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# Northcott Collection (MSS 40)

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### Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Northcott Collection (MSS 40)" (2008). *MSS Finding Aids*. Paper 352.  
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Manuscripts  
Special Collections Library  
Department of Library Special Collections  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, KY

***Descriptive Inventory***

**MSS 40 NORTHCOTT Family Collection**

3 boxes. 21 folders. 463 items. 1851-1918. Originals.

1970.45.1

***BIOGRAPHY***

Henry Clay Northcott, 1822-1918, fourth son of Martha (Odell), 1781-1861, and minister Benjamin Northcott, 1770-1854, was born near Hillsboro in Fleming County, Kentucky. He was educated locally and worked on his father's farm. While teaching in the area schools, he married Hannah Amanda Lewis, 1826-1917, on March 20, 1845. Like his father, Henry was active in the Methodist Church, and he received his license to preach in 1847. His early preaching assignments were: Owingsville Circuit, 1850; Sharpsburg, 1852 and 1854-1855; Maysville, 1853; Winchester, 1856-1857; Perryville, 1858-1859; Mt. Sterling, 1860-1861; Flemingsburg, 1862-1863; and Shelbyville, 1864. Northcott always had opposed slavery and was known as a strong temperance preacher. In September of 1865, he withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. He then served the Danville-Harrodsburg Circuit from October 1865 to February 1866 and ministered to the Shelbyville congregation from 1866 to 1869.

In 1870 Henry, Hannah and their surviving children: Martha Catherine "Kate", 1850-1889; Henry Bascom, 1853-1925; Annie Lou "Loulie", 1861-1933; and Maggie, 1864-1895; moved to Maysville, Kentucky. They remained there until 1887 while Northcott continued to serve on the following circuits: Germantown, 1869-1872; Maysville, 1872-1876; Tollesboro and Sardis, 1877; Murphysville, 1878; Foster, 1879; Germantown, 1880-1881; Vanceburg, 1882-1883; and Augusta, 1884-1885. While Northcott was assigned to the Grant Circuit from 1886 to 1889, the family moved to Fairmount in Cincinnati and then to the farm near Newport, Kentucky, where the elder Northcotts remained the rest of their lives. Due to his advanced age, Northcott retired from the ministry, and he and Hannah made their living for many years by selling farm produce.

Kate, the Northcott's oldest daughter, attended the Science Hill Academy in Shelbyville from 1866 to 1868, and later graduated from the Cincinnati Wesleyan College. She continued to teach music following her marriage in 1875 to lawyer Bruce F. Thomas, 1853?-1882, of Vanceburg, Kentucky. They had two children: George Morgan, b.1876, and Loulie Northcott, 1878-1886. Kate died of cancer in 1889, seven years after her husband's death.

The Northcotts' youngest daughter, Maggie, married John Henry Clagett, 1856-1938, who had a long tenure as an English professor at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. They were the parents of three children: William Argo, 1885-1978; Harry Northcott, b.1888; and Kate, 1892-1983, who married C. A. Duncan. After Maggie's death, John Henry Clagett, an English professor for many years at Western Kentucky University, married Hattie (Strange) Cook in 1898, and they had one daughter, Marjorie, 1900-2000.

### Bibliographical Notes

The Collection.

H. C. Northcott. *Sixty Years in the Methodist Ministry, and Biography of Benjamin Northcott.*

James P. Cornette. *John Henry Clagett.*

### THE COLLECTION

The bulk of this collection consists of fifty-three diaries, 1859-1918, kept by northern Kentucky Methodist Circuit preacher and farmer, Henry Clay Northcott; and family correspondence, 1870-1883, chiefly of his daughter Kate and her husband, attorney Bruce F. Thomas. Additional religious writings of Northcott; a diary, 1866-1867, kept by sixteen-year-old Kate; family genealogical data; and photographs are included.

The collection is divided into two series. Series I is comprised of the Henry Clay Northcott papers, which include the diaries that give a valuable day-by-day account of a circuit preacher's work; his struggle to rear his family on a limited budget; and discussion of various modes of travel, including horseback, carriages, and carts, buses, railroads, streetcars, and steamboats. Also, religion in Kentucky, slavery, temperance, family matters, and farming are topics addressed in Northcott's diaries. The journals pertain to events occurring in the Kentucky counties of Boone, Boyle, Bracken, Campbell, Fleming, Grant, Lewis, Mason, Mercer, Montgomery, Pendleton, Robertson, and Shelby. Other materials include the writings *An Early History of Hillsboro* and *The Methodist Episcopal Church in the South*; several clippings about district meetings, reports, and conferences; family photographs; and genealogical data.

