

# Lillie Ruth White Laird Collection of Mary L. Johnson Letters, 1884-1887:

## A Guide

### Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Lillie Ruth White Laird (1913-1987)

**Title:** Lillie Ruth White Laird Collection of Mary L. Johnson Letters, 1884-1887

**Inclusive Dates:** 1884-1941

**Abstract:** Transcriptions of letters from 1884 to 1887 written from Mary L. Johnson to her ex-husband John Tarleton as well as three original letters comprise the bulk of the collection. Other items include the transcription of a letter dated September 20, 1885 from H.C.A. Crawford to "Dear Friend" and correspondence between Laird and J. Thomas Davis about the donation of the material.

**Identification:** AR41

**Extent:** 4 folders

**Shelf location:** Archivist's Office

**Language(s):** Collection is entirely in English.

**Repository:** Tarleton State University, Dick Smith Library, Archives and Special Collections, Stephenville, Texas

### Biographical Note

Lillie Ruth White Laird was born on October 2, 1913 to Thomas Olon White (1892-1967) and Emma Ann Bradley (1890-1970) in Santo, Palo Pinto County, Texas. She married John Vester "J.V." Laird (1909-1976) on May 26, 1934. They had two sons.

J.V. Laird was a professor of horticulture at John Tarleton Agricultural College from 1941-1974. He also served as Head of the Agriculture Department during that time. In the mid-1960s Laird developed the Tarleton iris, which has three purple falls (the bottom petals) and three white standards (the top petals). Tarleton State University colors are purple and white. When he retired in 1974, Laird was designated as Professor Emeritus of Agriculture by the Texas A&M University System.

J.V. died in 1976 and Lillie died in 1987. They are buried in Tarleton Cemetery in Santo, Palo Pinto County, Texas.

### **Sources:**

The J-TAC (Stephenville, Tex.), Vol. 35, No. 14, Ed. 1 Tuesday, January 18, 1955, newspaper, January 18, 1955; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth140560/m1/2/>: accessed March 26, 2019), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Tarleton State University.

The J-TAC (Stephenville, Tex.), Vol. 54, No. 2, Ed. 1 Wednesday, September 12, 1973, newspaper, September 12, 1973; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth141270/m1/3/?q=%22J.V.%20Laird%22>: accessed March 26, 2019), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Tarleton State University.

Tarleton State University. J-TAC, 1976, periodical, 1976; Stephenville, Texas.  
(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth1040204/m1/5/?q=%22J.V.%20Laird%22>: accessed March 26, 2019), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Tarleton State University.

"Texas Birth Certificates, 1903-1935," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XL99-XLW> : 9 March 2018), Lillie Ruth White, 02 Oct 1913; citing Santo, Palo Pinto, Texas, United States, certificate 35434, Texas Department of Health, Austin; FHL microfilm 4,144,549. Accessed March 29, 2019.

"Texas Deaths, 1890-1976," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K38Y-XKK> : 13 March 2018), John Vester Laird, 09 Feb 1976; citing certificate number 28067, State Registrar Office, Austin; FHL microfilm 2,243,931. Accessed March 29, 2019.

## **Scope and Contents**

Transcriptions of letters dated from 1884 to 1887 written from Mary L. Johnson to her ex-husband John Tarleton as well as three original letters comprise the bulk of the collection. Other items include the transcription of a letter dated September 20, 1885 from H.C.A. Crawford to "Dear Friend" and correspondence between Laird and J. Thomas Davis about the donation of the material. Laird transcribed the letters in 1941 and donated the transcriptions to the John Tarleton Agricultural College (now known as Tarleton State University). The Thomas Olon White family owned the original letters and later donated them to the library.

## **Organization**

The Lillie Ruth White Laird Collection of Mary L. Johnson Letters, 1884-1887 is organized in 2 series:

Series I. Original letters

*Permission must be granted by the archivist in order to view the original letters.*

Series II. Transcriptions

## **Rights and Access**

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

### **Physical Access Restrictions**

As a preservation measure, researchers must use the transcriptions rather than the original letters. Permission must be granted by the archivist in order to view the original letters.

### **Technical Access Restrictions**

None.

## **Publication Rights**

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## **Reproduction Note**

Reproductions must be made from surrogates (microfilm, digital scan, photocopy, transcription of the original held by Archives/Special Collections, Dick Smith Library, Tarleton State University), when available. Only archives staff may photocopy collection documents.

## **Index Terms**

### **Persons**

Johnson, Mary Louisa Dunnica, 1829-  
Tarleton, John, ca. 1808-1895

### **Organizations**

John Tarleton Agricultural College

### **Subjects**

American letters.  
Correspondence.  
Correspondence – Mary Louisa Dunnica Johnson.  
Flood damage – Texas – Waco – History – 19<sup>th</sup> Century.  
Floods.

### **Places**

Waco (Tex.)

## **Administrative Information**

### **Provenance**

Donated to the Dick Smith Library at Tarleton State University by Lillie Ruth White Laird in 1941.

### **Preferred Citation**

[Title of file or item], Lillie Ruth White Laird Collection of Mary L. Johnson Letters, AR41, Box no., Folder [no.], Tarleton State University, Dick Smith Library, Archives and Special Collections, Stephenville, Texas.

### **Processing Information**

Finding aid prepared by Phyllis Kinnison, 2019.

### Note to the Researcher

Permission must be granted by the archivist in order to view the original letters.  
For more information, contact Librarian/Archivist Phyllis Kinnison at  
[pkinnison@tarleton.edu](mailto:pkinnison@tarleton.edu).

### Container List

<b>Stack Location</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder(s)</b>	<b>Series Title and Folder Contents (with dates)</b>
Archivist's Office	SC 1	12	Transcriptions: Transcriptions, 1941
		13	Original letters: Letter from Mary L. Johnson to John Tarleton, 4 November 1884
		14	Original letters: Letter from Mary L. Johnson to John Tarleton, 30 May 18[8]5
		15	Original letters: Letter from Mary L. Johnson to John Tarleton, 8 May 18[8]6