Guide to the

Elder Family Papers
1743 – 1999

Record Group 12: Local History

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE
William Elder (1707-1775) was born into the Catholic faith in 1707 in what is now Calvert County. He married Anne Wheeler (1709-1739) in Charles County who bore five children: William (1729-1804), Charles (1730-1804), Guy (1732-1805), Richard (1734-1790), and Mary (1735-1798). In 1732, William Elder received a patent for land in the valley below the Catoctin Mountains near the Monocacy River, which he named Saint Mary’s Mount. By 1736, he had built a cabin and moved his family to this site, approximately three miles from what is now Emmitsburg, Maryland. Ann died of consumption in 1739. In 1742 William married Jacoba Clementina Livers (1717-1807), the daughter of Arnold Livers of Arnold’s Delight on Owings Creek. His father-in-law conveyed a part of land known as “Ogle’s Good Will” to him on this occasion. A new home was built on this land with a parlor large enough to be used as a chapel for mass whenever a priest traveled through. Tradition states that a conch shell was used to summon local Catholics to mass on these occasions. Jacoba and William Elder had five sons and two daughters: Elizabeth (1743-1820), Arnold (1745-1812), Ann (1746-1806), Thomas (1748-1832), Ignatius (1749-?), Francis (1755-1809), and Aloysius (1757-1827). William is buried with his two wives in the Elder Family Cemetery, which is located on land adjacent to the home he built on Ogle’s Good Will after his marriage to Jacoba Clementina Livers.

During his lifetime, William Elder acquired approximately 1,500 acres of land, which were passed on to his children. Father John DuBois, who had begun serving the Catholic community in north-central Maryland as he rode the circuit from his home parish in Frederick, Maryland, purchased land in 1808 from Arnold Elder upon which he began to build the school which became Mount Saint Mary’s.

One of the priests who celebrated mass at the Elder home was Father Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, who was assigned to nearby Taneytown, Maryland, from 1795 to 1799. After his transfer to Loretto in western Pennsylvania, he advocated western settlement to his former congregation. Under his influence, several members of the Elder family moved to the new lands in Kentucky which were just opening up for settlement. In 1803, Thomas H. (1748-1832) and Elizabeth Spalding Elder (died at age 98) moved to Kentucky with several of their children, following in the footsteps of their Elder and Spalding relatives. Thomas and Elizabeth Elder’s children were: Ann or Nancy (1772-1842), Basil Spalding (1773-1869) Catherine (1776-1866), William Pius (1778-1799), Clementina (1780-1852), Ignatius (1782-1852), Theresa (1785-1816), Thomas Richard (1789-1835), Christina (1791-?), Mary Elizabeth (1794-1834), and Maria M. (1796-?).

Basil Spalding Elder (1773-1869) did not move to Kentucky but remained in Baltimore, working for his uncle William Spalding, who had a grocery business. Basil served as Mount Saint Mary’s commercial agent in Baltimore. In 1801 he married widow Elizabeth Miles Snowden (d. 1860)
with whom he had the following children: Eleanor (1802-1891), Mary Elizabeth (1805-1872), Francis William (1807-1889), Julianna Frances (1809-1846), Basil Thomas (1811-1893), John Carroll (1813-1900), Joseph Enoch (1815-1888), Thomas Andrew Snowden (1817-1898), William Henry (1819-1904), and Charles David (1822-1890). Eleanor became one of Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton’s first pupils at her boarding school in Emmitsburg, and joined her order, the Daughters of Charity, as Sister Helena. William Henry Elder was educated at the Mount, along with five of his brothers. He entered the Seminary and was ordained in Rome in 1846, returning to the Mount to teach and serve as rector of the Seminary. In 1857 he was consecrated Bishop of Natchez, and in 1883 he became Archbishop of Cincinnati. On this occasion, all seven brothers met in Cincinnati for a family reunion and were photographed together.

