

Lal, Radha Mohan Diaries

Radha Mohan Lal B.A. Diaries

1915-1922

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Biographical / Historical

Radha Mohan Lal was approximately 40-47 years old when he was writing his diaries. He had attended the Jaipur College. Religiously he and his family were Hindus, he knew Urdu, had a living father, wife, and children (two sons: Hargobind and Gobinda, and daughters). He owned land in Jaipur. His son, Hargobind, was married, had children and was part of the 7th Meerut Division, an infantry division of the British Indian Army that saw active service during WWI. Hargobind was sent to the Middle Eastern front in May of 1918 where he headed a hospital and was wounded. He survived and recovered well. He spent most of his time in Egypt. He returned to India in August of 1919.

Administrative History:

The hierarchy of the British and native governmental bodies and officials at the time the diaries were written:

- H.M. King Emperor;
- Council of Regency (Eight Members); had a Foreign Dept and a Police Dept.
- H.H. the Maharaja of Jaipur/Maharajahira: Sawai Madho Singh II (1880-1922)
- Ministers/Dewans: Chief Minister (Dewan): Amar Nath Atal (1916-1922)
- British Resident: Robert Arthur Edward Benn (1915/16-1922).

Scope and Contents

The diaries were written between 1915-1922 by Munshi Radha Mohan Lal B.A., a Nazim, a city magistrate in the Princely State of Jaipur, today's state of Rajasthan in northwestern India. There are four diaries in Box 1, each spanning one year, and two short ones in Box 2. They are in good condition and all entries are legible. They are written in English, with very few words, phrases, dates, or notes written in Hindi and Urdu. The latter was one of the co-official languages in the general area. There are entries for every day of the year, with some significant exceptions being the period from January 1917 through March 1918 and from 9 March, 1919 to 30 March, 1919. Some of the front pages contain Nazim's official, professional stamp and the last pages usually contain his random notes in English and Urdu (peoples' names, addresses, quotes, business transactions).

The Nazim led very active and intertwined professional, social, and private lives. From 1915 until circa 1917 he served in Sambhar, then through 1922 in Jaipur. He was the official ultimately responsible for the courts in those cities, which were under the authority of the Council of Regency and the Ministers in Jaipur. Thus he tended to have most contact with 'the Minister' and 'the Resident', with the former serving as his "supervisor". The Nazim also served on a working committee for the board of civil supplies and a committee to control supplies.

The diaries offer great insight into professional, social, and private lives of native provincial officials in the Princely States of British India, into the relationship between native officials and British officials, into the roles rail and commodities, such as salt and sugar cane, played at the time, British India's experience of WWI, into the Satyagraha movement led by Ghandi, and into everyday life in the Sambhar and Jaipur area of the interwar period (pastimes, habits and traditions, religious ceremonies, ailments and diseases from which people suffered, weather and how it influenced agriculture, prices, etc.).

Keywords

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Arrangement of Materials:

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Description of Subordinate Components

Diary

Unit ID id204149

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/257783

Unit Date January-December 1915

Mixed materials 1 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents

This diary spans the period of 1 January, 1915 through 31 December, 1915, with no entries between 23 December and 31 December and with a very small minority of them written in, what appears to be, Urdu, one of the coofficial languages in the general area today. It contains a stamp reading: "Munshi Radha Mohan Lal B.A., Nazim of Sambhar, Jaipur State." One learns from it that as the Nazim of Sambhar, the author performed many legal, as well as representative duties, which kept him very busy. He worked during weekends. He wrote correspondence, sent many money orders to magistrates in connection with legal cases, received royalty money from treasuries, worked with his court clerks to record the number of currency notes supplied by the Sall, heard legal cases, was present at inspections of his court and postmortem examinations in the local hospital, made usual arrangements to guard H.E. the Viceroy passing through Sambhar, met with many other officials and administrators, including "the Resident" and hosted them in his house on a regular basis. On 15 December, he was photographed during an official presentation of the insignia of Rai Salib to someone. The Nazim appears to be religious. He bathed in sacred streams and on Wednesday, 1 December, 1915, he observed that while the Raj courts were observing a holiday, "the Salt offices" were "working without the last regard to the sanctity of the day." "Salt offices" most likely referred to the offices administering salt from the Sambhar Lake (the offices of the Commissioner?) or to the last name of the Commissioner mentioned on 13 December, 1915. The Nazim also attended "the great Jalsa day" in Sambhar in September of 1915, which most likely referred to some regular day of public parties, festivities (nowadays speakers of Urdu use "Jalsa" to mean `procession`, `public rally`, and `public gathering`.) On Saturday, 15 January, a boy named Suresh, who was likely one of Nazim's servants, died of diptheria. The mourning was observed for three days (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday) and the court was closed on Monday. On 6 February there is a mention of the African Theatre of World War I. The Nazim was sent news of an Indian doctor's death, along with the doctor's entire regiment, in the East African Campaign, in which in excess of 200,000 Indian and South African troops fought against the German empire troops between August 1914 and November 1918.