Series II is composed of the correspondence of Kate N. Thomas and her husband, Bruce F. Thomas. It contains information on Bruce's attendance at Harvard Law School, 1873-1874; Kate's work as a music teacher; the struggles of a young lawyer in Vanceburg, Kentucky; steamboat travel and postal service on the Ohio River; and comments and comparisons of operas, music, and theater in Boston and Cincinnati. Additionally, Kate Northcott's journal details a stagecoach journey taken from Shelbyville to Louisville in 1866 and reveals the treatment accorded the Northcotts by Southern sympathizers when the family returned to Shelbyville after the Civil War.

**SHELF LIST**

<b>SERIES I</b>	<b>HENRY Clay Northcott - Papers</b>	<b>1851-1918</b>	
<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Henry Clay Northcott - Diaries</b>	<b>1859-1904</b>	<b>40 items</b>
#1	Perryville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1859	
#2	Mt. Sterling	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1860	
#3	Mt. Sterling	Jan. 6- Dec. 31, 1861	
#4	Flemingsburg	Jan. 7- Dec. 31, 1862	
#5	Shelbyville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1864	
#6	Danville and Harrodsburg	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1865	
#7	Shelbyville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1866	
#8	Shelbyville	Apr.-Aug. 1867	
#9	Shelbyville	Nov. 1867-Nov. 1868	
#10	Shelbyville and Germantown	Jan. 1, 1869- Dec. 31, 1870	
#11	Maysville and Germantown	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1871	
#12	Maysville and Germantown	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1872	
#13	Maysville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1873	
#14	Maysville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1874	
#15	Maysville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1875	

#16	Maysville and Tollesboro	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1876
#17	Maysville, Tollesboro and Sardis	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1877
#18	Maysville, Sardis and Murphysville	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1878
#19	Maysville and Foster	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1879
#20	Maysville, Foster and Germantown	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1880
#21	Maysville and Germantown	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1881
#22	Maysville and Vanceburg	Jan. 1, 1882- Jan. 2, 1883
#23	Maysville and Vanceburg	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1883
#24	Maysville, Vanceburg and Augusta	Jan. 1, 1884- Feb. 12, 1885
#25	Maysville and Augusta	Feb. 13- Dec. 31, 1885
#26	Maysville and Grant	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1886
#27	Cincinnati, Newport and Grant County	Jan. 1, 1887- Jan. 9, 1888
#28	Newport and Grant County	Jan. 10, 1888- Feb. 11, 1889
#29	Newport, Foster and Grant County	Mar. 12, 1889- Mar. 24, 1890
#30	Newport	Feb. 5, 1892- Feb. 9, 1893
#31	Newport	Feb. 11- Dec. 31, 1895

	#32	Newport	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1896	
	#33	Newport	Jan. 1, 1897- Jan. 15, 1898	
	#34	Newport	Mar. 3, 1898- Mar. 1, 1899	
	#35	Newport	Mar. 1, 1899- Jan. 6, 1900	
	#36	Newport	Jan. 6, 1900- Jan. 7, 1901	
	#37	Newport	Jan. 7, 1901- Jan. 15, 1902	
	#38	Newport	Jan. 19- Dec. 31, 1902	
	#39	Newport	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1903	
	#40	Newport	Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 1904	
<b>BOX 2</b>	<b>Henry Clay Northcott - Diaries and Papers</b>		<b>1851-1918</b>	<b>58 items</b>
	#1	Newport	Jan. 1- Jan. 20, 1905	
	#2	Newport	Jan. 1, 1905- Jan. 4, 1906	
	#3	Newport	Jan. 1, 1906- Mar. 2, 1908	
	#4	Newport	Mar. 1- Dec. 31, 1908	
	#5	Newport	Jan. 1, 1909- Jan. 6, 1911	

	#6	Newport	Jan. 1, 1911- Jan. 10, 1912	
	#7	Newport	Jan. 1, 1912- Jan. 21, 1913	
	#8	Newport	Jan. 22- Dec. 31, 1913	
	#9	Newport	Jan. 1, 1914- Feb. 28, 1915	
	#10	Newport	Mar. 1, 1915- Apr. 19, 1916	
	#11	Newport	May 1, 1916- Apr. 9, 1917	
	#12	Newport	Apr. 10, 1917- Mar. 31, 1918	
	#13	Newport	Apr. 1- Oct. 29, 1918	
Folder 1		<i>Early History of Hillsboro</i> - H. C. Northcott's manuscript (4 parts)	1917	1 item; 92p.
Folder 2		<i>An Early History of Hillsboro and Vicinity</i> - H. C. Northcott (typescript)	1917	1 item; 43p.
Folder 3		<i>The Methodist Episcopal Church in the South</i> - H. C. Northcott (two manuscript copies, 65p. and two partial manuscript items, 19p.)	n.d.	4 items
Folder 4		<i>Report to Annual Conference on Mayfield District</i> - Manuscript	1875	1 item; 7p.
Folder 5		Printed Methodist items chiefly by H. C. Northcott, 7 p. - <i>Sixty Years in the Methodist Ministry</i> (photocopy)	n.d.	13 items
Folder 6		H. C. Northcott - License to preach and miscellaneous receipts	1851; 1855; 1882; 1887; 1891	6 items
Folder 7		Northcott family - Photographs Benjamin, Martha (Odell) and Henry Clay	n.d.	9 items

