the files contain letters written by others, including Quitman (Jack) Lynch and the sisters’ children and grandchildren. Topics treated in the collection include the complexities of family life; homemaking; child rearing; local...
news; economic privation; the local labor market for both men and women during the Depression and during World War II; the stress that lack of stable employment can cause; Dorothy's employment in the aerospace industry during wartime and in silver sales after the war; and Dorothy's husband Quitman's (Jack's) time spent living apart from the family in order to seek employment in other cities, primarily in the oil industry. The letters also discuss rationing and war and their effects on people; marital tension; Dorothy's interest in work outside the home as well as in learning and coursework; military service; medical and legal problems faced by the two sisters and other family members; travel along the West Coast of the United States as well as to Texas; and fashion. Along with these topics, the correspondence provides a view of the lives of other family members as well, including son John's study of art and entry into the art world.

This collection, which also includes photographs and news clippings, is a good source for researchers interested in exploring women's roles in the home and in the workplace; gender expectations concerning women's work outside of the home; job scarcity and economic difficulties during the Depression; the need to move or travel in search of work and the impact that this can have on family life; child rearing, especially as covered in letters from the 1930s and 1940s; perspectives on employment in the aerospace and oil industries in California; and fashion and body image. The collection includes letters relating to the 1933 Long Beach earthquake (Box 2, Folder 2), and correspondence describing Dorothy Lynch's personal experience of the February 24-25, 1942 incident known as the "Battle of Los Angeles," a case of "friendly fire" in which artillery rounds from anti-aircraft fire rained down on Long Beach in response to the perceived threat of Japanese air attack (Box 4, Folder 4). The correspondence decreases greatly from 1970 on.

Because he is referred to by the names Quitman and Jack, the Scope and Content notes for this collection refer to Dorothy's husband as Quitman (Jack). In the letters, John's name is often spelled as "Jon"; at times, he is referred to in the letters as Jack.

**Arrangement**

Arranged in 10 Boxes in Chronological Order:

- Box I. Correspondence 1926-1931
- Box II. Correspondence 1932-1935
- Box III. Correspondence 1936-1938
- Box IV. Correspondence 1939-1943
- Box V. Correspondence 1944-1948
- Box VI. Correspondence 1949-1955
- Box VII. Correspondence 1956-1959
- Box VIII. Correspondence 1960-1963
- Box IX. Correspondence 1964-1966
- Box X. Correspondence 1966-1980, n.d.

**Subjects**

Aerospace industries -- California -- Employees
Child rearing
Family life
Gender and society
Gender and women studies
Homemaking
Marriage and family life
Petroleum industry and trade -- California -- Employees
Working mothers -- United States
Women employees -- Family relationships -- United States
Work and family -- United States

**Personal Names**

Bell, Goldie Faye
Bell, Harry E.
Lynch, Dorothy
Lynch, Louis Quitman
Lynch, John Q.
Lynch, Richard L.
Lynch, Thomas E.

Corporate Names
Douglas Aircraft Company

Geographic Names
Long Beach (Calif.)
Portland (Or.)

Box I. Correspondence, 1926-1931
Physical Description: .42 linear feet1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include the lives of Dorothy and Faye as teenagers in Long Beach, California; Dorothy's first two pregnancies and her adjustment to motherhood and homemaking; Quitman's (Jack's) search for work and a drop in the labor market; and the Depression.

Box 1 Folder 1, 1926-1928
Scope and Content Note
Sisters and their lives as teenagers in Long Beach, California.

Box 1 Folder 2, 1929
Scope and Content Note
Dorothy's first pregnancy; drop in labor market.

Box 1 Folder 3, 1930
Scope and Content Note
Dorothy adjusting to motherhood; building a household.

Box 1 Folder 4, 1931
Scope and Content Note
Dorothy's second pregnancy; talk about Depression.

Box 1 Folder 5, 1931
Scope and Content Note
Quitman's (Jack's) search for work; raising more than one child.

Box II. Correspondence, 1932-1935
Physical Description: .42 linear feet1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include raising children and Quitman's (Jack's) search for work; the Long Beach earthquake of March 10, 1933, and its death toll, damages, and aftershocks; the death of the sisters’ father; and the start of a side business as chicken breeders. Discussion also covers weddings and children; family life and the scarcity of jobs; and the need to travel or move in search of job opportunities.