Diary

Unit ID id204150

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/257784

Unit Date January-December 1916

Mixed materials 1 (Box)

Container 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents

This diary spans the period of 1 January, 1916 to 31 December, 1916, with entries for almost every day of the year, and with certain words, phrases, or dates written in, what appears to be, Urdu, one of the coofficial languages in the general area today. The inside cover has a quote from the Bible and the back pages contain random notes, many of them in Urdu. In the court, Nazim seemed to have worked closely with the Hakim (see, for example, the 20 January, 1916 entry). One of their usual duties was doing Shamlat work, which seems to have been suicide investigation (see, for example, 20 January, 18 June, and 2 December, 1916 entries). In January Nazim was busy with marriage arrangements. The ceremonies commenced on Saturday, 12 February, and continued through Monday, when a very large dinner for 1000 persons was given. After the wedding, the Nazim gave away parcels of sweets to the guests, a great example of the gift-giving nature of the Indian culture. Common gifts were shawls, baskets of oranges and melons, and golden watches (The January entries contain prices of gold and rolled gold watches.). H.E. the Viceroy visited Jodhpur on 25 February 1916 and the Hakim made the necessary arrangements to guard

the railway line. H.E. passed through the area on several other occasions throughout the year and the Nazim helped with the arrangements. On 26 February, the diary relays, H.H. the Maharaja of Jodhpur was invested with full powers by the Viceroy. On 22, 23, and 25 June, as well as 1, 3, 4, and 25 July, the Nazim mentioned "wife" and "wife and children". They lived with his father in Jaipur, who seemed to have exercised authority over them. From subsequent entries, one finds out that Nazim's wife suffered from problems connected to her reproductive system. According to the 2 December entry, one of the diagnoses was "derangement in the womb." She, the Nazim, and their son were trying to decide on an appropriate doctor under whose care she should be placed. Another glimpse into Nazim's personal family life is offered by the entry from 21 July, in which he mentions the contents of a certificate regarding his son, Hargobind. The certificate reads that Hargobind was the son of "M. Radha Mohan Lal Nazim and magistrate of Sambhar"; that he was a resident of Sherkot, that his family owned much real property and was very respectable. Hargobind was offered a paid position by the Inspector General of Hospitals as surgeon at the Medical College Hospital and accepted it, but stipulated that he was willing to work without remuneration (23 July). At another point in the diary, the Nazim mentioned meeting Hakim Indermul, who lived in Jodhpur at the time, with whom he had attended the Jaipur College. One finds out from this diary how important salt was to this region of India. The treaty between the Jodhpur Princely State and Britain specified regular payments by the Salt Treasury in Sambhar (see 5 June for a list of officers) to the Council in Jodhpur. This points to the Jodhpur State being a larger Princely State in India, as such States had treaties with Britain that specified which rights the princes had. Nazim wrote about salt samples for "supplying (...) the state" on 6 June, 1916. The Treasury seemed to have been the main source of income for the Council, which regularly sent payment orders to the Treasury via Nazim's court. The Treasury relayed the treaty payment money through Nazim's court, where clerks recorded their currency denominations and their numbers, a requirement by the clerks of the Treasury in Jaipur. Subsequently, the money was personally delivered to Jaipur, very often by the Nazim himself (see 27 and 28 January, 1916). Further, it seems that a portion of Nazim's personal income came from promissory notes bought from the Sambhar Treasury and other sources. On 20 September, Nazim wrote that he "realized from the Sambhar Treasury 8.4.0. on account of interest on [his] pro note" and on 6 December he "applied [...] to the Treasury officer [...] to convert [his] 3 1/2 % Pro note for 500- into 4% conversion loan." Nazim mentioned several court cases - a stolen property case, a criminal murder case, a rape case, into which he wanted to inquire in Phalera on 14 July, a Shamlat affair about which he had to see the Minister, and a criminal case of death of Gangla (?) Brahman, a high profile case likely going to be put before His Highness (2 July). There was a cholera outbreak in July and August that affected Jaipur and Sambhar. The 1916 diary, for example, mentions the area's cricket teams, various diseases from which people were suffering and mourning customs. He attended "the birthday Jalsa" in Sambhar in August, which most likely referred to an ordinary holiday or some regular day of public parties, festivities (nowadays speakers of Urdu use "Jalsa" to mean "procession", "public rally", and "public gathering".) This Jalsa started at 9:30 pm and finished at 3 am in the morning. The December entries contain no mention of Christmas.

