

Eleanor Lord Pray Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2012085750>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012200>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012
Revised 2021 August

Collection Summary

Title: Eleanor Lord Pray Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1894-1975

Bulk Dates: 1894-1930

ID No.: MSS85750

Creator: Pray, Eleanor Lord, 1868-1954

Extent: 3,800 items

Extent: 11 containers

Extent: 4.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English with Russian

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2012085750>

Summary: Member of a New England merchant family living in Vladivostok, Russia. Primarily letters written and received by Pray. Letters describe daily life, the city and its surroundings, and historic events.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Greener, Richard Theodore, 1844-1922.

Pray family--Correspondence..

Pray family.

Pray, Dorothy, 1906-2006--Correspondence.

Pray, Eleanor Lord, 1868-1954.

Pray, Frederick S., -1923--Correspondence.

Silver, Patricia D.

Smith, Charles, -1898.

Smith, Sarah E.

Smith, Sarah E.--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Red Cross. Vladivostok Chapter.

Legie česká.

Shanghai American School.

Subjects

Americans--China--Shanghai.

Americans--Russia--Vladivostok.

Boarding schools--China--Shanghai.

Censorship--Soviet Union.

Commercial agents--Russia--Vladivostok.

General stores--Russia--Vladivostok.

Germans--Russia--Vladivostok.

Japanese--Russia--Vladivostok.

Noncitizens--Russia--Vladivostok.

Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905.

World War, 1914-1918--Russia--Vladivostok.

World War, 1914-1918.

Places

Czechoslovakia--Armed Forces--Russia--Vladivostok.

Dal'nevostochnai̇a Respublika--History.

Harbin (China)--Description and travel.
Japan--Description and travel.
Russia--History--Revolution, 1905-1907.
Shanghai (China)--Description and travel.
Shanghai (China)--Social life and customs.
Siberia (Russia)--Description and travel.
Siberia (Russia)--History--20th century.
Siberia (Russia)--History--Revolution, 1917-1921.
Siberia (Russia)--Politics and government--20th century.
Soviet Union--History--Allied intervention, 1918-1920.
Soviet Union--History--Revolution, 1917-1921.
Vladivostok (Russia)--Commerce.
Vladivostok (Russia)--Description and travel.
Vladivostok (Russia)--History.
Vladivostok (Russia)--Social life and customs.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Eleanor Lord Pray, American living in Vladivostok, Russia, were given to the Library of Congress by Patricia D. Silver in 2012. Two companion books were donated to the Library by Birgitta Ingemanson in 2012. Items inadvertently separated from the 2012 donation were delivered to the Library in 2021 and added to the papers.

Processing History

The papers of Eleanor Lord Pray was processed by Karen Linn Femia in 2012. An addition was processed and the finding aid revised by Karen Linn Femia in 2021.

Additional Guides

The papers of Eleanor Pray have been described and many of the letters partially transcribed in *Eleanor Lord Pray, Selected Letters, 1894-1906*, edited by Birgitta Ingemanson (Vladivostok: The Rubezh Press of the Pacific, 2012).

Transfers

The Vladivostok Album by Eleanor L. Pray, edited by Birgitta Ingemanson (Vladivostok: The Rubezh Press of the Pacific, 2012) has been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where it is identified as part of these papers.