Box 2 Folder 1, 1932
Scope and Content Note
Raising children; Quitman's (Jack's) search for work.
Box 2 Folder 2, 1933
Scope and Content Note
Long Beach earthquake of March 10, 1933; its death toll, damages, and aftershocks. 
Death of father. Start of a side business breeding chickens.

Box 2 Folder 3, 1934
Scope and Content Note
Weddings and children; travel in search of work; recap of previous years and plan for 
future children.

Box 2 Folder 4, 1935
Scope and Content Note
Raising children; moving to follow work opportunities.

Box 2 Folder 5, 1935
Scope and Content Note
Family life and scarcity of jobs.

Box III. Correspondence, 1936-1938
Physical Description: .42 linear feet1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include raising children and teaching them at home; coping with illness; searching for 
work and making ends meet; connections with extended family; and legal issues concerning 
the sisters' father's estate. Discussion also concerns renting out part of the family home to 
make money and moving to follow work. Letters also mention fashion and body image.

Box 3 Folder 1, 1936
Scope and Content Note
(Jan - Jun) Raising children; coping with illnesses; teaching children at home.

Box 3 Folder 2, 1936
Scope and Content Note
(Jul - Dec) Searching for work; making ends meet.

Box 3 Folder 3, 1937
Scope and Content Note
Connections with extended family; handling of father's estate; discussion of fashion.

Box 3 Folder 4, 1938
Scope and Content Note
Legal issues with father's estate; renting out part of home to make money; moving to 
follow work; body image issues.
Box IV. **Correspondence, 1939-1943**

Physical Description: .42 linear feet 1 box

Scope and Content Note

Topics include making ends meet during work shortages; aid from the Church; and Dorothy and Quitman (Jack) Lynch’s purchase of a new home. Correspondence also features discussion of child rearing; of arts and crafts and of music lessons; of the possibility of Dorothy's third pregnancy; and of medical practices concerning childbirth, including questions of natural birth versus the use of drugs to ease childbirth. Letters treat the birth of Dorothy's third son, Thomas Lynch, and family life and responsibilities. Correspondence also makes reference to World War II and to Dorothy's finding shrapnel at her home and broken windows in her neighborhood in February, 1942, as a result of the “Battle of Los Angeles.” Letters also discuss Dorothy's employment at the Douglas Aircraft Company; Quitman's (Jack's) work in the oil industry in Coalinga and in Long Beach; and the rise in employment levels with the growth of war industries.

Box 4 Folder 1, 1939

Scope and Content Note

Making ends meet during work shortages; aid from the Church. Raising children; possibility of Dorothy’s being pregnant; arts and crafts and music lessons.

Box 4 Folder 2, 1940

Scope and Content Note

Dorothy and Quitman (Jack) buy new home; pregnancy; medical practices concerning childbirth.

Box 4 Folder 3, 1941

Scope and Content Note

Birth of Thomas Lynch; family life; responsibilities with school and home.

Box 4 Folder 4, 1942

Scope and Content Note

References to World War II and to the anti-aircraft fire incident on the West Coast on the night of February 24-25; beginning of rationing; women and changes caused by war; return of jobs with rise of war industries.

Box 4 Folder 5, 1943

Scope and Content Note

Quitman (Jack) works in oil industry in Coalinga and in Long Beach; Dorothy’s work at Douglas Aircraft Company; tension with Quitman (Jack) over Dorothy's work outside of the home; rationing of goods and its effects on people.

Box V. **Correspondence, 1944-1948**

Physical Description: .42 linear feet 1 box

Scope and Content Note

Topics include Quitman's (Jack's) living out of town because of work; Dorothy's quitting her job and returning to homemaking; routines of family life; son John's interest in art; and Quitman's (Jack's) return to live and work at home. Letters also discuss illness and Quitman's (Jack's) struggles to find stable employment; Dorothy's life as a homemaker; and issues faced by parents as children reach their teenage years. The correspondence also includes planning for children's futures; son Richard's graduation from high school and subsequent travel with friends to Alaska to find work; and discussion of Dorothy's interest in taking classes, as well as difficulties balancing coursework with her other responsibilities.
Box 5 Folder 1, 1944
Scope and Content Note
(Jan - Jun) Issues arising from Quitman's (Jack's) living out of town for work.

