

AccNo 1978.170 and 1980.003
(2 cubic feet in four ms. boxes)
4C-6.1.E

Saretta Hicks Papers
1963-1965

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Introduction

This collection consists of papers gathered and, in many cases, written by author Saretta G. Hicks. The material includes her notes and research for an unfinished book about Lady Deborah Moody titled *Dangerous Woman: A Biography of Deborah, Lady Moody of Coney Island*. Lady Moody is best known as the founder of the town of Gravesend in what was then New Amsterdam and later became a part of Brooklyn, New York.

This collection was donated to the Brooklyn Historical Society in two parts (1978.170 and 1980.003). Each accession number is treated as a separate series. The first of these, 1978.170, contains Ms. Hicks' research and related correspondence. The second part, 1980.003, was donated in 1980 by the estate of Saretta G. Hicks and contains the manuscript, chapter outlines and indexes. The collection contains undated materials and is organized by topic. Of particular note is the inclusion of copies of original documents pertaining to Lady Moody's family history. There is also a four page typed transcript of Gravesend town meeting records from 1656.

Biographical Note

Born circa 1583 in Avebury, England, Deborah Dunch "...was the daughter of a barrister, granddaughter of a Bishop, wife of a member of Parliament"¹ and a distant relative to Oliver Cromwell by marriage. Her husband, Sir Henry Moody, was made a baronet by King James I in 1622. After her husband passed away in 1629, Lady Moody was beset with financial difficulties and found the political atmosphere in England increasingly insupportable and immigrated to Lynn, Massachusetts in 1639.

At first welcomed in Lynn, Lady Moody's sympathies for the Anabaptist movement soon created increasing difficulties for her. Ms. Hicks' research points especially to Lady Moody's support of the Anabaptist practice of limiting baptism to adults as a major point of contention with members of the community. The Anabaptists, a minority in Massachusetts, also advocated a separation of church and state. Lady Moody left Massachusetts in 1643 in search of a more tolerant, or less controlling, atmosphere.

She settled in New Amsterdam but in 1645 led a group of English settlers to Long Island and established a colony at Gravesend, at the southern tip of Long Island, an area somewhat sheltered from the Atlantic Ocean by the westernmost extension of Coney Island and now best known as "New Utrecht". The grant to her and her supporters consisted of Coney Island and all of Gravesend and Sheepshead Bay. Author Jacob Judd noted that "[Gravesend]...was organized under a Dutch patent providing for freedom of worship and self-government and by the 1650s had become a well-known haven for persecuted Quakers."² It was also the first grant of land in the New World to a female.

¹ Saretta G. Hicks. *Dangerous Woman: A Biography of Deborah, Lady Moody of Coney Island*. Prologue. [p.1]. Unpublished manuscript. 1980.003. Box 2. Folder 1.

² "Moody, [née Dunch], Deborah, Lady." Jacob Judd. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. Ed. Kenneth T. Jackson. New Haven: Yale University Press and the New-York Historical Society, 1995: p. 767.

Scope and Content

In addition to materials pertaining to Lady Moody's life, this collection also contains correspondence. Most of this relates to Ms. Hicks' research and is business-like in tone. A few letters, however, provide some insight into the author's personal life. Of particular note is a copy of the Hicks family's Christmas letter of 1964, written by Saretta Hicks and containing photographs of each of her family members. It provides a brief glimpse into Ms. Hicks' life as she balanced the demands of family and authorship. Another letter, written in 1965 to Ms. Mary Tatchell in England, sheds some light on why the book was never finished. This letter notes that she had two chapters ready to be sent to a publisher in hopes of obtaining a contract when she discovered some additional information that led her to question Lady Moody's date and place of birth.³ It appears that she decided to hold her manuscript until she could resolve the discrepancy. The exact dates of Lady Moody's birth and death still remain uncertain in current scholarship, as evidenced by her entry in *The Encyclopedia of New York City* which gives her date of birth as "1583?" and her death as "between November 1658 and May 1659."⁴

The material that comprises accession number 1978.170 consists of Ms. Hicks' correspondence (1963-1965) and her research notes. There are some magazine and newspaper clippings, as well as guidebooks to sites in England. This portion of the collection also includes one book, *English Historic Costume Painting Book: Elizabeth and James I, 1558-1625*, No. 6. London: Winsor & Newton, Ltd., 1947. Also included are copies of original documents about Lady Moody and her family, genealogical charts (pedigrees) tracing the lineage of the Dutch family, and a genealogical chart for the Hicks family. Accession number 1978.170 also contains a typed transcript of the 1645 patent for Gravesend and a four page typed transcript of the Gravesend Town Meeting records of 1656.