Other Repositories

The Eleanor Pray Collection of photographs from Vladivostok is in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress and is available online. Other Eleanor Lord Pray material was donated to the Arseniev Museum, Vladivostok, Russia.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Eleanor Lord Pray is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Eleanor Lord Pray are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Eleanor Lord Pray Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1868, Nov. 28	Born, Berwick, Maine
1894	Married Frederick ("Ted") Pray and moves with him to Vladivostok, Russia, to work in Pray's brother-in-law's store, "The American Store"
1898	Death of Charles Smith, Pray's brother-in-law. Sarah Smith becomes sole owner of the American Store; her brother, Frederick Pray, becomes manager of the store
1906	Birth of daughter, Dorothy Pray
1916-1924	Dorothy attends the American School in Shanghai, Shanghai, China. Frederick Pray's sister Sarah Smith leaves Vladivostok, moves to Shanghai with Dorothy, and works at the school and remains in Shanghai after Dorothy graduates
1917-1923	Frederick Pray works at the U.S. consulate in Vladivostok, Russia, first as clerk, finally as a vice consul
1918	The American Store closes
1919-1924	Eleanor Pray works as volunteer and treasurer of the American Red Cross, Vladivostok chapter, Vladivostok, Russia
1923	Death of Frederick Pray
1923-1930	Eleanor Pray works as bookkeeper and translator at Kunst & Albers department store, Vladivostok, Russia
1930	Kunst & Albers closes, Eleanor Pray leaves Vladivostok, Russia, to join daughter Dorothy and sister-in-law Sarah Smith in Shanghai, China
1954, Feb.	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Eleanor ("Roxy") Lord Pray (1868-1954) span the years 1894-1975, with the bulk of the material dating from 1894 to 1930. The papers are in English with some Russian and are organized chronologically. The correspondence ends at 1930; all material after that date consists of drafts and partial and extrapolated transcripts, mostly created by her granddaughter, Patricia Silver. The collection is largely comprised of the correspondence of Eleanor Pray with her family back in New England, with her daughter Dorothy, and with her sister-in-law Sarah Smith after Sarah left Vladivostok, Russia, to live in Shanghai, China. Many of the letters are lengthy and in journal form. Pray's letters, in particular, are highly descriptive and detailed. Pray would often continue adding to a letter until a ship carrying mail left port.

When newlyweds Eleanor ("Roxy") and Frederick ("Ted" or "Fred") Pray arrived in Vladivostok in 1894, the city was only a little over thirty years old. By then the city, boasting the Golden Horn Bay, had already become the most important Russian commercial and military port on the Pacific. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad further cemented the role of Vladivostok in the Russian Far East. As such, Vladivostok became the home to a large international community of merchants, diplomats, and military personnel. This was the social world of the Prays who had come to Vladivostok to work at Frederick's brother-in-law, Charles Smith, and sister Sarah Smith's general store, "The American Store." Eleanor's early letters home describe social events with other expatriates (primarily Germans, Scandinavians, and Americans), the mixed

culture of the city (which still included large numbers of Koreans and Chinese as well as Russians), and she conveys her enthusiasm for the natural beauty of the area.

Over the course of Eleanor Pray's thirty-six years in Vladivostok, she witnessed a procession of major historical events, often literally from her front porch. Events with local consequences covered in her letters include: the Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 Japanese attack on Vladivostok, the 1905 uprising or first Russian Revolution, World War I, the forced removal of German citizens from Vladivostok during the war, the taking of Vladivostok by the Czechoslovak Legion in June/July 1918, the Russian Civil War, the Siberian Intervention of 1918-1920, the occupation of Vladivostok by the Japanese military 1918-1922, the Far Eastern Republic and the Provisional Priamur Governments of Siberia/Vladivostok, the return of the Bolsheviks in 1922, and life under Soviet rule during the 1920s until her departure for Shanghai in 1930.

Pray was a volunteer and served as treasurer for the Vladivostok chapter of the American Red Cross, 1919-1924. In this capacity, she was involved in efforts to aid war refugees and stray soldiers. There are several folders dedicated to the American Red Cross containing documents and activity reports. Many of her personal letters also chronicle her work with the Red Cross.

In October 1916, daughter Dorothy and sister-in-law Sarah Smith moved to Shanghai, where Dorothy was enrolled in the Shanghai American School until her graduation in 1924. Sarah Smith worked at the school and remained in Shanghai after Dorothy's graduation, eventually working in a private home. Letters from them describe their lives at the Shanghai American School and life in Shanghai. During the 1920s, after the Soviet takeover of Vladivostok, Eleanor Pray occasionally traveled to Shanghai to visit family and friends and also took trips to Japan and Harbin, China. While away, Pray's letters offer more detail about life at home, claiming that she dared not write these things in Vladivostok for fear of difficulties with Soviet censors who read her mail.

Also in the letters is Pray's reaction to the arrival of Richard Theodore Greener who served as the official United States Commercial Agent, 1898-1905, in Vladivostok. Greener was the first African American graduate of Harvard College and later served as the dean of the Howard University Law School.