Diary

Unit ID id204151

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/257785

Unit Date April 1918-March 1919

Mixed materials 1 (Box)

Container 3 (folder)

Scope and Contents

This diary spans the period of 1 April, 1918 through 31 March, 1919, with entries in English for almost every day of the year, and certain words, phrases, or dates in Hindi and, what appears to be, Urdu, one of the coofficial languages in the general area today. Following his eye operation in March, there are no entries for approximately three weeks. The back pages have random notes in English and Urdu. In contrast to previous diaries, the entries in this diary are shorter and there are fewer of them. During the diary's time frame, Radha Mohan Lal was a city magistrate in Jaipur. On 18 September, he mentioned he entered his second year of magistracy. He continued having much contact with the British and native government officials, but most so with "the Minister", the Chief Minister (Dewan/Diwan), at the time a position filled by Amar Nath Atal (1916 - 1922). Thus far, this diary contains the most information regarding WWI. In 1 May, 1918 entry Nazim wrote that "the Minister went to (...) join the war conference." In other May entries, he wrote that his son, Hargobind, was in a regiment that was being sent to the front. After finding out this news, the Nazim searched for a servant to accompany Hargobind to the front. And in the anticipation of Hargobind's deployment, many of the family members came to Bariely where Hargobind was at the time. On 19 May Hargobind left for the front and on 22 May embarked with his regiment from Bombay to the Suez docks (via the Gulf of Aden). Hargobind was sent to the Middle Eastern theatre of WWI. Initially he was in the city of Suez, then in "Tilkibir"/"Telilkibir"/"Telilkibit", which most likely meant Tall all Kebir or Tel-el-Kebir (Arabic) in Lower Egypt (June), an area involved in the Sinai and Palestine Campaign, "Suez" (July), Palestine and Jerusalem (end of July, August, and September),

