Read Family Papers
Accession #91-018

Creators: Read Family members
Title: Read Family Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1875-1948
Bulk Dates: 1889-1948
Quantity: 0.75 Cubic Feet
Accession: Number 91-018
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Brooklyn NY 11210
(718) 951-5346

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Historical Note

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Read family moved to the newly built suburban style neighborhood of Ditmas Park in Brooklyn. With his wife Elinor Mathews, Walter Read raised his family of two children, daughter Viola and son Lloyd, at their home at 745 Rugby Road.

Social life was pleasant for the Reads. They enjoyed attendance at the Wells Memorial Presbyterian Church, Argyle and Glenwood Roads. Walter Read kept an art sketchbook, while Mrs. Read was a photographer. During the twenties, son Lloyd C. Read attended college at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in upstate New York, from where he corresponded to his parents. In 1926, the family took an automobile trip to the West, visiting places such as Yellowstone National Park.
Scope and Content Note

The Read Family Papers consists mainly of family correspondence and memorabilia dating from 1875 to 1945. The majority of the collection relates to the time period when the Read family moved to their residence at 745 Rugby Road in Flatbush, Brooklyn in 1905.

The collection is arranged into two Sub-Groups: I. Correspondence and II. Family Memorabilia and Photographs.

Special materials include: Walter Read's naturalization certificate (1894) and art sketch book, plus family correspondence, family neighborhood photographs, a travel diary from 1926 trip to the West, and the correspondence of Lloyd C. Read.
SUB-GROUP I: CORRESPONDENCE

Series 1: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1924-1932

Correspondence in Series 1 is between Lloyd Read and his parents, Walter and Elinor Read, as well as with his sister Viola. Letters are arranged chronologically and relate to Lloyd's college life and studies at RPI in Rensselaer, New York.

In his letters, Lloyd discusses classes, friends, job hunts, the weather, and also reflects on his thoughts and feelings.

"I just received the laundry and mother's letter. Regarding the cottage I again wish to stress the fact that I want be able to go for a dip in the ocean [not the bay]. I do not mind commuting by boat if I could get that swim in the ocean every night. The bay is N.G. I might just as well commute from Brooklyn to Coney for a swim."
- Letter to Walter Read: May 8, 1927

During his first two years in college, Lloyd shared a room in dorms of the Young Men's Christian Association in Troy, New York. But in February 1927, Lloyd received a letter announcing a rent increase.

"Your rent for room 408 which you now occupy will be $3.50 per week."
- Letter from YMCA: February 18, 1927

This correspondence includes both typed and handwritten letters.

Series 2: Letters of Walter George Read, 1875, 1890

This second series of correspondence consists of two handwritten letters. The earlier letter dates from June 14, 1875 and was written to Mr. Walter G. Read. The other letter dates from Sept. 9, 1890.

Series 3: Letters and Travel Journals of the Far West Relatives, "Bert & George," July 26, 1926

Series 3 consists of letters and travel journals from the Read family trip to the Far West. The trip began in Montclair, New Jersey in the summer of 1926. It included stops in San Diego, California, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Dayton, Ohio.

A sampling from a travel journal reads as follows:

"We spent a number of hours at Santa Fe today. This is a very quaint city with its combination of Spanish, Mexican and Indian Pueblo architecture. There is a very attractive hotel and most of the business buildings are built in
this style. We spent some time in the state museum. We passed many more Indian villages and hilly country with cedars. At Las Vegas we slept in our car and it developed into a very cold night with some rain."
- September 24, 1926, Albuquerque to Las Vegas, 139 miles

Series 4: Miscellaneous Letters of Friends and Relatives, 1889-1948

Over 50 years of correspondence between the Reads and their family and friends are located in this series. There are six different letters, one of them a notary public's affidavit on Elinor and Viola Read's citizenship, certifying that "they were both born in Brooklyn." [July 21, 1948]

Series 5: Letters to Helene Harvitt, Editor of The French Review

Correspondence in Series 5 is the newest in the collection, dating from 1937 to 1962. These are letters to the editor of The French Review, Helene Harvitt, with most letters written in French.

SUB-GROUP II: FAMILY MEMORABILIA AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Series 6: Memorabilia

Series 6 consists of personal memorabilia from the Read household. Among these are Walter G. Read's sketch books, a 1905 tax receipt for the 745 Rugby Road home, a 1926 "new calendar of desserts," and Mr. Read's 1894 naturalization certificate.

