

# A Guide to the Clara L. Snodgrass and Rural Retreat Letter Collection, 1903-1940

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A Collection in University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University AC 029  
University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University

## History

**Processed by:** Katherine Okie with Gene Hyde

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Clara L. Snodgrass and Rural Retreat Letter Collection, 1903-1940

**Subtitle:**

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**Author:** Katherine Okie with Gene Hyde.

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Kaitlin Scott, 29 June 2017

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Collection number

AC 029

### Language

English

### Abstract

Contains approximately 450 letters and original mail envelopes of correspondence between Miss C.L. Snodgrass of New Castle, Virginia and R.L. Sizer, Neal Philips, R. H. Miller, and Della Miller from 1903-1928.

### Physical Characteristics

3.0 Linear feet.

### Location

Locked in compact shelving, level 1, shelf 32D.

### Repository

University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

An appointment for research is required. Collection is open to research. No interlibrary loan. Full collection [inventory](#) is available.

## **Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

## **Acquisition Information**

Purchased from Bookworm and Silverfish, Fall 2012.

## **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Clara L. Snodgrass and Rural Retreat Letter Collection, Appalachian Collection, McConnell Library, Radford University, Radford, VA. Clara L. Snodgrass and Rural Retreat Letter Collection, Accession # AC 029, University Archives, McConnell Library, Radford University

## **Accruals**

Additional accruals are not expected.

## **Custodial History**

Purchased from Bookworm and Silverfish, Fall 2012.

## **Scope and Content**

### The Snodgrass and Sizer Letters

The Snodgrass and Sizer letters contain correspondence between Miss Clara L. Snodgrass of New Castle, Virginia, and Mr. Rufus Lee Sizer who spent much of his time travelling and working several jobs. Miss Snodgrass married Mr. Sizer some time between November 1914 and July 1916. The letters from R.L. Sizer to Clara Snodgrass are mostly love letters with bits of news scattered throughout. From 1903 to 1905, Sizer wrote from Clifton Forge and Glen Jean, both in West Virginia. He appears to have been working for the Allegheny Bottling Company, Manufacturers of Carbonated Beverages. Letters from 1903 mention a strike at the bottling plant. 1904 letters include comments about local baseball games; and the murders of Rey Bum and George Blake. 1905 letters mention an accident at the bottling factory in which Sizer was injured; and job offers that Sizer is considering. Letters from 1907-1908 come from Clifton Forge, Va, where Sizer may have been working for Karnes and Farrier Cash Grocers. From 1909 to 1914, Sizer travelled with the Wrought Iron Range Company, installing ranges in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The 1909 letters include notes about the possibility of Sizer being transferred to Georgia; and his impression of the people of Richlands, Va.

The 1911 letters speak of a possible investment opportunity with Ripley Springs and Claras trip to West Virginia. Letters from 1912 mention the death of H. H. Crawford, President of the Wrought Iron Range Co. the death of a Mr. Caldwell and a shooting in New Castle. The 1913 and 1914 letters deal mostly with plans for Clara and Rufus' upcoming wedding. Letters from 1916-1917 are less frequent, as Sizer appears to have travelled only a few months out of the year. The letters that Clara Snodgrass wrote from her home in Johns Creek near New Castle are also love letters with some news of family and friends in Craig County, notes about the weather, the crops, and local happenings.

### The Miller Letters

The Miller papers contain letters to Mrs. Dell C. Miller and Mrs. R. H. Miller, both of Rural Retreat, Virginia, who appear to have been applying for teaching positions. Letters to Mrs. Dell C. Miller consist of returned applications and letters of rejection from Concord State Normal School, Allegheny Collegiate Institute, Pittsylvania County Public School, Danville Public Schools, and the Virginia Sunday School Association; and a letter about an efficiency institute. Letters to Mrs. R. H. Miller 1924 include returned applications and letters of rejection from George Peabody College for Teachers, Roanoke County Public Schools, Farmville High School, and Dade County Florida Public Schools; and a job offer and employee Christmas letter from the Virginia Public School Association. Letters from 1925 include returned applications and letters of rejection from Norfolk City Public Schools, and Richmond Public Schools; and a job offer from Ferrum Training School. Mrs. Millers papers also include an empty envelope from 1940 postmarked Red Cross Roll Call JOIN.

### The Phipps Letters

The Phipps Papers contain letters written to Mr. John Neal Phipps in Northfork, West Virginia from his friends and family in Rural Retreat, Virginia, and miscellaneous bills and receipts. Letters from his mother, Mrs. J. M. Phipps (Cora Miller Phipps) mostly discuss Rural Retreat News such as the weather; the crops; market prices for cabbage, eggs, and other produce; trips to Wytheville, Marion, and other nearby places; illnesses among the family and neighbors; deaths in the community; church functions and faith; news about friends and family who have left Rural Retreat to find work; and words of advice. A few of the letters mention a Dell, possibly Mrs. Dell C. Miller, and a few mention a Chloe. Neal is addressed as Pete in many of the letters.

The 1927 letters also include notes about the Rural Retreat drug store, the proposed hosiery mill in Pulaski, Virginia, a rumored milk condensing plant in Rural Retreat, a Presbyterian revival and black camp meeting the Holy Rollers the OK Harris shooting and a town rumor of Neals engagement to a D. The 1928 letters include comments about Ruth Phipps getting a divorce Rural Retreat as a bootlegging town, the OK Harris murder case Neals defeat by a black candidate for a position with the Northfork Postal Office and Cora Phipps indignation at the Price family for what they did at Mas place. Two letters from Neal Phipps sister Ruth tell news of family and friends. Ruth also wrote post scripts in several of her mothers letters to Neal of May 17, 1927, and March 25, 1928. The Neal Phipps papers also include three letters from Chloe who appears to be a former girlfriend of Neals with whom he was still corresponding. In one she requests that he not continue to disguise his letters to her as she didnt mind who knew that they corresponded. In another she chastises Neal strongly for the way he is acting making his mother worry. Miscellaneous papers include bills from Jess E. Baughman, D.D.S. of Rural Retreat, Gammons Inc. Department Store, City Garage, Inc., Bluefield Floral Co., receipts from J. N. Cassell and the Mt. Airy Lodge No. 226, a letter from B. Wade Harper, and a letter from J. N. Cassell upbraiding Neal for not answering his letter.

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged in the following way:

Box 1: Rufus Lee Sizer to Clara L. Snodgrass, 1903-1908

Box 2: Rufus Lee Sizer to Clara L. Snodgrass, 1909-1910

Box 3: Rufus Lee Sizer to Clara L. Snodgrass, January 1911-June 1912

Box 4: Rufus Lee Sizer to Clara L. Snodgrass, July 1912 - November 1914

Box 5: Rufus Lee Sizer to Clara L. (Snodgrass) Sizer, July 1916 - October 1917; Clara L. (Snodgrass) Sizer to Rufus Lee Sizer, 1904-1913

Box 6: Letters to Mrs. Dell C. Miller (Mrs. A.H.M.); Letters to Mrs. R. H. Miller; Letters to J. Neal Phipps from Mrs. J.M. Phipps, "Ruth" Phipps?, and "Chloe"; J. Neal Phipps Miscellaneous Bills and Receipts