Noble Family Papers: Finding Aid

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
© 2006
The Huntington Library. All rights reserved.
Overview of the Collection
Title: Noble Family Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1862-1969
Collection Number: mssHM 68773-68879
Creator: Noble family.
Extent: 541 pieces in 3 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
Abstract: This collection contains the papers of the family of Montana farmers and ranchers Florence Noble (1881-1968) and Royal H. Noble (1878-1971). The materials cover many aspects of the Nobles' lives in Montana and California, chiefly dating from the late 1890s to 1960s, including ranch and agricultural business, frontier and pioneer life and history, and the Masons and Oddfellows. There are also 30 World War II letters of U.S. Navy yeoman Lester J. Noble.
Language: English.
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.
Publication Rights
The Huntington Library does not require that researchers request permission to quote from or publish images of this material, nor does it charge fees for such activities. The responsibility for identifying the copyright holder, if there is one, and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Noble Family Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
In Library.
Biographical Note
Royal H. Noble (1878-1971) and Florence Mary Noble (1881-1968) were Montana farmers and ranchers whose families were among the first settlers of Broadwater County.
Florence's father, Reuben A. (or E.) Johnson, a Wisconsin man who had fought in the Union Army in the Civil War, walked to Diamond City, Montana, from Salmon City, Idaho, following the war, in hopes of becoming a successful miner. His young wife, Anna, the daughter of a Scottish émigré, joined him two years later, and they established a fruit farm. Their daughter Florence Mary married a local man, Royal H. Noble, in 1902. The new couple lived at the “old home ranch” until well after the deaths of Florence's parents, continuing to farm. Roy also seems to have worked in odd jobs later in life, especially during the Second World War. After the war, the Nobles moved to Southern California. Roy was an active Mason and Knight Templar in Montana and California. Florence Noble became seriously ill in 1965 and died in 1968. Royal died in 1971.
Of Roy and Florence Noble's four children, Lester J. Noble figures most prominently in the collection. Lester enlisted as a Yeoman in the United States Navy in 1942 and was sent to Farragut, Idaho, where he trained and then served until the spring of 1943, when he was transferred to California. He shipped out of Port Hueneme in the late spring of 1945 as part of Acorn 48 aboard a ship of the Seventh Fleet, reaching the Philippines in late June. He served in the logistics section of the Com Air, Seventh Fleet for most of that summer, and was ordered home on 17 September 1945. He was discharged that fall. Lester's relationship with his wife Ruth deteriorated swiftly after his return, and the couple divorced. Lester married Evelyn M. Smith not long afterwards, and soon welcomed a son, Gregg Earl Noble, who would later serve in a U. S. Army Band (during the Vietnam War). Lester, Evelyn, and Gregg moved to Southern California within a few years after Gregg's birth.
Roy and Florence's three other children, Gladys Simons, Ethel Carter (later Hauk) (born 1909), and Lloyd H. Noble, also made their homes in California with their spouses. Gladys married Claude W. Simons; Ethel married George W. Carter, and later Robert Hauk; and Lloyd married a woman named Effie, but by 1967 had remarried, this time to a woman named Iris. All three of these Nobles had children, many of whom are represented in the collection, including Janis Carter (or Janice -
possibly not the same person), Connie Grant, Donna Lee Simons Paquette (who married Frank Paquette), and possibly Ruth Ann Noble. Most of the Noble clan gathered together in 1962 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the marriage of Roy and Florence, which coincided approximately with the 12th anniversary of one Lloyd's children and her husband.

Several other family members, friends and associates are represented in the collection, including: Beulah Adams (friend); Grace and Walter Bystrom; Jesse Earle (Florence's first cousin, with whom she traveled through Yellowstone National Park in 1897); Earle Johnson (Florence's brother); Hattie Johnson (a relative of Florence, perhaps' Earle Johnson’s wife); May Kettenhofen (friend); Glenard Lipscomb (Congressman); Arthur Patrick “Niche” Moran (an early Montana pioneer and family friend of the Johnsons, who was also Hattie Johnson’s uncle); C. Earle and Rachael Noble (Roy's brother and his wife); Alice Shafer (friend); and Mamie Williams (friend).

**Scope and Content**

The collection consists of correspondence, records, and other manuscripts and ephemera pertaining to the Noble family. It includes one letter from 1862; the rest of the pieces range in date from 1897 to 1969.

The 30 World War II letters of Lester J. Noble, a Yeoman in the U. S. Navy, to his parents are by far the largest block of letters written by one person within a short period, and are perhaps the most significant in the collection. They discuss naval life and training during the war, life aboard ship and in the Philippines, where Lester was stationed just before and following V-J Day, as well as in his stations at Farragut, Idaho, and Port Hueneme, California. In addition, the letters provide insight into the family relationships of sailors during the Second World War. Lester’s relationship with his wife, Ruth, is particularly interesting, and the letters often mention the roles of naval wives, many of whom followed their husbands from post to post until the men were sent overseas. One of Lester’s post-war letters offers his thoughts on how common post-war divorces were among returning soldiers and sailors and their spouses.