Box 5 Folder 2, 1944
Scope and Content Note
(Jul - Dec) Dorothy quits job with Douglas.

Box 5 Folder 3, 1945
Scope and Content Note
(Jan - Jul) Routine events in the lives of the Lynch family.

Box 5 Folder 4, 1945
Scope and Content Note
(Aug - Dec) Dorothy takes a college-level Psychology class; John continues to develop his interests in art; Quitman (Jack) returns to live and work at home.

Box 5 Folder 5, 1946
Scope and Content Note
Dorothy's homemaking and caring for youngest son; medical treatments.

Box 5 Folder 6, 1947
Scope and Content Note
Issues with teenagers; Quitman's (Jack's) struggles with unstable employment; Richard's travel with friends to Alaska to find seasonal work; travel and responsibilities of maintaining a home; Dorothy's interest in continuing education and enrollment in income tax and crafts classes; difficulties of balancing coursework with her other responsibilities. Folder contains several of Richard's letters to his parents and siblings.

Box 5 Folder 7, 1948
Scope and Content Note
Contains only one letter, regarding the Christmas holiday.

Box VI. Correspondence, 1949-1955
Physical Description: .42 linear feet1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include family life, child rearing, and making plans for their college education; Quitman's (Jack's) situation of being in and out of work; Dorothy's return to work, this time in sales; son John's growing reputation as an artist and his move to New York to study art. Letters also describe John's dispute with the draft board and his exemption from military service; son Richard's injury while working on an oil rig and his being drafted into the Navy; Richard's marriage to Dorothy Dixon (Dody), the birth of their first child, their family life, and purchase of land to build their own family home. Correspondence also treats dieting and nutrition; Faye's, Dorothy's and the children's travel between Louisiana, Oregon, Texas, and California; and Dorothy's babysitting duties for Richard and his wife's two children.

Box 6 Folder 1, 1949
Scope and Content Note
Raising children; planning for college; Quitman (Jack) is in and out of work; Dorothy begins to work again, this time in sales. John gains more recognition as an artist and begins dispute with draft board; Richard's injury on the oil fields sparks discussion of dangers of working in the oil industry.
Box 6 Folder 2, 1950
Scope and Content Note
Richard is drafted into the Navy; John is exempt because of good standing in college.

Box 6 Folder 3, 1951
Scope and Content Note
Richard gets married.

Box 6 Folder 4, 1952
Scope and Content Note
Newlyweds, dieting and family; John's move to New York to study art.

Box 6 Folder 5, 1953
Scope and Content Note
Birth of Richard and Dody's daughter; John wins dispute with draft board.

Box 6 Folder 6, 1954
Scope and Content Note
Richard and Dody buy land and begin building their own home. Faye, Dorothy and children travel between Louisiana, Oregon, Texas and California.

Box 6 Folder 7, 1955
Scope and Content Note
Diets, vitamins and nutritional supplements; Dorothy begins babysitting Richard and Dody's children.

Box VII. Correspondence, 1956-1959
Physical Description: .42 linear feet1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include Quitman's (Jack's) travel for work, which sometimes sees him absent for days or months; and visits between the sisters, including plans for Dorothy to visit Faye in Oregon and for Faye to visit Dorothy in California. Correspondence also covers Thomas Lynch's graduation from Long Beach Polytechnic; the sons' job searches in the Long Beach area; a nephew's employment at Douglas Aircraft; and folk remedies for arthritis. Folders 2 and 4 contain photographs of family members.

Box 7 Folder 1, 1956
Scope and Content Note
Richard and Dody finish home and move in. Quitman (Jack) must still work out of town at times, and is sometimes away for days to months.

Box 7 Folder 2, 1957
Scope and Content Note
Faye visits mid-year; Dody has second child.

Box 7 Folder 3, 1958
Scope and Content Note
Family comes together to help out; Thomas Lynch graduates from Long Beach Polytechnic.
Box 7 Folder 4, 1959
Scope and Content Note
Folk remedies for arthritis; sons looking for work in Long Beach area; nephew working for Douglas Aircraft. Photos of family are included in this folder.