Alexandria (September and October), Ishmailia (October), Suez and Alexandria again (November & December 1918, January 1919), and finally Ishmailia and Mansoura (May and June 1919). He departed for India in June of 1919. Throughout his deployment from May 1918 to June 1919 Czar Nicholas of the Russian Empire was shot by the Revolutionaries, the British and the Allies succeeded in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire surrendered unconditionally and signed an armistice, the Germans also surrendered and signed an armistice, the Kaiser fled for Holland, on 27 of November a Victory Day was celebrated all over India, in 1919 Gandhi's movement started gaining in importance and was causing unrest and the British mobilized for Afghanistan. Hargobind's rank and role within his regiment is not very clear from this diary, but the diary points to his fulfilling communications and/or medical roles. At the end of July and in August Hargobind was "on the line of communication" in Palestine (2 September 1918) where he was wounded. Further, the entry from 10 February 1919 reads that he was "attached to the 160th Indian Combined Field Ambulance". The news of Hargobind being wounded came via telegram from Hargobind dated either 20 or 26 of September reading that he had been wounded "superficially in the side" in Palestine, but that he was doing well and via an official report sent to Nazim by Director General of the hospital reading that he suffered shrapnel wounds to the abdominal wall. Hargobind was admitted to a hospital in Alexandria and at the beginning of October he was discharged as recovered and most probably went back to his regiment. While Hargobind's rank and role within his regiment are not clear, we do know that his performance at the front was highly praised. Hargobind's grandfather (Nazim's father) sent a letter to Major General John Shea and received a reply in which the General gave "(...) very high testimony to Hargobind's work at the front." (27 October). The General was a British officer in the Indian Army, who fought in the Chitral Expedition, Second Boer War, and WWI. After the War and until he retired in 1932, he served in India, during which time he was the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army. Throughout Hargobind's deployment, the communication between him and his father, grandfather, and other family members took place via EFM (Expeditionary Force Message) telegrams (took up to three days), Defd (Deferred) telegrams, cablegrams, letters, and packages. Hargobind's packages usually contained books, "picture postcards" (e.g. from Jerusalem or the Suez), albums (e.g. of Jerusalem), photos (e.g. on a camel with his orderly at Cairo near the Pyramids), and artifacts (e.g. an antique vase from Jerusalem), while Nazim's contained medical supplies. Other sources of news about the war and Hargobind were official reports from the front, letters from Hargobind's military superiors or doctors, and newspapers, such as the "Civil Military Gazette" listing wounded and dead soldiers and the "Pioneer". In the letter dated 8 June Hargobind mentioned that several of his letters had been detained by censors "through some mistake in writing the name of the place and his official designation", as paraphrased by his father. Mail from India going to the front was also censored. Throughout Hargobind's deployment, the Nazim received monthly payments from "D.D.O. Theerut on account of family allotment (...)" (August entries). He received these payments through January. Nazim purchased war bonds from the local post-office and hosted meetings of the War Loan Chowbiri (?) Committee with the Chief Minister, Mr. Atal, as the chair. The Nazim continued to be involved with raw materials and during the time span of this diary was responsible for their relay to His Highness, the Maharaja of Jaipur. One of the materials was sugar cane from Suharanpur. In June of 1918 the Nazim was appointed by the Council to the committee to control supplies comprising eight members of the Council, two Dewans, and him. He was also appointed to a four-member working committee for the board of civil supplies. In this dual capacity he dealt mostly with the grain market, by regulating the prices of grain. For example, on 2 October the Nazim did rounds in the grain markets and induced merchants to sell barley at a lower price, given the high and rising prices at that time. The Nazim reported a death due to Typhoid Fever, and thousands of deaths due to influenza in October and November. At the height of the epidemic over 300 people a day were dying of flu in Jaipur. On 22 October the Nazim wrote, "Everything seems to be unhinged (...)" and on the 23 October, "Very hard times. The whole town seems to be under difficulties on account of this scourge (...)." The 9 July entry enumerates Nazim's father's pension and Nazim's pay, specifically his regular pay, his "conveyance allowance" (might have meant funds for staff to transport guests to and from the train station), and "pay of 5 men". All were specified by the Council and approved by H.H. A new source of income for Nazim, on account of war, were War Bonds. On 25 August, the Nazim pronounced judgment in a case sentencing the accused to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine. On the occasion of H.H.'s birthday orders were sent to the Nazim for the release of prisoners. His clerks were responsible for working out the details of the release. On 16 October, Nazim's wife gave birth to a son (Jagdeeshwari Dayal). Two days later Mrs. Madan Muhan had a miscarriage (The Muhans were one of Nazim's closest family friends). Finally, on 17 December, Hargobind's wife gave birth to a son, "happy news" that the Nazim announced to Hargobind via a telegram listing its cost of 6.12.0. The following day he and the family doctor went to the hospital and "got a bottle of 3x Rum for Mrs. Hargobind's use". "Thanks God she is doing well", wrote the Nazim (18 December). The son died two days and four hours later of chill caught during night, as explained by the doctor (19 December). On 22 January it was announced that HM King Emperor's youngest son died. The Nazim was ordered to close the court on account of the "Royal mourning". On 9 March, Radha had an operation to remove a cataract from his left eye. Following it, he couldn't write in his diary as his eyes were bandaged and after the bandages were removed, his eyes were covered in lotion. He resumed normal functioning on 30 March when he went to see the Minister. His Highness arrived in Jaipur on 28 March.