Tied to the Mount and tied to one another, Elder descendants have carefully traced their own history and the history of the community and school that is so closely intertwined with their own. The Elder Family Cemetery, now on Mount property, has been carefully reclaimed and tended, and family reunions were held in 1988 and 1989. A family tree is attached.

Sources: Comeau, Eddie Lee Mary Elder, *Genealogy of William Elder*, 1983, and Ledoux, Albert H., “The Elder Family and Its Relation to Mount Saint Mary’s,” lecture delivered in “The History of Mount Saint Mary’s” class, Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary, October 27, 1992, found in *The Elder Family Papers, 1795-1999*, Mount Saint Mary’s Archives and Department of Special Collections, Mount Saint Mary’s College & Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

**PROVENANCE**
The manuscripts in Series I were donated by Charlotte Dawson in 1986. The provenance of the rest of the collection is unknown.

**PROCESSING NOTE**
Processing procedures consisted of discarding unnecessary duplicates, binders, and routine transmittals. Artifacts, photographs, and oversized documents were removed from the original location in their assigned series and housed separately. Separation sheets were inserted in the original location within the folder to indicate the new location of records placed elsewhere.

Preservation photocopying of newspaper clippings was performed whenever feasible. Records in folders were arranged, unless otherwise noted, in forward chronological order, with undated records appearing at the end of the folder.

Documents contaminated with mold were removed to separate housing, and photocopies on acid-free paper were made of all of the original manuscripts in Series I and the scrapbook in Series IX. Plats drawn by the State Roads Commission and State Highway Department from the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s were removed to RG 17, Architectural Records.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE
This collection consists of 3.0 feet of materials ranging in date from 1743 to 1999. Items in this collection include correspondence, family histories and genealogies, photographs, artifacts, diaries, and a scrapbook. The collection contains material relating to the Elder family cemetery, and includes as well correspondence between the members of the Elder family during the 1800s. The collection also contains Elder family newsletters and items relating to family reunions in 1988 and 1989, such as photographs, correspondence, programs, and plans.

Unless otherwise noted, items within each folder are arranged in forward chronological order, with undated material in the back. Genealogies and histories have been left in original order.

This collection is arranged in the following series:

Series I: Personal Papers
Series II: Diaries
Series III: Genealogy
Series IV: Histories
Series V: Cemetery
Series VI: Family Correspondence
Series VII: Reunions
Series VIII: Photographs
Series IX: Scrapbook
Series X: Artifacts.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I: Personal Papers, 1762-1904 (0.10 feet)
Most of the manuscripts in this series derive from the descendents of Thomas H. (1748-1832) and Elizabeth Spalding Elder. Thomas was the son of William Elder and his second wife, Jacoba Clementina Livers Elder. In 1803, Thomas and Elizabeth and several of their children moved to Kentucky, but they remained in touch with the family members who stayed behind in Maryland. The letters convey news about family members, trips undertaken, and discuss arrangements among the six brothers of Archbishop William Henry Elder (1819-1904) for a reunion at his installation as archbishop of Cincinnati in December 1883. This series also contains the 1762 certificate of resurvey requested by William Elder for the plat of land known as Ogle’s Good Will.

A letter written in 1818 by Reverend George Elder (1793-1838) describes in detail his long journey from Mount Saint Mary’s to his home in Kentucky. After eight years of separation, neither his parents nor his siblings recognized him. George was the son of James Elder (1765-1845), who was the son of Guy Elder (1732-1805), a son of William by his first wife, Ann
Basil Spalding Elder (1773-1869) wrote to his mother, Elizabeth Spalding Elder, and his sister, Maria Elder Horrell, in Bardstown, Kentucky, discussing family news, his business, the state of the economy, illnesses, the weather, and the death of his sister Ann (Nancy) in 1842. This folder also contains a fragment of a 1795 letter he wrote to his sister Nancy describing his social life in Baltimore. An 1848 letter describes a trip he made to visit his son John, daughter-in-law Elizabeth, and their new son in New Orleans. At that time, he also traveled to Baton Rouge, newly-designated as the state capital, and described its condition. In 1852 he again wrote to his sister Maria M. Elder Horrell to describe the death of his beloved daughter-in-law Margareta, wife of Francis William (1807-1889). Archbishop Purcell and Bishop Whelan attended her funeral, and Purcell delivered a moving eulogy.