Box VIII. Correspondence, 1960-1963
Physical Description: .42 linear feet 1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include son Thomas's service in the Navy; disputes concerning the inheritance; Thomas's preparations to marry Alice, who is earning a teaching credential at California State University, Long Beach; Faye's visit; son John's art show in Hollywood; and fashion. Correspondence also discusses income from rental properties, as well as jury duty for Dorothy.

Box 8 Folder 1, 1960
Scope and Content Note
Family travels to New Orleans to deal with inheritance matters. Richard has surgery; Thomas prepares to wed girlfriend Alice.

Box 8 Folder 2, 1961
Scope and Content Note
Faye visits Dorothy and family; John has art show in Hollywood; Thomas in the Navy.

Box 8 Folder 3, 1962
Scope and Content Note
Plans for Thomas and Alice's wedding; fashion ideas; Alice completes teaching credential at Cal State Long Beach; moving and property maintenance.

Box 8 Folder 4, 1963
Scope and Content Note
Dorothy undertakes jury duty; proceedings continue in Texas for inheritance; earnings from rental properties.

Box IX. Correspondence, 1964-1966
Physical Description: .42 linear feet 1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include interest in nutritional supplements; Quitman's (Jack's) job prospects and his success at finding work; Richard's move to Oregon; and family travels on the West coast and to Texas.

Box 9 Folder 1, 1964
Scope and Content Note
(Jan - Jun) Job market for Quitman (Jack); Richard is moving to Oregon; nutritional supplements

Box 9 Folder 2, 1964
Scope and Content Note
(Jul - Dec) Thomas's coming baby; Richard's move to Oregon; Quitman's (Jack's) work.

Box 9 Folder 3, 1965
Scope and Content Note
(Jan - Aug) Family travels from San Diego to Morro Bay and Oregon; Dorothy travels to Texas to deal with inheritance matters.
Box 9 Folder 4, 1965
Scope and Content Note
(Sept - Dec) Continuing discussion of inheritance; plans for travel.

Box 9 Folder 5, 1966
Scope and Content Note
(Jan - Jun) Many family members become ill.

Box 9 Folder 6, 1966
Scope and Content Note
(Jul - Dec) Thomas moves to San Diego from Idaho.

Box X. Correspondence, 1966-1980, n.d.
Physical Description: .42 linear feet1 box
Scope and Content Note
Topics include the birth of Thomas and Alice's child; the fact that Dorothy, Quitman (Jack), and Faye are all reaching retirement age; the circumstances surrounding Quitman's (Jack's) retirement; travel; family medical matters; and a negative mention of California Governor Ronald Reagan. Correspondence diminishes from 1970 to 1980; topics of these letters include illnesses; John's travels and work on his art; events in the lives of family members; and Dorothy's care giving for her mother and other relatives. Folder 6 contains undated materials, including funeral arrangements for Dorothy; two photographs—one of the family and one of a young Quitman (Jack) at an oil rig; drawings by various children; and copies of letters made by John Q. Lynch.

Box 10 Folder 1, 1967
Scope and Content Note
Thomas and Alice's first child; illness.

Box 10 Folder 2, 1968
Scope and Content Note
Negative mention of California State Gov. Reagan; Dorothy, Quitman (Jack), and Faye approach retirement age.

Box 10 Folder 3, 1969
Scope and Content Note
Quitman's (Jack's) retirement; Dorothy's responsibilities.

Box 10 Folder 4, 1970
Scope and Content Note
Travel; AARP; how the children are doing.

Box 10 Folder 5, 1970-ca. 1980
Scope and Content Note
Lives of family members; John's travel and work on his art; Dorothy's caretaking for her mother and for older relatives; description of holidays spent in Long Beach.
Box 10 Folder 6, 1992; n.d.

Scope and Content Note

Miscellaneous pages of letters with no identifiable date. Funeral arrangements for Dorothy; sign-in sheets for wake. Folder also contains family trees and six undated photographs, one of Quitman (Jack) at an oil rig in his youth and five of various members of the family, including Dorothy Lynch. The location of the photographs is uncertain. Also includes drawings by various children and copies of letters made by John Q. Lynch.