

James Boyce Montgomery family papers, 1873-1954

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Montgomery, James Boyce, 1832-1900
Title	James Boyce Montgomery family papers
Dates	1873-1954 (inclusive) 1873 1954 1873-1935 (bulk) 1873 1935
Quantity	3 cubic feet, (6 document cases), (1 flat box)
Collection Number	Mss 2727
Summary	Papers of three generations of the family of James Boyce Montgomery, railroad construction contractor who settled in Portland, Or., in 1870. Includes correspondence between Montgomery and his wife, Mary Phelps Montgomery; letters to Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum from Adolfo de Bosis; letters from Margaret Zogbaum written from Europe and elsewhere in the 1910s and 1920s; and personal diaries of Mary Montgomery and Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum detailing travels, social events, and family matters.
Repository	Oregon Historical Society Research Library 1200 SW Park Avenue Portland, OR 97205 Telephone: 503-306-5240 Fax: 503-219-2040 libreference@ohs.org
Access Restrictions	The collection is open to the public.
Languages	English, Italian
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

James Boyce Montgomery was a railroad contractor who grew wealthy through construction projects in the eastern and western U.S. Born near Harrisburg, Penn., in 1832, he worked first as a journalist, eventually becoming editor and publisher of the Pittsburgh *Morning Post*. He moved on to railroad construction in the late 1850s and built bridges and rail lines in Pennsylvania and vicinity in the following decade. He served on the boards of many railroad companies and purchased a portion of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad. He moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1870 and constructed portions of the Northern Pacific Railroad, travelling to Europe to raise capital and obtain materials. In addition he organized other enterprises, such as the dredging of the Columbia River channel and construction of docks in the Portland area. He was also an influential figure in Republican party circles, although

his only major public office was that of Multnomah County representative to the Oregon legislature, to which he was elected in 1890.

In 1861 Montgomery married Rachael Anthony and the couple had one son, Henry Moorhead Montgomery (1863-1932). After Rachael's death in 1863, James Montgomery married Mary S. Phelps in 1866. She came from a prominent Missouri family and was the daughter of John Smith Phelps, who served as the governor of the state from 1877 to 1886. Mary Phelps Montgomery (1846-1943) led a strenuous and long life filled with travels, social activities, and active club work. She served as hostess for her father during his gubernatorial term in Missouri; lived in Berlin in the late 1880s and at later periods; served on the Board of Lady Managers for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis; organized the Portland chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution and Colonial Dames of America; travelled extensively; befriended famous people, such as President Ulysses S. Grant; and managed her husband's financial affairs after his death in 1900. Among her seven children were: Mary Montgomery Talbot, Antoinette Montgomery Frissel (b. 1871), Phelps Montgomery (b. 1872), Eliza Montgomery (b. 1874), Constance Montgomery Burrell (b. 1875), Russell Montgomery (1877-1900); and Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum (b. 1887).

Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum pursued a literary career and wrote essays, plays and novels. She lived much of her youth in Europe and had a brief love affair around 1912 with an Italian nobleman, Adolfo de Bosis. In 1914 she married a U.S. naval officer, Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum II, who was stationed in London and later became the commandant of the U.S. Naval Station in Pensacola, Florida. The two travelled throughout Europe and the Middle East and settled eventually near Tryon, North Carolina, in the late 1930s. Among their children were Wilfrid Zogbaum (1915-1965), an artist and musician, David Zogbaum, and Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum III (called "Fair").

Content Description

The collection provides a sampling of personal papers from three generations of a wealthy American family. Although the materials probably represent only a small percentage of the family's output, they are filled with great detail and vivid descriptions. The writing in the letters and diaries is well composed and fairly legible throughout.

The correspondence between James and Mary Montgomery, which dates from the late 1870s to the late 1890s, provides details of their family life, their social engagements, their travels, and their observations on current events. James's letters contain some information about contemporary politics and his business ventures, although most of the writing is family-oriented.

A large file of letters from Adolfo de Bosis to Margaret Montgomery date from 1912 and contain often extravagant declarations of love. Most are written in Italian. One letter from Margaret to Adolfo is included as well, and this is possibly a draft of her final communication with him. A file of letters from Margaret to her friend Lady Johnstone give Margaret's own emotional account of the affair with de Bosis. Additional letters are from other family members and friends, including Margaret's sons Wilfrid and Rufus, and her husband. Of particular interest is a bound set of letters written by Margaret to her mother from Europe and elsewhere. Titled "Letters of Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum. London, Paris, Ragusa, Zagreb, Constantinople, Hawaii," the letters date from 1913 to 1929 and are packed with details of travels, children, and daily life. Additional letters from Margaret to her mother, unbound, are also of the same nature.

Most of the diaries in the collection were written by Mary Phelps Montgomery and date mainly from the 1890s through the 1910s. They contain details of her active social life, her travels across the U.S. and Europe, her work for the Daughters of the American Revolution, and her activities relating to the

St. Louis Exposition of 1904. She mentions meetings with prominent political figures, friendships with German nobility in Berlin, and visits to the White House, among many other topics. Also included are some entries written in Portland, with mention of people prominent in local society. Two diaries of Mary's daughter Margaret Zogbaum provide details of her travels in Europe and the Middle East with her husband and children. Her writing is highly descriptive and vivid.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

James Boyce Montgomery Family Papers, Mss 2727, Oregon Historical Society Research Library

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series:

Series 1: Correspondence and related papers, 1873-1954

Series 2: Diaries and notebooks, 1891-1934

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Jack Reitsma, 1986

Related Materials

The Oregon Historical Society Research Library also houses papers of Henry Moorhead Montgomery (Mss 2298), son of James Boyce Montgomery.