Diary**Unit ID** id204152**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/257786**Unit Date** April 1919-March 1920**Mixed materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 4 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

SUMMARY: This diary spans the period of 1 April, 1919 through 31 March, 1920, with entries for almost every day and with some text written in Urdu, one of the co-official languages in the general area today. The front pages of this diary look different from those in the earlier ones. One page has the calendar for 1919 glued onto it and the other has "RML Mathur's DIARY 1ST APRIL, 1919 to 31ST MARCH, 1920" ornamentally and colorfully written on it. The significant occurrences of this diary were Nazim's son's return from the front in August of 1919, most probably from the Suez with the 137 Indian Stationery Hospital he was commanding. Besides WWI's end, other significant historical events were the Third Afghan War in the North-West frontier in 1919 and the unrest caused by the Satyagraha movement led by Ghandi. The movement started gaining more and more strength following WWI (1919) and caused much unrest in many areas leading to the institution of martial laws regionally in 1919. The Nazim continued to be stationed in Jaipur as a magistrate without significant changes in his professional life. He continued to have the most professional contact with 'the Minister' and 'the Resident'. There was continuity in his personal life as well - he participated in his family life, attended public religious functions, invested via Promissory Notes and wrote about deaths and other significant events in the life of the Jaipur region. *** DETAIL: The Nazim did not hear from Hargobind for an unusually long time, from 3 April to 23 May, and because of that, the Nazim wrote to General Shea, Colonel Lang, and the censor in Bombay complaining and inquiring about the lack of correspondence from Hargobind. On 30 April the Nazim was told that Hargobind might return from the front between 10-14 June. On 1 June, the Nazim wrote that Hargobind was in Mansoura with the 123rd Field Ambulance and on 16 June that Hargobind was with the 121st Ambulance and that he was returning home. However, as of the 22 June cablegram from Hargobind, his return to India was still not settled. Then the 25th and 28th communications from Hargobind read that he would go to Lucknow with the 137 Stationery Hospital, not 121 Ambulance, as formerly announced. His 30 June letter reads that he was in command of the 137 Indian Stationery Hospital and that there were from 6,000 to 7,000 men at Suez awaiting embarkation for India. Later, one also learns that according to the Gazette of India, on 30 June 1918 Hargobind was made Temporary Captain. Hargobind left for India from the Suez docks via the Chikdara ship on 19 August and reached Bombay on 31 August where he was greeted by the Nazim, friends and family. The Nazim also continued receiving pay from the D.D.o. (Deputy Director of Operations or Director of Operations?) of the 7th Meerut Division on account of Hargobind's service. The particular payments in this diary mention service from 1 October 1917 to 30 April 1918 signifying that Hargobind was in the military well prior to being deployed in May of 1918. The correspondence from Hargobind to the Nazim continued being censored by the censor in Bombay "who still exists to delay letters & to justify his existence." (11 August 1919) Following Hargobind's return from the war, he continued serving in the military and as such was leading field hospitals in various conflict areas of India. In October of 1919 he was posted with a Hospital to Bannu close to Peshawar on the North-Western frontier, the border area with Afghanistan and asked the Nazim to mail him his revolver (25 October 1919 entry). In light of this, the Nazim kept urging him to resign from the military service in altogether. The Satyagraha movement led by Ghandi, another significant development in this diary, interrupted His Highness's movements. HH arrived in Jaipur on 28 March. On 5 April the Nazim presented him with sugarcane and Nazar. Later that month he canceled his travels to Brindaban (in today's state of Uttar Pradesh in northeastern India bordered by Rajasthan to the west) due to the social unrest in British India in general, caused by the Satyagraha movement. "Owing to Satyagraha movement, strikes, hartals, mob-fighting and all sort of nuisance have taken place in many towns in Br India. Military assistance was requisitioned in lots of places to put down this rising movement." (15 April, 1919). However, His Highness did reach Brindaban on 20 April. He returned to Jaipur on 25 April. During his stay there, on 22 April, the Nazim mentioned the unrest in India again writing that all "sorts of conveyances" were stopped and marshal and curfew laws were instituted in several districts. In addition to the domestic unrest, there was unrest on the North-Western frontier of British India, near the border with Afghanistan, near Peshawar and in Waziristan. The Pioneer reported in May of 1919 that due to the unrest in Afghanistan, "the mobilization of troops [was] being made at the frontier". The Nazim wrote that "in fact, the situation rather look[ed] gloomy (8 April 1919). A couple of days later the Nazim wrote that the "mobilization of the army according to the Pioneer is going on satisfactorily on the frontier" and reported that martial law was declared in Peshawar, the frontier headquarters of British India (11 May 1919). The Nazim reported on 10 August that peace with Afghanistan was signed. However, a couple of months later, the Pioneer reported that the bombing of the villages in that region started prior to the 25 October 1919 (30 October 1919 entry). In April 1919 the Nazim attended a great Pooja/Poojah (or 'Puja'), a prayer ritual performed by Hindus to host, honor and worship one or more deities, or to spiritually celebrate an event. In May his wife and children accompanied

