

Dickinson Family Papers

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1871-1931



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1989.094

Unit Date

1871-1931

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains the papers of the Dickinson family of Smyth County, Virginia, consisting of letters from U. S. Army officer Ralph Dickinson and the medical account books and diploma of Dr. S. W. Dickinson.

Creator

Dickinson family

Extent

1.2 Cubic Feet 3 boxes and 1 oversize folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

Most of the Dickinson Papers were donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 1989. At the time the donation was accessioned, four medical account books of S. W. Dickinson that had been held by the department for many years as Ms1940-004, were incorporated into this collection.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Dickinson Family Papers commenced and was completed in June 2013.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Dickinson Family Papers, Ms1989-094, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Smelt Winston Dickinson, son of Dr. Charles R. and Lucy Winston Dickinson, was born in Louisa County, Virginia, on January 25, 1852. He obtained a medical degree at the Medical College of Virginia (now part of Virginia Commonwealth University) in 1871 and a medical doctorate from the University of Maryland in 1872. By 1880, Dickinson had established a medical practice in Louisa County and had married Sarah Isabel Look (1853-1933). The couple had nine children: Loomis L., Charles Ralph, Lucy Belle, Julia C., Josiah, Ruby, William, Burt, and Nathan. By 1884, the family had moved to Marion in Smyth County, Virginia, where Dickinson continued to practice medicine. Smelt Dickinson died on October 2, 1932, and was buried at Round Hill Cemetery, Smyth County, Virginia.

Charles Ralph Dickinson, son of Smelt W. and Sarah Look Dickinson, was born in Virginia on December 8, 1878. He graduated from the U. S. Military Academy at West Point in 1904. Accepting a commission as second lieutenant, Dickinson was assigned to the 3rd Infantry at Fort St. Michael, Alaska, and engaged in repair work on the Alaskan telegraph line until July, 1906, when he was transferred to Fort Lawton and Fort Wright in Washington state. While on leave in 1907, Dickinson married Nancy Apperson (1881-1975), and the couple had two children. Returning to Fort Wright, Dickinson served as quartermaster and constructing quartermaster until 1909, when he was assigned to duty in the Philippines. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1911, but soon afterward fell ill and returned to the United States, remaining on leave for a year. In 1912, Dickinson became post adjutant, quartermaster, and battalion adjutant at Fort Ontario, New York, then quartermaster at Fort Brady, Michigan from 1915 to 1916. Promoted to captain in 1916, Dickinson spent the next year at Fort Keogh, Montana and Fort Monroe, Virginia before becoming professor of military science and tactics at Kentucky Military Academy; in 1919, he took the same position at John B. Stetson University. He served in the active military during World War I and was promoted to major. By 1930, the family was living in Dunedin, Florida, and they were still living there as late as 1949. Ralph Dickinson died on January 7, 1963, and was buried at Round Hill Cemetery, Smyth County, Virginia.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of the papers of the Dickinson family of Marion in Smyth County, Virginia. Letters written by Ralph Dickinson, an officer in the U. S. Army, are primarily addressed to Dickinson's parents, Smelt and Sarah Dickinson, though a few were written to his sister Ruby. The majority of the letters were written from Alaska and Washington state, where Dickinson served. The letters include an invitation to the 1904 U. S. Military Academy graduation ceremonies. A folder of correspondence from others comprises letters from other Dickinson family members and friends, as well as one from novelist Mary Johnston.

The collection also contains the medical account books and diploma of Dr. S. W. Dickinson. The ledgers provide patient names and amounts owed, with treatments or medicines prescribed sometimes included as well. In the back of some ledgers are account records for Dickinson's rental properties. Scattered throughout the ledgers are a few pieces of correspondence and financial documents. A small financial memoranda book

maintained by Josiah Look of Saltville, Virginia, and a few stock certificates issued to George D. and Lucy Dickinson Urquhart compose the remainder of the collection.

Related Archival Materials

Papers of the Dickinson family are also held in the Lucy Dickinson Urquhart Papers (Ms1987-046) and the Lucy Dickinson Correspondence (Ms1988-014).

Keywords

Folk, historical, and patent medicine
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Medicine
Smyth County (Va.)

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by material type, then chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Ralph Dickinson letters

Unit Date 1904-1931, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1-6 (folder)

Other correspondents

Unit Date 1901-1928

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Prentiss L. Coonley to Ralph

Unit Date 1901

J. L. Dickinson to Papa

Unit Date 1908

Nancy [Dickinson] to Mrs. Dickinson

Unit Date 1907

Nancy [Dickinson] to Mother

Unit Date 1908

Nellie J. Dickinson to Ralph

Unit Date 1903

Mary Johnston to Mrs. Dickinson

Unit Date 1912

E. B. Phillips to Mr. Dickinson

Unit Date 1904

E. B. Phillips to Mrs. Dickinson

Unit Date 1915

Parkhurst Whitney (The Outlook) to Lucy D. Urquhart

Unit Date 1928

Extent [2 items]

James N. Young (Collier's) to Mrs. L. D. Urquhart

Unit Date 1928

Aunt Julia to Nancy

Unit Date 1911

Extent [2 items]

Senator Thomas S. Martin free-franked envelope

Unit Date 1907

S. W. Dickinson medical account books

Unit Date 1885-1928

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8-10 (folder)

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 1-4 (folder)

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Josiah Look financial memoranda book

Unit Date 1871-1877

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Financial documents

Unit Date 1884-1924

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Receipts

Unit Date 1884-1888

Extent [2 items]

Stock certificates

Aud Company

Unit Date [1924?]

Pinnacle Block Coal Company

Unit Date 1922

Extent [2 items]

Baltimore and Ohio Land Company

Unit Date 1890