

*A Finding Aid to the Morse Family Collection*

*Date Range: 1867-2020*

*Compiled by Arielle Nathanson,*

*August 2021*

**Summary**

**Creators:** Drs. Jay Rice and Stanson A. Moody

**Title:** Morse Family Collection

**Dates:** 1730-1940

**Extent:** 3.2 linear feet, including: 1 journal, 2 CDs, 1 audio tape, 3 books, 1 red velvet family photograph album and 1 spool of thread

**Abstract:** The papers of the Morse Family date from 1867 to 2020, with the bulk of the collection being photographs of the 1899 and 1907 Morse cars and car parts. Other photographs picture some of the family members, their homes, the Easton Machine Company and the thread factory. The rest of the materials include personal correspondence, various essays, technical specifications, advertisements, articles in newsprint and magazines, and genealogical documents.

**Language:** English

**Administrative Information**

**Acquisition Information:** This collection was donated by Dr. Stanson A. Moody in 2021 to the Easton Historical Society and Museum, for the purpose of creating an exhibit around the 1899 Morse Car.

**Accruals:** Research on the Morse Family is ongoing, making accruals at random intervals possible.

**Restrictions on Access:** The Morse Family Collection may only be accessed with the permission of the Easton Historical Society and Museum. Digitized versions of select materials are available through the Historical Society and Museum's website at: [eastonmahistoricalsociety.org](http://eastonmahistoricalsociety.org)

**Conditions Governing Use:** The Morse Family Collection is owned by the Easton Historical Society and Museum. It may be used for research, study and scholarship purposes. Permission to quote, publish or copy these materials requires the permission of the Easton Historical Society and Museum, which can be contacted at: [eastonmahsmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:eastonmahsmuseum@gmail.com) or 508-238-7774.

**Preferred Citation:** Morse Family Collection, 1867-2020, Easton Historical Society and Museum, [item].

**Processing Note:** This collection was fully processed and a finding aid created by Arielle Nathanson. Select materials from this collection were digitized in 2021 and are accessible online. To request virtual access to non digitized materials, please contact the Easton Historical Society and Museum.

## **Biographical Note**

While much of the material in this collection is related to the cars the Morse Family built, their success began with their thread and lace making machines. Josiah Copeland (1768-1852) came to Easton in the late 1700s and started the infamous business by manufacturing simple cotton yarn. However, it wasn't until Edward James Whiting Morse (1808-1858) arrived in Easton, that the thread factory became truly successful. He and his brother Solomon Whiting Morse (1814-1869) worked together to make cord and twine there, until E.J.W. Morse bought out his partner's shares of the business and foreclosed on the property. By 1860, 39,600 pounds of thread made from South Carolina's Sea Island cotton was being produced. The thread was used in lace, bonnets, shoes, leather, straw and cloth.

After E.J.W. Morse's death, his son Edward Newcomb Morse (1831-1889) took over the company. In 1878 he built a two story brick building next to the original thread mill, which allowed for further expansion. Later on, the company was passed onto Edward N. Morse's son Alfred Bryant Morse (1861-1932). Alfred B. Morse created the Morse Machine Company in 1892 in order to expand the business into manufacturing parts for cars and lace machines. Only a few years later, the thread mill burned and had to be rebuilt. Alfred didn't let that setback stop him from making the first two cylinder Model A Runabout in 1902, sparking the start of the Easton Machine Company. The Model B was introduced in 1907. The company made car parts, lace machines and other machinery until 1917. World War 1 made it nearly impossible to secure Krupp steel from Germany, so Alfred B. Morse had no choice but to close down his business. Eight unassembled cars were left to his son Neubert Bryant Mose (1977), who sold all but two, one of each model for scrap. One was eventually sold to a collector in Newport and the other to Dr. Jay Rice Moody (1909-1989), who would restore and show it.

The brick factory was not left empty, as in 1925 Neubert B. Morse purchased the Charles E. Crofoot Gear Corporation and relocated it to South Easton. That building was known as mill number two, built across the street from the old thread mill building in 1912. From then on gears for electrical appliances, cars and Marine transmissions were made in mill number two until it closed for good in 1994. In 1939 the original mill building was sold to Brockton Tool Company, which made shoe molds and closed in 1986.

George Waterman was a car collector from Newport, Rhode Island and purchased the 1899 Model from Neubert B. Morse himself. The car was then to be featured in Belcourt Castle in Newport, as part of the Newport Antique Car Museum's collection. That however, never happened because the residential community would not allow it. George Waterman sold the castle and stored his cars in Providence, Rhode Island. That is where Dr. J.R. Moody first saw the 1899 car and became interested in it, because he discovered it was manufactured near his birthplace. He later purchased the car from John Hebdon, who worked as a salesman for George Waterman.

