

# Guide to the Scott Family Collection

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#### COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Scott family can trace its antecedents to East Lyme, Connecticut and to Eugene, Oregon and Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Ernest Wilbur Scott was born in East Lyme, Connecticut in 1918 and Marian Cover Scott was born in Lorain, Ohio in 1921. They were married in 1941 in Dearborn, Michigan and raised their three children in Churchville, New York (Donna Lee, Lynn Carol, and John Warner, all born in Rochester, NY, in 1944, 1945, and 1948, respectively). Marian was an artist and homemaker and Wilbur was a vegetable plant breeder and the Vice President of the Joseph Harris Seed Co., Inc., Rochester, NY. Donna moved to Tompkins County in 1965 to attend graduate school at Cornell University, then again in 1972 and worked at Cornell University in six different positions, retiring in 2002 as a Senior Extension Associate in Food Safety Education in the Department of Food Science. She married Roger A. Kline in 1970 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. She made her homes in the Towns of Ithaca, then Dryden, and finally, after they divorced in 1986, in the Town of Lansing in a house on Cayuga Lake. She became involved in numerous community activities, including the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca; helping to found and run the Lansing Community Library, as well as a lake-water-level issues group; the Cayuga Bird Club; the Friends of Salt Point Natural Area; the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes; and the Town of Lansing Zoning Board of Appeals.

This collection contains mostly letters to and from several members of the Scott family, primarily to each other. They date from the early 1940s to the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Scott family members and their connections were prolific letter writers. Even after the days of email, they still took pen to paper and wrote extensively to each other, often long, chatty letters covering the news of their days, their trips, weather, interests, illnesses, their homes, work, their (numerous) pets, family gossip in general, and so much more. Most of these letters were clearly written for intimate family communication, and not for posterity. Many are undated, or dated with just a month and day, or simply a day of the week (“Monday,” “April Fool’s Day,” “May Day,” “8:30 AM” etc.)

They start with letters from the 1940s to and from Marian's mother, Ruth Cover. They continue with a large number to and from Marian and Wilbur, and many also to and from Donna Scott, the donor of the collection. Some of the letters are from Donna Scott's husband, Roger A. Kline, both during and after their marriage. Their divorce in 1986 was an amicable one, and their correspondence continued, and he shared news of his life with a new wife (Betsy) with Donna and her family. These letters offer exceptional insights into upper-middle class, well-educated White American family life in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

The collection also contains non-family materials relating to endeavors Donna Scott was engaged in, including an unsuccessful attempt to move her house from one location to another, and the Lansing Community Library, one of Donna's many community oriented initiatives. Her involvement in the community took many forms, and her generosity was keenly felt by many.

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