K0202
Meredith Tarlton Moore (1827-1911) Interviews
1906-1908
Five folders

Notes and transcript reports from interviews with Meredith Tarlton Moore, a soldier in the Mexican War and a trader on the California Trail.

BIOGRAPHY:

Meredith Tarlton Moore was born the son of Samuel Turner Moore and Emily Tarlton Moore at Ham’s Prairie, Callaway County, Missouri, on May 25, 1827. Because his mother died at his birth, he was taken to Kentucky to his grandmother, Mrs. Mary Briscoe Tarlton, widow of Jeremiah Tarlton. He returned to Missouri with his grandmother in 1839 to live with his uncle, Meredith Tarlton, near Cedar City, Callaway County.

At the beginning of the Mexican War, Moore enlisted in Company F, First Regiment under Alexander Doniphan and served until discharged in New Orleans. Moore and his friends participated in a number of the important battles of the war.

In 1849, Moore made his first trip to California. He had heard about the land from a Mexican he had met during the war and determined to take a saw mill to California and sell it. He purchased his mill in St. Louis and shipped it to Jefferson City where it was loaded into a wagon especially built for the journey at the State Penitentiary. Traveling with his brother, John Hendley Moore, among others, Moore moved his wagon by river and overland to Nebraska City and then across the plains to Fort Kearney, where he was persuaded to sell his mill to the officers of the Fort who used it to construct new buildings. He and his brother continued on the Sacramento, suffering considerable hardships. Moore returned home via Panama, arriving in 1852. Moore made at least one more trip to California in the 1850s.

Meredith Moore married Martha Hannah Ramsay, granddaughter of General Jonathan Ramsay, on June 26, 1856 at Jefferson City, Missouri. To this union
were born seven children of whom three survived: Leulah Moore Carlton, William Alfred and Hendley Hobbs Moore. Upon the death of his first wife, Moore married her sister, Eliza Ramsay. Moore farmed in Callaway County and served as collector of that county from 1871 to 1875. In 1882, he moved to Jefferson City and operated a ferry on the Missouri River about fifteen years. At the time of the interviews (1906-1908) he was living in Cedar City, Missouri, across the Missouri River from Jefferson City. He died September 9, 1911.

PROVENANCE:

These letters were part of a transfer from the General Library of the University of Missouri-Kansas City as accession KA0054 on October 24, 1980. They are assumed to have been collected by Robert M. Snyder, Jr. and sold to the University in the mid-1940’s.

PREFERRED CITATION:

Specific item; folder number; Meredith Tarlton Moore (1827-1911) Interviews (K0202); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

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DESCRIPTION:

The interviews are typescript reports of information provided to William E. Connelley, noted Kansas historian, by Meredith Tarlton Moore about his experiences and travels during the Mexican War and on two trips to California. In addition to these reports is a letter written to Connelley by Moore in January 1908. Moore relates a great deal of information about the appearance of the country, the costs of goods and services, and the personalities of the people with whom he dealt.
The reports appear to be Connelley’s attempt to boil down the wealth of information provided him by Moore. Each of the reports has a ‘clean’ copy and a duplicate which has penciled annotations and corrections. Some of these changes were clearly made by Connelley, while others suggest that Moore reviewed and modified the manuscripts. It is evident from the materials that there was a long standing relationship between the two men and that the documents here represent only a small portion of their exchange.

INVENTORY:

Folder 1. “Interview with Meredith Tarlton Moore at his House in Cedar City, Callaway County, Missouri, May 12, 13, 14, 1906.”
This paper was apparently prepared by Connelley from information gained from Moore about his experiences during the Mexican War.

Folder 2. “Notes from Moore’s interview”
Included are short notes on a variety of subjects and individuals including hunting and game in Missouri and on the plains, Kit Carson, and Alexander Doniphan.

Folder 3. “Moore and California”
This paper is a detailed account of Moore’s first trip to California in 1849.

Folder 4. “Moore’s second trip to California”
A very short paper which mainly tells the story of a woman and her children who Moore found abandoned on the trail west.

Folder 5. Letter from Moore to Connelley, January 9, 1908
This letter provides Moore’s first person account of his first trip to California.