Dr. Jay Rice Moody was born in Brockton, Massachusetts. His Father was a machinist and his Mother a housewife. He attended the University of Rhode Island to study pre-dental and then graduated from Tufts University Dental School in 1935. He practiced dentistry with his uncle in Newport, Rhode Island. While there, he became a member of the Chamber of Commerce and was assigned to meet the people in charge of the Glidden Antique Car Tours. From then on, Dr. J.R. Moody developed a love for antique cars and their restoration.

In 1950 John Hebdon began restoring the 1899 Morse Car by cleaning and painting it yellow. Dr. J.R. Moody then purchased it in 1960 and enlisted the help of his son Dr. Stanson Moody (1946) and Lester Paryzik to continue its restoration. They worked throughout the year to prepare the car to be shown.

Dr. Stanson Moody was born in Newport, Rhode Island. He graduated from The University of Rhode Island in 1969 with a degree in pre-medicine/dentistry. He then attended the USAF Officer Training Program to prepare for Flight Training at Williams AFBBase in Phoenix, Arizona. After completing the program, Dr. Moody was admitted to Tufts Dental School in 1970 and made his decision to pursue that career. He later graduated in 1974 and proceeded to practice with his Father in Newport. Dr. Moody eventually bought the practice and continued the business until he retired in June of 2020. Dr. Moody currently has a small practice on Cape Cod.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The papers of the Morse Family date from 1867 to 2020, with the bulk of the collection being photographs of the 1899 and 1907 Morse cars and car parts. Other photographs picture some of the family members, their homes, the Easton Machine Company and the thread factory. The rest of the materials include personal correspondence, various essays, technical specifications, advertisements, articles in newsprint and magazines, and genealogical documents. This collection is arranged into eight series by document genre or function and is presented in alphabetical order. Subsequent organization of subseries and file levels are arranged chronologically or alphabetically, as will be specified below. Notable materials in this collection include: pictures of the 1899 and 1907 Morse cars, specifications for the A.B. Universal Joint, the 1910 Morse car manual, accounts receivable paperwork, genealogical listings for the Morse Family and an Easton Machine Company pamphlet.

**Series 1: Advertisements and Business Transactions.** The materials in this series date from 1896 to 1978. Subseries are arranged by document genre and presented alphabetically. Materials within each subseries are organized chronologically. The bulk of the materials are advertisements for various models of Morse cars. Notable items include: Alfred B. Morse's business card and accounts receivable paperwork.

**Series 2: Correspondence.** The materials in this series date from 1919 to 2020. Subseries are arranged by recipient and ordered alphabetically. Materials in each subseries are in chronological order. Most of the correspondence relates to Dr. Stanson and Jay Rice Moody, as they search for existing Morse cars.

**Series 3: Historical Paperwork and Genealogical Listings.** The materials in this series date from 1867 to 1986. Subseries are grouped by document genre and ordered alphabetically. The arrangement of the materials within each subseries are ordered either chronologically or alphabetically by creator or document function, depending on the prevalence of dates. The bulk of the material is comprised of registration information for various Morse cars and historical academic essays. The most notable items are the 1836 Morse Family Bible and the Book of Morse Memorials.

**Series 4: Morse Thread Factory Materials.** The materials in this series are undated. Subseries are arranged by document genre and ordered alphabetically. Materials within each subseries are ordered alphabetically by document function. Notable materials include: pictures of the factory, an annotated journal of specifications for lace making machines and a thread label.

**Series 5: Newspapers and Clippings.** The materials in this series date from 1970 to 1997. There is one subseries relating to articles about the 1907 Morse Car organized chronologically. Notable articles cover: the histories of the Easton Machine Company building and the Morse cars themselves.

**Series 6: Photographs.** The materials in this series are undated. Subseries are arranged by the focal point of the photograph and ordered alphabetically. Materials in each subseries follow the same arrangement and order. The bulk of the materials relate to the 1907 Morse Car and various car parts. Notable materials include: the burned out remains of the Easton Machine Company, the 1907 car before and after its restoration, current pictures of the 1899 car and a red velvet family photo album.

**Series 7: Technical Specifications.** The materials in this series are undated. Subseries are arranged by document function and ordered alphabetically. Materials in each subseries are also ordered alphabetically. The most significant items are the Easton Machine Company pamphlet, a Universal A.B. Joint handwritten pamphlet and two copper printing plates for the 1910 owner's manual.

**Series 8: Miscellaneous.** The materials in this series are undated. Subseries are arranged by document genre and ordered alphabetically. Materials within each

subseries are ordered alphabetically as well. Notable materials include: two CDs of the 1963 interview between Mr. Neubert Morse and Dr. Jay Rice Moody, and three postcards picturing the factories and the 1907 car.

### **Arrangement**

The Morse Family Collection is arranged into eight series. Each series is arranged by document genre and ordered chronologically or alphabetically, as detailed above. Series 2, 5 and 6 differ in their arrangements: series 2 is grouped by document recipient, series 5 has no need for multiple subseries groupings and series 6 is arranged by the main focal point of each photograph. Each of these series is ordered either chronologically or alphabetically, as explained in the previous section. This collection is stored in three archival boxes. Box 1 contains series 1 through 5. Box 2 houses the entirety of series 6, and Box 3 holds series 7 and 8. A more detailed explanation of the exact locations of the materials can be found in the container list below.