The letters of Basil T. Elder (1811-1893) discuss the 1883 reunion with his brothers in Cincinnati and financial difficulties he is experiencing. A July 5, 1885, letter to his brother Joseph E. (1815-1888) is devoted primarily to reminiscences of their youth.

The December 1883/January 1884 letter from Josephine Elder, wife of Basil T. Elder, to her brother-in-law Joseph has been taped together incorrectly. The bottom third of the first page should be at the bottom of page three, thus placing the bottom third of the second page at the bottom of page four. Likewise, the bottom thirds of pages three and four should be at the bottom of pages one and two. This letter discusses the illness of their parish priest, Father Ennis, who boarded with the family. Family members mentioned include Joseph Elder’s daughter Bessie Claro and his sons Eugene and Willie. Josephine Elder also mentions Basil Jr.

Francis W. Elder (1807-1889) wrote to his aunt Maria M. Elder (later Horrell) describing an uncomfortable journey from Kentucky back to Maryland in 1828 and his social activities in Baltimore in 1829. The latter was taped together incorrectly. The center section at the bottom of the page with the salutation was taped backwards. This letter describes the marriage of Julia Elder and Edward Jenkins and other news from the family. An 1876 letter to his cousin Maria (Horrell?) Dawson describes his delight at receiving from her the early letters he had written to her mother Maria M. Elder Horrell, and leads him to many reminiscences. A note from Maria Dawson is penciled on the back. Francis’ later letters discuss the impending death in 1884 of Charles White, who married another cousin; the 1883 reunion and the photographs taken at that time; the death of his brother Joseph in 1888; his own health; the consecration of Bishop Foley; and a trip to New York City.

The series also contains letters from Sister Helena Elder (1802-1891), daughter of Basil Spalding (1773-1869) and Elizabeth Miles Snowden Elder, who was christened Eleanor and later entered the sisterhood of the Daughters of Charity. She wrote to her grandmother Elizabeth Spalding Elder in 1843 and to one of her brothers in 1879. At her brother’s request, she discussed early family history.
Joseph Elder (1815-1888) organized the brothers’ reunion in 1883, and much of his correspondence relates to that effort and the distribution of the brothers’ photograph. In 1884 letters written to his cousin Mollie Dawson, he discusses his brother Frank (1807-1889) and the death of Charles White, who married their cousin Mary Hazzard. An August 9, 1888, letter to Mollie discusses the death of his nephew Frank Elder, the illness and recovery of his brother Thomas, and reminiscences about his relationship with his brothers. The folder also contains a memorial card issued at Joseph’s death in 1888.

Bessie Elder Claro wrote letters describing her 1867 European trip, but she recrossed her lines so the text is very difficult to read. She was the daughter of Joseph E. Elder (1815-1888) and also wrote to him at the time of his reunion with his brothers in 1883, urging that a photograph be taken.

Thomas A.S. Elder (1817-1898) wrote two letters to his brother Joseph in 1883 regarding the reunion and mentioning their brothers Charles and John. Thomas Elder was Secretary of the New Orleans Auxiliary Sanitary Association.

The letters from Archbishop William Henry Elder (1819-1904) to his brother Joseph describe arrangements for the reunion and distribution of the photograph taken of the seven brothers. An 1894 letter to his cousin Mary Dawson discusses two Catholic educational institutions in Ohio. The folder also contains a memorial card and likeness of Archbishop Elder.

