



# Guide to the John William Firor Papers, 1860-1986

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

John William Firor papers, 1860-1986

**Creator:**

Firor, John William, 1887-1956.

**Extent:**

2 Linear Feet  
circa 1,530 Items

**Physical Location:**

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

**Language:**

English

**Language:**

English.

**Collection ID:**

RL.00395

**Permalink:**

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/firor/>

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## Background

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**Scope and Content**

The papers of John William Firor span the years 1860-1985, but the bulk of the papers falls between 1900 and the 1950s. Included are correspondence, articles, a diary, postcards, printed material, clippings, notes, and pictures. This collection primarily consists of his personal and family correspondence, although there are papers relating to his work as a university professor, author, and farmer.

Firor began his career as a horticulturist prior to World War I and eventually broadened his interests to the field of southern agricultural economics, teaching at the University of Georgia. A major focus for his work was problems relating to Georgia agricultural crops, including especially pecans and peaches, but also watermelons, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, and apples. Particular interests in this

field included fertilizer tests, diseases, expansion and economics of the farming industry, the impact of the boll weevil, distribution of farm price information, and general farm problems. In addition, he was known for developing the idea of carlot marketing of poultry and livestock.

The single diary in the papers covers chiefly the latter part of Firor's career as a professor in the College of Agriculture at the University of Georgia, 1949-1952, with only intermittent entries for 1941-1948. He wrote about veterans, his farm, and his economic, agricultural, and political philosophy. Entries also discuss various farming topics, such as cost and prices, crops, planting, cattle, sales, and the effects of temperature and rainfall on crops.

The Correspondence Series comprises over one-half of the collection. Pre-World War I correspondence consists primarily of incoming letters. Family correspondents include Firor's mother, Anna Catherine Wisotskey Firor, and his brothers Guy W., George, and David F. Some of the letters concern J. William Firor's job searches. In his World War I letters from France, he reflected on the U.S. Army, the Armistice, the French people, and AEF (American Expeditionary Forces) University (1919). He wrote to his fiancée Mary Valentine Moss, a student at Simmons College in Boston, and to Guy and his wife Helen. Firor and Mary corresponded from 1915 until their marriage in 1920. In France Firor met Viscountess Therese de Montford, and their correspondence extends into 1953. After the war, his letters express concern about the arrival of the boll weevil in Georgia. He referred to varieties of pecan trees, fruit trees, spraying, and some letters pertain to his job searches. Few letters exist for the 1930s.

Correspondence in the 1940s and 1950s includes a few World War II letters that Firor wrote from Lowry Field, Colorado and letters from Yvonne Ragon, a friend in France. Other war and post-war letters pertain to Firor's return to the University of Georgia and changes in the College of Agriculture and in courses in rural sociology. In letters between Mary and J. William Firor, and their daughter Anne Byrd Firor Scott, professor of history at Duke University, Dr. Scott wrote of her career and family life. In 1951 Firor wrote to former students in agricultural economics and associates in response to the volume of letters presented upon his retirement from the University of Georgia. Most of the post-1951 correspondence is between Firor and his daughter Anne Scott. Prominent individuals represented in the Correspondence Series include Reuben "Shorty" Brigham (late 1940s), Harmon Caldwell (late 1940s), Paul Wilber Chapman (1940s), William Mauzy Kemper (ca. 1908-1914), and Anne Firor Scott (1949-1961).

The Writings and Speeches Series includes clippings of Firor's articles from such publications as *The Country Gentleman*, *The Georgia Democrat*, *The Progressive Farmer*, *Southern Ruralist*, and *The Southern Agriculturalist*. Included is a rough draft of his "Farm Plan for the Future," 1952. Firor wrote on a variety of southern agricultural topics, such as economics, prices, mortgages, the marketing of crops, sharecroppers, surpluses, farm ownership and management, father and son farming, planting, conservation, and farm

people. The writings reflect a particular concern for problems relating to the cultivation of the pecan, sweet potato, peach, watermelon, and cotton crops. He also wrote about politics and veterans as farmers.

The Subject Files Series includes biographical and genealogical files on the Moss and Firor families as well as a folder for Anne Firor Scott. There are folders for Thurmont, Md., Firor's boyhood home, and for Country Gentleman, to which Firor frequently contributed articles. In the Printed Material Series is a booklet, *In Memoriam: Rufus Lafayette Moss (1913)*. In addition, there are clippings about Paul W. Chapman in the Miscellaneous Series.

Addition (2012-0161) (450 items, 0.6 lin. ft.) contains family correspondence (1942-53), photographs, photocopies of letters from John William Firor and some transcriptions of these created by Anne Firor Scott, material about Mary Valentine Moss, legal documents, genealogical material, and material produced by Anne Firor Scott while writing a biography of John William Firor. This addition may require further processing before use.