Accession number 1980.003 consists of Hicks' typewritten manuscript of the first three chapters of *Dangerous Woman: A Biography of Deborah, Lady Moody of Coney Island* and outlines of the remaining chapters. The collection also contains newspaper and magazine clippings about various locations in Massachusetts, New York, and England, as well as four indexes. The first of these organizes information about significant people and events in Lady Moody's life. The second indexes major dates in the history of the Moody family. The third index presents information on Gravesend and includes a list of early settlers. The fourth indexes bibliographic sources.

The overall condition of the collection is fair. Some items, however, are on thermofax or photostat paper and have begun to fade. Photocopies have been made of those showing the greatest loss. The papers do not indicate the identity of Saretta's literary executor, which means that such must be sought. Researchers may accordingly read the materials but may not quote or publish from Saretta's writings without permission of the unidentified holder of literary copyright.

See also: Brooklyn Historical Society Image Collection, V1997.1

Container List

1978.170

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Avebury (includes typed transcripts of depositions from 1598)	1598

³ Letter of March 3, 1965 to Mrs. Mary Tatchell. Correspondence re: Research 1963-1965. 1978.170. Box 1, Folder 3.

⁴ Jacob Judd. "Moody, [née Dunch], Deborah, Lady." *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. Ed. Kenneth T. Jackson. New Haven: Yale University Press and the New-York Historical Society, 1995: p. 767.

2 Bibliographies undated

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	3 Correspondence re: Research	1963-1965
	4 England—Research on life in 1600	undated
	5 England-Travel Journal	1963
	6 Garsdon	undated
	7 Gravesend (notes, clippings, copies, transcript of 1645 patent)	1645, c.1965
	8 Gravesend Town Meeting Records (4 page typed transcript)	1656
	9 Huntingdon	undated
	10 Indians	undated
	11 Inns of Court (includes typed list of admissions to Lincoln's Inn for 1581-1619)	1581-1619
	12 William Kieft	undated
	13 Little and Long Wittenham (includes typed transcript of translation of memorials to the Dunch family in the chapel at Little Wittenham)	1590s-1620s
	14 London	undated
2	15 Henry Lovelace	undated
	16 Massachusetts	undated
	17 Miscellaneous (notes, guidebook, unidentified sketch bearing measurements)	c.1960s
	18 Moody & Dunch families	c.16 th -18 th century
	19 Wills and funeral certificates of Mervyn, Dunch, Stone, and Moody families	c.16 th -18 th century
	20 Deborah Moody (includes <i>English Historic Costume Painting Book</i>)	undated
	21 New Haven	undated
	22 New Netherlands	undated
	23 Oxford and Cambridge (contains copies of original documents pertaining to Henry Moody)	1620s
	24 Pilkington Family	undated
	25 Rhode Island	undated
	26 Church of St. Mary Aldermary, London (typed transcript of church register)	1558-1611

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title or item</u>	<u>Dates</u>
2	27	Pedigrees-includes reproduction of portrait (c.1670-1719) of Edmund Dunch	undated
	28	Story Ideas	undated
	29	The Thames	undated
	30	Wiltshire Map (1630) and Index	1630 and undated
1980.003			undated
3	1	Index to Bibliographic Sources	
	2	Index to People and Events in Lady Deborah Moody's Life, Index to Dates in Moody Family History, and Index to Gravesend	undated
4	3	"Dangerous Woman.." by Saretta G. Hicks. Chapters 1-3. Outlines of ch. 4-16, preface, and prologue.	undated