Mary Elizabeth Elder (1805-1872) took advantage of a trip to visit relatives in Kentucky undertaken by her brother Francis (1807-1889) to send a letter to her aunt Maria M. Elder. Written from Baltimore May 29, 1828, the letter mentions a trip to Emmitsburg in February, and the consecration of Archbishop Whitfield by Bishop Flaget, who was assisted by Bishop John DuBois. Maria seems to have been a seamstress. Included in the collection is an order from Joseph Spalding for stockings, and a neatly written fragment signed by Maria M. Elder in 1818 describing the solar system. The collection also contains a letter written in 1840 by Maria’s husband John Horrell who describes to his wife in detail a trip he is taking to White Sulphur Springs, presumably for his health.

Caroline Clements Elder married Thomas Richard Elder (1789-1835). Thomas Richard was the son of Thomas H. (1748-1832) and Elizabeth Spalding Elder. Caroline wrote to his sister Maria M. Elder (b. 1796, married John Horrell in 1830) in 1818 and his mother c. 1840. The collection also contains a letter from Maria’s brother Thomas Richard Elder (1789-1835, husband of Caroline Clements Elder) in 1816, in which he asks her to make him some articles of clothing; and two letters from Maria’s sister Theresa (1785-1816) written in May and June 1814 to her sisters in Kentucky, whom she will shortly join. She mentions the children of her brother Basil (1773-1869).

Mary Hazzard, who later married Charles White (d.c. 1884), wrote to her cousin Mollie
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(Dawson?) in 1866 after Mollie's visit with her family in Baltimore, discussing family news, the heat, and childhood illnesses. She mentions Bessie (Claro?), Gretta (her daughter?), Fanny, Mathilda (second wife of Francis W.?), and Lita (Carmelita, daughter of Francis W. and his second wife Matilda?).

This series also contains three typewritten transcriptions of letters for which the original location is unknown. A family tree for a portion of the family is attached.

The manuscripts in this series are arranged in alphabetical order by writer or subject. The originals are stored separately for preservation purposes, but photocopies are available for use.

Series II: Diaries, 1827-1828, 1862-1865 (2 folders)
This series is comprised of Guy Elders' daily journal from July 14, 1827 to October 31, 1828, and a published volume of the Civil War Diary maintained by Henry Elder, who notes climate changes and events in the local Catholic Church and reports on events of the Civil War.

This series is arranged in alphabetical order by creator.

Series III: Genealogy, 1743-1999, n.d. (0.20 feet)
This series contains genealogies of many members of the Elder family including Guy Elder, William Elder, Thomas G. Elder, and Archbishop William Henry Elder, compiled by Eddie Lee Mary Elder Comeau and by Dr. Richard Mudd. The correspondence folder contains many requests for information on the Elder family and related branches, and includes also information supplied on the Elder and related families. The documents in this series include correspondence, land records, wills, deeds, family trees, and the Elder Family Newsletter from 1993 to 1996.

Folders in this series are arranged in alphabetical order.

Series IV: Histories, 1896-1993, n.d. (0.20 feet)

This series includes correspondence concerning the upkeep and maintenance of the cemetery. The series also contains information on the history of the cemetery, and correspondence relating
to the installation of a Historical Marker. The folder titled “Cemetery Fund” is restricted due to privacy concerns. Folders in this series are arranged in alphabetical order.

Series VI: Family Correspondence, 1979-1999, n.d. (3 folders)
This series contains the many requests for information regarding the Elder Family, information about a scholarship in the Elder name for Mount Saint Mary’s College, and several copies of the checks for donations and letters of thanks. The folders related to the scholarship fund and research requests are restricted due to privacy concerns. This series is arranged in alphabetical order.

Series VII: Reunions, 1987-1989 (2 folders)
This series includes programs and other arrangements for the 1988 and 1989 Elder Family Reunions, correspondence with the family, and college memoranda written in preparation for the events. This series is in chronological order.