Photographs from the James Boyce Montgomery family are housed in Org. Lot 428 of the Photographic Collections, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Scrapbook compiled by James Boyce Montgomery, SB 129, is held by the Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1873-1954

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Correspondence of James and Mary Montgomery		
Box/Folder		
1/1-8	Letters from James to Mary Montgomery	1873-1898; undated
1/9-14	Letters from Mary to James Montgomery	1889-circa 1898
1/15	Letters to Mary Montgomery from her children	1892-1938
1/16	Letters to James Montgomery from his children	1890-1895
1/17	Letters from James Montgomery to his children	1893-1894
1/18	Mary Montgomery correspondence concerning the Daughters of the American Revolution	1903-1941; undated
1/19	Mary Montgomery correspondence concerning the Colonial Dames of America	1898-1934
1/20	Mary Montgomery correspondence regarding Women's Relief Committee	1906
1/21	Letters to Mary Montgomery from her grandsons	1928-1938
1/22	General correspondence of Mary Montgomery	1881-1941
1/23	Letters to Mary Montgomery from Claire Willmann, Zogbaum's governess	1931; undated
2/1	Invitations and calling cards to Mary Montgomery	1883-1939; undated
2/2	Writings of Mary Montgomery (mostly family history)	undated
2/3	Biographical and genealogical materials on Montgomery and Phelps families	undated
Correspondence of Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
2/4-11	Letters from Adolfo de Bosis to Margaret	1912 Feb.-Sept.
3/1-3	Letters from Adolfo de Bosis to Margaret	1912 Oct.-1913 July
3/4	Cablegrams and telegrams to Margaret, mostly from Adolfo de Bosis	1912-1913; 1923; undated
3/5	Margaret's last letter to Adolfo de Bosis	1913 July 12
3/6	Writings of Adolfo de Bosis	circa 1912
3/7	Letters to Margaret from Lillian de Bosis (Adolfo's wife)	1912
3/8	Letters to Margaret from her husband, Rufus Zogbaum	1922-1923
3/9	General letters to Margaret	1908-1954
3/10	Letters from Margaret to Nettie (Lady Johnstone)	1912
3/11	Letters from Margaret to her mother, Mary Montgomery	1913-1927
3/12	Letters from Margaret to her mother	1931-1932; undated
Box		
7	Bound volume of letters from Margaret to her mother	1913-1929
Box/Folder		
3/13	Letters from Margaret to her husband, Rufus Zogbaum	1917-1933; undated
3/14	Letters from Margaret to her sisters	1908-1928; undated
3/15	Fragmentary letters of Margaret	1925; undated
3/16	Letters to Rufus Zogbaum from navy friends in Europe	1924

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3/17	Letters to Mary Montgomery from Rufus Zogbaum	1929-1934
3/18	Letters from Wilfrid Zogbaum to his father, Rufus Zogbaum	undated
3/19	Letters from Margaret Zogbaum and others to Wilfrid Zogbaum, and school information	1924-1945; undated
3/20	Margaret Zogbaum writings	circa 1912-1927; undated
3/21	Ephemera and general materials	1903-1904; undated
3/22	Certificate of marriage and announcement, Margaret and Rufus Zogbaum	1914
3/23	Lineage of Zogbaum family	undated

Series 2: Diaries and notebooks, 1891-1934

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Diaries of Mary Phelps Montgomery		
Box/Folder		
4/1	Diary	1891
4/2	Diary	1892
4/3	Diary	1893
4/4	Diary This diary appears to have been used by both Mary Montgomery and her daughter Constance	1896-1897
4/5	Diary	1903
5/1	Diary	1904
5/2	Diary	1910-1911

Container(s)	Description	Dates
5/3	Diary	1912-1913
5/4	Engagement book Some entries appear to have been written by Margaret Montgomery Zogbaum	1891-1914
5/5	Engagement calendar	1928; 1934
Diaries and related materials of Zogbaum Family		
Box/Folder		
5/6	Margaret Zogbaum Diary	1913-1914
6/1	Margaret Zogbaum Diary	1923
6/2	Margaret Zogbaum notes for her play <i>Imortal Mortal</i>	circa 1920
6/3	Margaret Zogbaum notebook	undated
6/4	Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum III diary	1922-1923
6/5	Wilfrid Zogbaum diary	1924-1925

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Women—United States—History

Personal Names :

Bosis, Adolfo de, 1863-1924—Archives
(creator)

Mongomery, James Boyce, 1832-1900—Archives
(creator)

Montgomery, Mary S. Phelps—Archives

Zogbaum, Margaret Montgomery—Archives
(creator)

Zogbaum, Rufus Fairchild, 1879-1956—Archives
(creator)

Zogbaum, Wilfrid, 1915-1965—Archives

Corporate Names :

Daughters of the American Revolution

Family Names :

Montgomery Family

Zogbaum Family

Geographical Names :

Europe—Description and travel

Greece—Description and travel

Portland (Or.)—Social life and customs

Turkey—Description and travel

United States—Description and travel

Form or Genre Terms :

Diaries

Letters

Finding aid prepared by Geoffrey B. Wexler
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