The other items in the collection, dating from 1897 to 1969, deal mostly with the aging of Royal H. Noble and Florence Mary Johnson Noble, including their 60th wedding anniversary party. The documents cover many aspects of the Nobles' lives in Montana and California, including ranch and agricultural business, frontier and pioneer life and history, and the Masons and Oddfellows. One letter from Gregg Noble describes some of his experiences as a member of a U.S. Army band during the Vietnam War. Four other pieces are of particular note: an 1897 diary of a trip through Yellowstone, written by Jesse Earle for Florence Noble, who went with him on the trip; Florence Noble's autograph album; notes (presumably by Florence) on a trip to Washington State to visit the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909; and a diary and account book kept by Roy and Florence Noble in the early 20th century. The collection also includes numerous poems, songs, jokes, and notes, as well as a radio transcript and a script for a play.

The ephemera include 100 postcards, 72 photographs, approximately 70 newspaper articles, photocopies of the articles, 2 envelopes, 2 greeting cards, 5 invitations, 11 remembrance cards, 11 pieces of printed matter, and 2 other pieces of ephemera. Many of the postcards portray sights along Highway 101 (in California) mid-20th-century. The newspaper articles include obituaries and wedding announcements pertaining to the family, as well as numerous articles on Montana history, and add significantly to the collection.

**Author index:**

- Adams, Beulah B. (1 piece)
- Barnhart, John R. (1 piece)
- Bystrom, Grace. (1 piece)
- Bystrom, Walter. (1 piece)
- Carter, Ethel Noble. (11 pieces)
- Carter, George W. (2 pieces)
- Carter, Janis. (2 pieces)
- Coulam, Henry, fl. 1925. (1 piece)
- Earle, Jesse, b. 1873. (1 piece)
- Elkins, Darla. (1 piece)
- Fuller, Doris. (1 piece)
- Grant, Connie. (1 piece)
- Hauk, Robert. (1 piece)
- Johnson, Anna M. Earle, 1847-1930. (1 piece)
- Johnson, Earle. (1 piece)
- Johnson, Hattie. (1 piece)
- Johnson, Reuben A., 1845-1907. (1 piece)
- Kettenhofen, May K. (1 piece)
- Klem, John J. (1 piece)
- Lipscomb, Glenard P. (1 piece)
- Moran, Arthur Patrick, 1868-1964. (1 piece)
- Noble, C. Earle. (3 pieces)
- Noble, Effie. (1 piece)
- Noble, Evelyn M. Smith. (1 piece)
- Noble, Florence Mary Johnson, 1882-circa 1969. (3 pieces)
- Noble, Gregg Earl. (1 piece)
- Noble, Iris. (1 piece)
- Noble, Lester J. (34 pieces)
- Noble, Lloyd H. (4 pieces)
- Noble, Rachael, fl. 1909. (2 pieces)
- Noble, Roy H. (Royal H.), 1878-1971. (3 pieces)
- Noble, Ruth. (2 pieces)
- Noble, Ruth Ann. (1 piece)
- Paquette, Donna Lee Simons. (2 pieces)
- Paquette, Frank. (2 pieces)
- Shafer, Alice, fl. 1914. (1 piece)
- Simons, Claude W. (1 piece)
- Simons, Gladys Noble, b. circa 1907. (3 pieces)
- Williams, Mamie. (1 piece)

**Arrangement**
The collection is organized chronologically. The autograph album and Roy and Florence Noble’s diary, however, are included in Box 2.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.

**Subjects**
Noble family.
Acorn 48.
Farragut Naval Training Station (Idaho)
Freemasons -- California.
Freemasons -- Montana.
United States. Army. Infantry Division, 8th.
United States. Army -- Bands (Music)
United States. Navy -- Sea life -- Sources.
Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (1909 : Seattle, Wash.)
Agriculture -- Montana -- Broadwater County.
Basic training (Military education) -- United States.
Domestic relations -- Families of military personnel.
Frontier and pioneer life -- Montana -- Broadwater County.
Navy spouses -- United States.
Pioneers -- Montana -- History.
Ranchers -- Montana -- Broadwater County -- Archives.
Sailors -- Family relationships.
Sailors -- United States -- Correspondence.
Wedding anniversaries.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Philippines.
Broadwater County (Mont.) -- History.
Diamond City (Mont.) -- History.
Helena (Mont.)
Montana -- History.
Philippines -- Description and travel.
Port Hueneme (Calif.)
Townsend (Mont.)
United States Highway 101 -- Pictorial works.
Yellowstone National Park -- Description and travel.

**Forms/Genres**
Accounts Montana -- 20th century.
Autograph albums -- United States.
Diaries Montana -- 20th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 20th century.
Photographs -- United States -- 20th century.
Picture postcards -- United States.
Photographic postcards -- United States.
Personal papers -- United States -- 20th century.

**Additional Contributors**
Carter, Ethel Noble.
Earle, Jesse, b. 1873.
Johnson, Anna M. Earle, 1847-1930.
Johnson, Reuben A., 1845-1907.
Noble, C. Earle.
Noble, Lester J.
Noble, Lloyd H.
Simons, Gladys Noble, b. ca. 1907.

---

| Box 1 | 1862 - 1947 (HM 68773-68823) |
| Box 2 | 1949 - 1969; autograph album and diary (HM 68824-68879) |
| Box 3 | Ephemera |