Series VIII: Photographs, n.d. (1 folder)
The photographs in this series have been moved to Record Group 17, Photographs. These photographs include views of the Elder Family Cemetery and the family reunions, buildings and plats on the Elder property called Pleasant Level, a copy of the portrait of Archbishop William Henry Elder and his brothers taken in 1883, and photographic images of the portrait of Archbishop Elder painted by Thomas Eakins.

Series IX: Scrapbook, 1988 (1 item)
This scrapbook, which was compiled in 1988, focuses on the Elder Family Reunion held on June 18 and 19, 1988, in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The scrapbook is entitled “Homecoming I: The Descendants of William Elder (1707-1775),” and contains a history of the family, a bibliography, an account of the reunion, and a reunion photograph with family members identified. Because non-archival adhesives and plastics were used, a copy was made onto acid-free paper.

Series X: Artifacts, 1700s, 1999 (1 folder)
This series contains the conch shell which, according to tradition, was brought to Frederick County from St. Mary’s County, Maryland, by William Elder in 1734, and a particle of ash tree from the Elder Family Cemetery in 1999. The artifacts have been moved to Record Group 16, Artifacts.
BOX INVENTORY

Box 1

Series I: Personal Papers

Copy of Manuscript Catalog Cards, n.d.
Claro, Bessie Elder, 1867, 1883
Dawson, Ralph, promissory note, 1849
Elder, Anne 1810
Elder, Basil Spalding, 1795, 1837-1852
Elder, Basil Thomas, 1883-1885
Elder, Caroline Clements, 1807, c. 1840
Elder, Francis, 1828, 1829, 1876, 1884, 1888
Elder, George, 1818
Elder, Helena, 1845, 1879
Elder, Joseph E., 1884-1888
Elder, Josephine M., 1883
Elder, Mary Elizabeth, 1828
Elder, Teresa, 1814
Elder, Thomas A.S., 1883
Elder, T.R. (Thomas Richard), 1816, 1822
Elder, William, Certificate of Survey for Ogle's Good Will, 1762
Elder, William Henry (Archbishop), 1883-1884, 1894, 1904
Hazzard, Mary, 1866
Horrell, John, 1840
Horrell, Maria M. Elder, 1818, n.d.
Nolen, Emily, 1853 (typewritten copy)
Correspondence from the Convent of the Visitation, 1860, 1872 (typewritten copy)

Series II: Diaries

Elder, Guy, Journal, 1827-1828
Elder, Henry, Civil War Diary, 1862-1865 (bound volume)

Series III: Genealogy

Family Trees, n.d.
Genealogy of William Elder Family (copies), 1743-1993, n.d.
Genealogy of William Elder by Eddie Lee Mary Elder Comeau, 1983
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Box 2


Series IV: The Elder History

Archbishop Elder, 1883, 1896
Donnelly, Sister Mary Louise, William Elder Ancestors and Descendants, 1986
The Elder Family and Catholicity in Fredrick County, n.d.
Elder, J.J., II, Let’s Meet the Elder Folks, 1974
Ledaux, Rev. Albert, The Elder Family and Its Relation to Mount Saint Mary’s, 1992
McClellan, Delphine Seabold, The Beginning of Mount Saint Mary's, n.d.
Related Histories, 1884-1985, n.d.
Spiros, Joyce Hawley, Descendants of William Elder who were Priests and Nuns, 1993

Series V: Cemetery

Cemetery Fund, 1988-1997 RESTRICTED

Series VI: Family Correspondence

Correspondence, 1997 RESTRICTED
Scholarship Fund, 1990-1999 RESTRICTED

Series VII: Reunions

Reunion of 1989, 1989

Series IX: Scrapbook

Homecoming of the Descendants of William Elder, 1988 (copy)

Box 3

Homecoming I: The Descendants of William Elder, 1707-1775, 1988