	Northcott; Marshall Paul Lewis; Benjamin Northcott farmhouse; Kate (Northcott) Thomas and Bruce F. Thomas		
Folder 8	Northcott family - Genealogical data three biographical sketches by Kate (Clagett Duncan; Martha (Odell) Northcott, 3p.; Henry Clay Northcott 6p.; Kate (Northcott) Thomas and Bruce F. Thomas, 2p.; Northcott bible records, (2), 6p.; DAR application, 2p.; cemetery inscriptions (2), 1p.; Benjamin Northcott will (typescript); clipping of B. F. Northcott, Missouri; photocopy of marriage certificate of Kate Northcott and Bruce F. Thomas (original in C1-D2,F2)	n.d.; Oct. 28,1875	9 items
Folder 9	Northcott family - Rough genealogical chart	n.d.	1 item
<b>SERIES II</b>	<b>Northcott-Thomas Correspondence and Journal</b>	<b>1866-1883</b>	<b>361 items</b>
<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Northcott-Thomas correspondence</b>	<b>1866-1883</b>	<b>361 items</b>
Folder 1	Kate Northcott - Letters to Bruce Thomas	1873	23 items
Folder 2	Kate Northcott - Letters to Bruce Thomas	1874-1875	73 items
Folder 3	Bruce Thomas - Letters to Kate Northcott	1873	27 items
Folder 4	Bruce Thomas - Letters to Kate Northcott and Harvard Law School List of Examinations (1 item)	Jan.-June 1874	43 items
Folder 5	Bruce Thomas - Letters to Kate Northcott	July-Dec. 1874	39 items
Folder 6	Bruce Thomas - Letters to Kate Northcott	1875	32 items
Folder 7	Kate N. Thomas - Letters to Bruce Thomas	1876-1881	9 items
Folder 8	Bruce Thomas - Letters to Kate N. Thomas	1876-1881	16 items
Folder 9	Kate (Northcott) Thomas - Incoming letters	1870-1883	80 items
Folder 10	Bruce F. Thomas - Incoming letters	1870-1881	15 items



Folder 11	Letters - Partial and undated	n.d.	3 items
Folder 12	Kate Northcott - Journal	1866-1867	1 item; 67p.

### **CATALOG CARD**

MSS                   NORTHCOTT Family Collection                   1851-1918  
40

Fifty-three diaries (1859-1918) and other writings of Henry Clay Northcott, 1822-1918, Methodist circuit preacher and farmer of northern Kentucky; correspondence (1870-1883) of his daughter, music teacher Kate N. Thomas, 1850-1889; and her husband, Bruce F. Thomas, 1853?-1882, lawyer of Vanceburg, Kentucky.  
3 boxes. 21 folders. 463 items. Originals.  
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### **SUJECT ANALYTICS**

Augusta           I,B1,F24-25  
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Campbell County   I,B1,F27-40; B2,F1-13  
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Clergy – Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
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Darrow, Bell       II,B1,F9  
DeCamp, Hi        II,B1,F9  
DeCamp, William H., 1823-1898       II,B1,F9  
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Diaries – Northcott, Kate, 1866-1867       II,B1,F12  
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Foster            I,B1,F19-20,29

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 Harvard University – Law School – Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1873-1874 II,B1,F3-4  
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 Johnston, Alice II,B1,F9  
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 Maysville I,B1,F11-26; II  
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 Methodist Episcopal Church – Kentucky Conference  
 Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
 Montgomery County  
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 Mt. Sterling I,B1,F2-3  
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 Northcott, Benjamin, 1770-1854  
 Northcott, Benjamin, 1770-1854 – Photos I,B2,F7  
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 Northcott, Henry Bascom, 1853-1925  
 Northcott, Henry Clay, 1822-1918  
 Northcott, Henry Clay, 1822-1918 – Photos I,B2,F7  
 Northcott, Martha (Odell), 1781-1861  
 Northcott, Martha (Odell), 1781-1861 – Photos I,B2,F7  
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Jeffrey 05/02/2012