One item of a touching nature is Clement Light Read's "Breathings on a Sickbed," 1876. The little booklet consists of poems written by 16 year old Clement while on his deathbed. With titles like "Waiting" and "Loving Jesus," some titles being verses from the New Testament, they reflect the young lad's strong Christian faith. In one of his final poems, dedicated to his mother, he writes:

"I will always love my mother
Till up to heaven above,
I'll be watching for her coming
Where everything is love."
- excerpt from "Filial Love"

Series 7: Photographs

Photographs in Series 7 mainly show life at 745 Rugby Road in Flatbush, Brooklyn, at the turn of the century. There are pictures of family and friends. A couple of pictures, dated 1905, show Mrs. Read with baby Lloyd outside their home. There are also photographs from the neighborhood, the 1926 Read family trip to the West, glass plate negatives of a fraternal organization and Brooklyn row houses.
Container List

BOX 1
SUB-GROUP I
CORRESPONDENCE

Series 1: Letters of Lloyd C. Read 1924-1932
Folder 1: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1924
Folder 2: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1925
Folder 3: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1926
Folder 4: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1927
Folder 5: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1928
Folder 6: Letters of Lloyd C. Read, 1929-1932

Series 2: Letters of Walter George Read 1875, 1894
Folder 7: Letters of Walter George Read 1875, 1894

Series 3: Letters and Travel Journals 1926
Folder 8: Travel Log of Bert & George July 29, 1926
Folder 9: Travel Log of Bert & George August 21, 1926
Folder 10: Letter and Travel Log of Bert & George September 17, 1926

Series 4: Miscellaneous Letters of Friends and Family, 1889-1948
Folder 11: Miscellaneous Letters of Friends and Family

Folder 12: Letters to Helene Harvitt

BOX 2
SUB-GROUP II
FAMILY MEMORABILIA & PHOTOGRAPHS

Series 6: Memorabilia & Photographs
Envelope: Fenimore Street Church, Sunday Program Palm Sunday, March 24, 1918
Envelope: Hiller, Elizabeth O., New Calendar of Desserts, circa 1926
Envelope: Billheads and 1905 Tax Receipt for 745 Rugby Road, Brooklyn, New York
Envelope: Scrapbook, 1920's missing
Envelope: Read, Clement Light, Breathings On Sickbed, 1876
Envelope: Read, Walter George Sketchbook, circa 1900
Envelope: Read, Walter George Sketchbook "Sketches from Nature", 1897
Envelope: Walter George Read’s Certificate of Naturalization, 1894
Envelope: Wedding Album

**Series 7: Photographs**

Folder 1: Photographs, W.G. Read home, Bayonne, New Jersey
Folder 2: Photographs, W.G. Read home, 234 Adams Street, c. 1894-1902
Folder 3: Photographs by Elinor M. Read; Brooklyn Scenes, at Home, 745 Rugby Road
Folder 4: Photographs by Elinor M. Read; Family Members
Folder 5: Photographs by Elinor M. Read; Vacation Photos, 1926
Folder 6: (2) Envelopes: Photographs [Glass Plate Negative], Fraternal Organizations;
   (1) Envelope: Photographs [Glass Plate Negative]; Row of Buildings, Brooklyn (?)
Folder 7: Unidentified Photographs (2)
Photographs

Read Family home, 745 Rugby Road, Brooklyn NY, 1904

Dutch Costume Party, Read home, 745 Rugby Road, Brooklyn, Christmas 1904

Mrs Walter Read with her son Lloyd C. Read, on back lawn of 745 Rugby Road, Brooklyn, 1905
Mrs Samuel B. Matthews (Mrs Read's mother), in Prospect Park, 1899 [cyanotype process]

Mr & Mrs Walter Read and Family at home, 234 Adams St, Brooklyn, Christmas 1896

Dutch Costume Party, Read home, 745 Rugby Road, Brooklyn, Christmas 1904

Mrs Walter Read with her son Lloyd C. Read, on back lawn of 745 Rugby Road, Brooklyn, 1905
Lloyd C. Read, Graduation, 1928

Pan American Exposition, photo taken by Elinor Matthews (Read)

Updated 6/25/14