In 2021, three letters that had inadvertently been separated from the original donation were brought to the Library to be reunited with the collection. These letters have been appended to the end of the papers as the 2021 Addition.

It should also be noted that, especially in the early letters, sometimes both Julian and Gregorian calendar dates are given, sometimes only one or the other. Pray, however, rarely used only Julian calendar dates. Gregorian dates are most common.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged chronologically and therein by topic or type of material followed by an addition.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	1894
BOX 1	Correspondence, Mar.-Dec. (5 folders)
BOX 1	Miscellany
BOX 1	1895
BOX 1	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (7 folders)
BOX 1	Russian newspapers
BOX 1	1896, correspondence and miscellany, Jan.-Sept.
BOX 1	1897, correspondence and miscellany, Jan.-Dec.
BOX 1	1898, correspondence
BOX 1	Jan.
BOX 2	Feb.-Dec. (4 folders)
BOX 2	1899
BOX 2	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (6 folders)
BOX 2	Miscellany
BOX 2	1900
BOX 2	Correspondence
BOX 2	Jan.-July (6 folders)
BOX 3	Aug.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 3	Photographs and card
BOX 3	1901
BOX 3	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (5 folders)
BOX 3	Miscellany
BOX 3	1902, correspondence (5 folders)
BOX 3	1903, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 3	1904
BOX 3	Correspondence
BOX 3	Jan.-Sept. (3 folders)
BOX 4	Sept.-Dec.
BOX 4	Miscellany, 1904, 1953, undated
BOX 4	1905, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (6 folders)
BOX 4	1906

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 4	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (4 folders)
BOX 4	Notebook
BOX 4	1907, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (6 folders)
BOX 5	1908, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 5	1909
BOX 5	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 5	Photograph
BOX 5	1910, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 5	1911, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 5	1912
BOX 5	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 5	Financial memorandum
BOX 5	1913, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 5	1914, correspondence, Feb.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 5	1915, correspondence, June-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 5	1916, correspondence
BOX 5	Jan.-Oct. (2 folders)
BOX 6	Nov.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 6	1917, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (9 folders)
BOX 6	1918
BOX 6	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (8 folders)
BOX 6	Miscellany
BOX 6	1919
BOX 6	Correspondence
BOX 6	Jan.-May
BOX 7	July-Dec.
BOX 7	Miscellany, 1919-1922
BOX 7	1920
BOX 7	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 7	Poem by Eleanor Lord Pray
BOX 7	1921
BOX 7	American Red Cross, Vladivostok chapter, Vladivostok, Russia

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 7	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (6 folders)
BOX 7	1922
BOX 7	American Red Cross, Vladivostok chapter, Vladivostok, Russia
BOX 7	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (4 folders)
BOX 7	Miscellany
BOX 8	1923
BOX 8	American Red Cross, Vladivostok chapter, Vladivostok, Russia
BOX 8	Condolence letters, death of Frederick Pray (2 folders)
BOX 8	Correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (5 folders)
BOX 8	Miscellany
BOX 8	1924, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 8	1925, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 8	1926, correspondence
BOX 8	Jan.-Aug. (2 folders)
BOX 9	Sep.-Dec. (2 folders)
BOX 9	1927, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (10 folders)
BOX 9	1928, correspondence
BOX 9	Jan.-May (3 folders)
BOX 10	June-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 10	1929, correspondence, Jan.-Dec. (8 folders)
BOX 10	1930, correspondence
BOX 10	Jan.-May (3 folders)
BOX 11	Jun.-Dec. (3 folders)
BOX 11	1975, Silver, Patricia D., "The Japanese Intervention in Siberia, 1918-1922," draft typescript
BOX 11	Undated
BOX 11	Miscellaneous draft material probably by Eleanor Lord Pray
BOX 11	Silver, Patricia D.
BOX 11	Miscellaneous drafts
BOX 11	Notes, extrapolations, and incomplete transcriptions of the letters of Eleanor Lord Pray (3 folders)
BOX 11	2021 Addition
BOX 11	Correspondence, 1895?, 1901, 1918