by two Sowars, went to Amer (or Amber), a nearby city, to "Mataji's temple to perform the ceremony of Namie Babu." (2 May, 1919). The 10 April 1919 entry lists details of three Promissory Notes (two War Bonds and one War Loan): their rates of return, their numbers, their maturity dates and their redemption values. The Nazim presented them to the Sambhar Treasury for "realization of interest", which he received on 13 April. On the same day, the Nazim also reported an engineer die of phthisis, an archaic name for tuberculosis. On 3 May, he wrote that he received 572 from the Treasury as his pay for the months of March and April. On 9 May, the Nazim met the Nazim of Sambhar. In November of 1919 he realized more interest from the Sambhar Treasury. On 28 May, the Nazim received the news of his uncle, Jai Behari Lal, having passed away. Nazim's father was very affected by the news. The Nazim and his daughter-in-law with children traveled to Sherkot for the 13th Day Ceremony to take place on 9 June. A 10th Day Ceremony (on 6 June) also took place. On 19 June 1919, the Nazim mentioned that only 19 boys out of 71 sent from a local college successfully passed a matriculation examination to the University of Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh). He was exasperated about the news. On 7 August, he wrote about his land on Residency Road in Jaipur, how it was being cleared and leveled. There was a change in his professional life on 17 August 1919 when he was officially reassigned from the Girai office back to the Fanjdari office. It seems from the diary entries that this reassignment was not without some drama. Her Highness Dowager Maharani of Gwahir died in September 1919. The Nazim received consignments of sugar canes, which were then presented to HH (31 October 1919). The Nazim attended events at the Christian mission church outside of Chandpole, Purani Basti in Jaipur (31 October 1919). There was an annual holiday surrounding lunar eclipses and the one in 1919 was on 8 November. The Nazim complained that it took place on the day of the eclipse and not the following day "as is the case everywhere else and as it should be." (8 November 1919) The Nazim mentioned the British Resident, Col. Robert Arthur Edward Benn (1915/16 - 1922), on a frequent basis as he has much professional contact with him, but usually the mentions are simply of meetings with him with no further information, for example a mention that the Col. went to the Chief's Conference in Dehli, which took place ~27 October - 8 November, also attended by 'the Minister' and Babu Abinash. However, later there was an unusual mention - namely, the Col. delivered a couple of lectures on his overland journey from India to England. These lectures were "illustrated by magic lantern slides" and were given at "the College" (15 November 1919). They were a hit and had non-English speaking audience, which, the Nazim reported, "has assembled to visit the College as if they were going to a cinema" (15 November 1919). In November the Nazim discussed Hargobind's career and prospects with Col. Deas. December is the start of the betrothal and wedding season in the region during which "feasts take place every day" (30 November 1919) During December of 1919 Peace Celebrations took place with four distinct holidays. The Nazim was on the organization committee, which also included the minister and the Resident. As part of it, thousands of poor were fed, garden parties were held, thanksgiving celebrations were held in churches, temples, and mosques, celebratory gun salvos were fired, fairs were held, and fireworks and illuminations took place.

Diary

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Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/257787

Unit Date 1920-1921

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Diary

Unit ID id204154

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/257788

Unit Date 1921-1922

Mixed materials 2 (Box)

Container 2 (folder)