### **Related Materials**

Series 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 have been digitized in their entirety. Virtual materials are available by request at the Easton Historical Society and Museum's webpage: <https://www.eastonmahistoricalociety.org/#/>.

### **Container List**

#### **Series 1: Advertisements and Business Transactions, 1896-1978**

Subseries 1.1: Accounts Receivable Paperwork, 1910-1911

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Accounts Receivable Paperwork, 1910-1911

Subseries 1.2: Advertisements Found in Magazines, 1910-1978

Box	Folder	Description
1	2	Advertisements in Magazines, 1910-1978

Subseries 1.3: Business Cards and Stationary, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	3	Business Cards and Stationary, Undated

Subseries 1.4: Receipts, 1852-1885

Box	Folder	Description
1	4	E.J.W. Morse Business Receipts, 1852-1885

Subseries 1.5: Standalone Advertisements, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	5	Individual Advertisements of Unknown Origin, Undated

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1919-2020**

Subseries 2.1: Alfred Bryant Morse as Recipient, 1919-1920

Box	Folder	Description
1	6	A.B. Morse as Recipient, 1919-1920

Subseries 2.2: Dr. Jay Rice Moody as Creator, 1991

Box	Folder	Description
1	7	Dr. J.R. Moody as Creator, 1991

Subseries 2.3: Dr. Stanson Moody as Creator and Recipient, 1984-2020

Box	Folder	Description
1	8	Dr. Stanson Moody Letters, 1984-2020

Subseries 2.4: Miscellaneous Letters, 1987-2012

Box	Folder	Description
1	9	Letters by Various Creators, 1987-2012

### **Series 3: Historical Paperwork and Genealogical Listings, 1867-1986**

#### Subseries 3.1: Historical and Academic Essays, 1969-1986

Box	Folder	Description
1	10	Historical and Academic Essays, 1969-1986

#### Subseries 3.2: Genealogical Materials, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	11	Johnson Family Genealogical Materials, Undated
1	12	Morse Family Genealogical Materials, Undated

#### Subseries 3.3: Morse Car Registrations, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	13	Registrations, Undated

#### Subseries 3.4: Miscellaneous Creators and Materials, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	14	Miscellaneous Historical Essays and Materials, Undated

### **Series 4: Morse Thread Factory Materials, Undated**

#### Subseries 4.1: Photographs, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	15	Thread Factory Photographs, Undated

#### Subseries 4.2: Journal, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	16	Lace Factory Machine Journal, Undated

Subseries 4.3: Miscellaneous Materials, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
1	17	Miscellaneous Thread Factory Materials, Undated

**Series 5: Newspapers and Clippings, 1970-1997**

Subseries 5.1: 1907 Morse Car Articles, 1970-1997

Box	Folder	Description
1	18	1907 Articles and Clippings, 1970-1997

**Series 6: Photographs, Undated**

Subseries 6.1: 1899 Morse Car, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	19	1899 Morse Car, Undated

Subseries 6.2: 1907 Morse Car, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	19B	1907 Morse Car, Undated

Subseries 6.3: Easton Machine Company, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	20	Easton Machine Company, Undated

Subseries 6.4: Morse Car Models, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	21	Morse Car Models, Undated

Subseries 6.5: Morse Car Parts, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	22	Morse Car Parts, Undated

Subseries 6.6: Morse Family Buildings and Portraits, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	23	Morse Buildings, Undated
2	24	Morse Portraits, Undated

Subseries 6.7: Miscellaneous, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
2	25	Miscellaneous, Undated

**Series 7: Technical Specifications, Undated**

Subseries 7.1: 1910 Morse Car Manual, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	26	1910 Morse Car Manual, Undated

Subseries 7.2: Easton Machine Company and Various Models, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	27	Easton Machine Co. and Various Models, Undated

Subseries 7.3: Universal A.B. Joint Materials, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	28	Universal A.B. Joint Materials, Undated

Subseries 7.4: Miscellaneous Specifications, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	29	Miscellaneous Specs, Undated

**Series 8: Miscellaneous, Undated**

Subseries 8.1: Media, 1963

Box	Folder	Description
3	30	2 CDs, 1 Audio Tape

Subseries 8.2: Notes, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	31	Historical Content Unknown Creator, Undated

Subseries 8.3: Postcards, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	32	Postcards, Undated

Subseries 8.4: Writings, 2016

Box	Folder	Description
3	33	Easton Historical Society and Museum Newsletter Fall, 2016

Subseries 8.5: Miscellaneous, Undated

Box	Folder	Description
3	34	Miscellaneous, Undated
4	Not Applicable	Oversized box containing: the Morse Family Bible, the Eliza C. Morse Hymnal, The Book of Morse Memorials, the red velvet family photograph album and the two copper plates of the 1910 Morse car.