## Biographical/Historical

### Chronology

Date	Description
1887, Sept. 23	Born, Frederick County, Md.
1908	B.S. in horticulture, Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland), College Park, Md..
1908,1910	Commandant and instructor, Bethel Military Academy, Warrenton, Va.
1910-1912	Assistant Horticulturist at the West Virginia Experiment Station, Morgantown, W. Va.
1912	Professor, Georgia State College of Agriculture (later incorporated into the University of Georgia), Athens.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1912-1917	Extension Horticulturist, Georgia State College.
1914-1917	Co-editor, Southern Fruit Grower.
1917-1919	U. S. Army Field Artillery Officer, serving primarily in France. Taught horticulture in the College of Agriculture, A.E.F. University, Beaune, France.
1918	Graduate, U. S. School of Artillery Fire.
1920, June 15	Married Mary Valentine Moss.
1920-1922	Manager, Planters Products Company, Ga. Horticulturist and marketing agent, Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic Railway Company.
1923-1925	County Agricultural Agent, Clarke County, Ga.
1926-1927	State Agent in Marketing for Georgia.
1928-1951	Organized and headed the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Georgia.
1931	M.S. in agriculture, University of Georgia.
1942-1944	Education officer and director of Troop School, U.S. Army Air Force, Lowry Field, Colo.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1944-1945	Member, Governor's Agricultural & Industrial Development Board, Ga.
1947-1948	Member, City Council, Athens, Ga.
1951	Retired from University of Georgia faculty.
1956, May 28	Died.

Wrote bulletins, government reports, addresses, and many articles for Southern Ruralist, Southern Agriculturist, The Georgia Democrat, Country Gentleman, and The Progressive Farmer.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research. Accession 2012-0161 (boxes 5-6) may require further processing before use.

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

All or portions of this collection may be housed off-site in Duke University's Library Service Center. The library may require up to 48 hours to retrieve these materials for research use.

Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library to use this collection.

### **Use Restrictions**

The copyright interests in the papers of John William Firor have been transferred to Duke University. For further information, see the section on copyright in the Regulations and Procedures of the Rubenstein Library

### **Acquisition Information**

The papers of John William Firor (1887-1956), professor at the University of Georgia and author, were a gift to the Rubenstein Library in 1986.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by Sharon Knapp

Completed May 20, 1988

Encoded by Stephen D. Miller

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## **Names and Subjects**

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- France
- Postcards
- Agriculture -- Economic aspects
- Agriculture -- Study and teaching -- Georgia
- Diaries
- World War, 1914-1918
- United States -- History -- 1913-1921
- Horticulture
- Courtship
- Scott, Anne Firor, 1921-
- Moss family
- University of Georgia -- College of Agriculture (Athens, Ga.)
- AEF University. College of Agriculture (Beaune, France)

- Brigham, Reuben
- Caldwell, Harmon
- Chapman, Paul Wilber, 1891-1953
- Firor, John William, 1887-1956.
- Firor, John William, 1887-1956.
- Kemper, William Mauzy, 1881-

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## Collection Inventory

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### Diaries Series, 1941-1952

#### Scope and Contents note

Diary of Firor, including handwritten and typed entries.

1941-1952	Box 1
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### Correspondence Series, 1902-1974 and undated

#### Scope and Contents note

Chiefly of a personal and family nature, although there are some professional letters. Correspondence is to and from Firor, typed and handwritten, with a handful of postcards, ca. 1919. Arranged chronologically.

1902-1919, Sept.	Box 1
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**Physical Description:** 5 folders

1919-1951	Box 2
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**Physical Description:** 5 folders

1952-1974 & undated	Box 3
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**Physical Description:** 3 folders

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### Writings and Speeches Series, 1921-1952 and undated

### Scope and Contents note

Primarily articles by Firor, arranged chronologically. Includes clippings, typescripts, radio address scripts, and some notes taken by Firor.

Magazine articles by John William Firor, 1924-1937	Box 3
The Progressive Farmer articles by John William Firor, 1924-1947	Box 3
Miscellaneous articles, 1921-1952	Box 3
Miscellaneous articles, undated	Box 4

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### Subject Files Series, 1878-1985 and undated

#### Scope and Contents note

Small file, arranged chronologically.

Biographical Information, 1911-1951	Box 4
Country Gentleman, 1942-1945	Box 4
Firor & Moss Genealogy, 1878, 1983-1985 & undated	Box 4
Thurmont, Maryland, 1951-1954	Box 4
Scott, Anne Byrd (Firor), 1940-1946	Box 4

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### Printed Material Series, 1868-1920 and undated

#### Scope and Contents note

Small file of calling cards, pamphlet, program, and French wedding invitations. Arranged chronologically.

1868-1920 & undated	Box 4
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## Miscellaneous Series, 1913-1972 and undated

### Scope and Contents note

Small file of clippings, pictures, address and membership lists, estate appraisal, and general material. Arranged chronologically.

1913-1972 & undated

Box 4

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## Oversize Materials, 1951

Catocin Enterprise, 1951

Oversize-folder 1

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## Accession 2012-0161

**Physical Description:** 2 boxes

### Scope and Contents note

Addition (2012-0161) (450 items, 0.6 lin. ft.) contains family correspondence (1942-53), photographs, photocopies of letters from John William Firor and some transcriptions of these created by by Anne Firor Scott, material about Mary Valentine Moss, legal documents, genealogical material, and material produced by Anne Firor Scott while writing a biography of John William Firor. This addition may require further processing before use.

### Access Restrictions:

This accession may require further processing before use.

Letters from David L. Firor

Box 5

Letters to his children and others, 1943-1944

Box 5

Letters to his children and others, 1948-1953

Box 5

AEF University

Box 5

Maryland Agricultural College

Box 5

John William Firor pictures

Box 5

Grandchildren

Box 5

John William Firor diary	Box 5
John William Firor letters World War I	Box 5
Mary Valentine Moss	Box 6
Legal documents	Box 6
Biographical notes	Box 6
Writing biography	Box 6
France	Box 6
JWF letters	Box 6
JWF book	Box 6
John William Firor, Sr.	Box 6
John William Firor scholarship	Box 6
JWF Scholarship	Box 6
Hall of fame	Box 6

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