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University of Memphis Libraries
Preservation and Special Collections Department

126 Ned R. McWherter Library
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Phone: (901) 678 - 2210
E-mail: lib_sc@memphis.edu

Luther Colby Morse letters

Title: Luther Colby Morse letters
Collection No: MSS.400
Creator: Luther Colby Morse (1835-1917)
Extent: 0.25 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1872-1873 and undated

Abstract: The collection is composed of six letters written by Luther Colby Morse to Catherine (Kate) V. Page in North Haverhill, New Hampshire. Three of the letters were written from Humboldt, Tennessee, one was written from Jackson, Tennessee, and one while in Haverhill. The letters were written during the Reconstruction period and contain comments on everyday life in Tennessee.

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Publication date: May 2014

Biographical information

Luther Colby Morse, the son of Daniel Morse (1804-1870), farmer and storekeeper, and his first wife, Lavinia Colby Morse (1803-1838), was born in North Haverhill, Grafton County, New Hampshire, on November 24, 1835. He studied law at Dartmouth College and was admitted to the bar of Grafton County in 1863. From 1861 to 1871 he was registrar of probate for Grafton County and then moved to Humboldt, Tennessee, and was engaged in the cotton pressing business. From 1873 to 1879 he was working in mining in Joplin, Missouri, and later continued in mining and other work further west. He died at Barnwell, California, on January 22, 1917.

Scope and contents

The collection is composed of six letters written by Luther Colby Morse to Catherine (Kate) V. Page in North Haverhill, New Hampshire. Three of the letters were written from Humboldt, Tennessee, one was written from Jackson, Tennessee, and one while in Haverhill. The letters were written during the Reconstruction Period and contain comments on everyday life in Tennessee.

Subject terms

NAMES:

Morse, Luther Colby, 1835-1917.

Page, Catherine V.

Inventory

Folder 1

1. Morse, Humboldt, Tenn., to Catherine Page, North Haverhill, N.H., 1872 February 24.
“...I have made a little trip to central Mississippi and business led me into the creme a la creme of Southern aristocracy, and I must allow that hospitality could go no further than theirs. They have the style without their former extravagance... The girls are as pretty as ever, their diamonds the same, but the war rather demoralized their wardrobe,...there is an apparent lack, which some rich husband can supply, and that sort of cattle is scarce,...I find (not with standing the money I used to pay, and rum I used to give in the Black Republican cause) that niggers is niggers - we have nine, as good as any I suppose, but you cant think how much a good licking would do some of them....”

2. Morse, Humboldt, Tenn., to Catherine (Kate) V. Page, North Haverhill, N.H., 1873 February 19.

“I thought we should get away from this place with no regrets, but today I saw a handsome girl just moved in, and our eight niggers cry & take on like a pack of dirty trousers on children when some good homely old schoolmarm tells them she has licked ‘em for the last time and our engineer felt so bad he has been drunk a week. The girl plagues me, the darkies get my old clothes, and I’ll have my best friend put in what we call the calaboose if he don’t let up on his rum.”

3. Morse, Humboldt, Tenn., to Kate V. Page, Haverhill, N.H., 187? April 6.

“And speaking of dipping, you must know my dear unsophisticated girl that your sisters way down here do the tobacco question thusly - not with elevated heels in easy chairs, with tiny cigarettes, but with sticks made of the gum tree, and about the size of this pencil, and sharpened like it, and moreover chawed at the end, then plunged into snuff, and the snuffy end stuck right in their mouthses, do fair lasses in gay apparel go gushing round with all the elation which God visits on a cheap boy who smokes his first cigar in academic grandeur, before his board bill falls due....Speaking of sisters, Steve has gone to a darkey meeting, and I expect he will be singing African psalms for three days.”

4. Morse, Humboldt, Tenn., to Catherine Page, 187? July 21.

Refers to cotton compress business.

5. Morse, Jackson, Tenn., to Catherine Page, 187? September 7.

“You want to know something about politics I suppose, my information is summed in a remark of a rebel friend here, thus Horace Greeley! G-d d-m him! he will be beaten world without end....Jackson is a very pretty town of about 6,000 inhabitants, half black.”

6. Morse & Jane, Haverhill, N.H., to Kate Page, undated.

Refers to Kate’s picture.