


2018

Guide to the Davidson Family papers

Mary Davidson Wagner

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Guide to the Davidson Family papers

Overview of the Collection

Title: Davidson Family papers

Dates

(Inclusive): 1903-2018

Dates (Bulk): 1908-1978

Creators: Davidson, Ethel Helena, 1885-1906
Davidson, Frederick Arthur, 1906-1968
Wagner, Mary Davidson

Quantity: 1 box plus 3 oversize boxes, (3.5 linear feet)

Summary: The Davidson Family papers include photographs taken and correspondence written during Ethel Helena Davidson's time as an American Expeditionary Force nurse in France during World War I and Frederick Arthur Davidson's time in the United States Army between the 1920s and 1950s. Also includes a scrapbook of Ethel's war experience and army records for each of them.

Identification: USDSC_2018_001; USDSC_2018_002

Language: English

Repository: [University of San Diego, Archives and Special Collections](#)

Copley Library
5998 Alcalá Park
San Diego, CA 92110
Telephone: 619-260-2730
spcoll@sandiego.edu

Biographical Note

Ethel Helena Davidson born January 9, 1885 in Belleville, Hastings, Ontario, Canada. She moved to the United States in 1900, and in 1906 earned her Registered Nurse Certificate from the University of the State of New York, Albany. She then worked as a nurse in a hospital and lived with her mother and six siblings in Rochester, New York.

In 1917, Ethel began serving in the US Army Nurse Corps. She was assigned to the Base Hospital, Unit 36, American Expeditionary Force in France. She was relieved of active service in April 1919. Ethel died on April 28, 1950 in La Jolla, California.

Frederick Arthur Davidson was born on January 17, 1906 in Rochester, New York. He joined the US Army at the age of 17. He was stationed in Panama in the 1930s with the US Army Signal Corps. While in Panama, he built a boat he named Gulliver. In 1942 he was assigned as an Ordnance Officer in the US Eighth Air Force in Bushy Park, Widewing, England in charge of the ammunition section. While there he met Joan Hale, with whom he married in 1943. Joan and Frederick had two children, Mary and Dale. Frederick was reassigned to the United States in 1947. He was stationed at Muroc Army Base in the Mojave Desert to clear unexploded bombs used for bombing practice during World War II. He then served in the Korean War between 1951 and 1953. He retired from the Army in 1955.

After serving in the Army, Joan and Frederick purchased a house in San Clemente, California. Frederick built a 24 foot fishing boat which he named "Mary Kathleen." Joan and Frederick's son Dale attended the University of San Diego and married 1967 USD Associated Students President Joylee Loftis. Frederick died April 28, 1968 in San Diego, California. Joan died July 8, 1978.

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Scope and Content Note

This collection consists most prominently of the materials of Frederick Arthur Davidson and Ethel Helena Davidson. Frederick Davidson was the nephew of Ethel Davidson. Mary Davidson Wagner, daughter of Frederick Arthur Davidson, compiled the collection.

Among Ethel Davidson's materials are records pertaining to her time working as an Army nurse in France during World War I. These include photographs, letters, poetry, war records, and her discharge papers. Also included is a photograph album of family, friends, and fellow nurses, as well as a scrapbook of her time in France during the war. The scrapbook includes newspaper clippings, photographs, letters, drawings, and poetry. Records of Ethel's fight to receive a pension for her service in the War are also included.

The materials of Frederick Davidson consist primarily of correspondence and photographs documenting his time in the US Army from the 1930s into the 1950s. These photographs and letters pertain to Frederick's service in World War II and the Korean War. The bulk of the correspondence is with Frederick's sister, Bernice, though not exclusively. Correspondence with friends and other family members is also included. Stationed in England during the 1940s with wife Joan, topics include what life was like in England during the war, impending air raids, life with their new-born son, Dale, and Frederick's desire to build a boat. Photographs and correspondence reveal Frederick's nicknames: to his army comrades, he was known as Dave, and to his family he was Fritz. This collection also includes correspondence and photographs of Joan Hale Davidson.

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Arrangement

Records remain in original order.

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Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

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Separated Material

Oversize materials have been separated from their original folder location and stored in oversize (Box 2) for preservation purposes. Record has been made of the original location.

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Index Terms

Davidson, Ethel Helena, 1885-1906
Davidson, Frederick Arthur, 1906-1968
Davidson, Joan Hale, 1919-1978
Matteson, Bernice (Davidson), 1898-1964
Wagner, Mary Davidson
Davidson family

Bushy Park (London, England)
Rochester (N.Y.)
Vittel (France)

Korean War, 1950-1953.
Military nursing--Europe, Western--History--20th century.
Nursing--United States--History.
United States. Army.
World War, 1914-1918.
World War, 1914-1918--Women.
World War, 1939-1945.

Military
Nursing.

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Administrative Information

Preferred citation

[Folder Title], Box # Folder #, Davidson Family papers, Copley Library, University of San Diego, Archives and Special Collections.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Mary Davidson Wagner in June 2018. Additional materials donated by Mary Wagner in July 2018.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Ashley Toutain in 2018.

Materials have been rehoused in alkaline folders. Folder titles have been transcribed exactly from the original. When no folder title was given, brackets [] have been used to describe included items.

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Detailed Description of the Collection

| Box | Folder | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 1 | [Ethel and Frederick Davidson biographies. Compiled by Mary Wagner], 2018 June |
| 2 | Frederick Davidson (Joan), 1908-1968 | [Materials include photographs of Fred and other soldiers dating from the 1920s to the 1950s. These include photographs taken while in the Army in Panama and Korea. Includes letters between Arthur Davidson, Ethel's father, and Ethel, letters written to Bernice, and other family members, as well as a childhood photograph of Frederick. Also includes a 1960 letter from William Wharton, Jr. about working at Comboni College Khartoum in Khartoum, Sudan. A friend of Frederick, this is a rather extensive letter documenting Sudan and the College.] |
| 3 | Frederick Davidson, 1942-1944 | |

- [Includes correspondence from Joan and Frederick to Bernice and family documenting life in England, air raids, and life with their new child, Dale.]
- 4 Correspondence (Citizenship-Mrs. Davidson) (Personal), 1903, 1935-1968, 2004
[Primarily consists of army and citizenship records for Frederick.]
- 5 [Letters from Fred and Joan], 1941-1944
[Includes correspondence from Joan and Frederick to Bernice and family.]
- 6 Joan Davidson, 1922-1978
[Includes photographs of the Hale and Davidson families, photographs taken at Frederick's funeral, and Joan's death and funeral records.]
- 7 Joan Hale Davidson, 1944 May, 1971
[Includes letter from Joan to Bernice and photograph of Joan.]
- 8 Arthur Davidson, 1945-1946
[Includes correspondence between Ethel and Arthur as well as family photographs.]
- 9- [Ethel Davidson], 1917-1951
11
[Includes photographs of family, friends, and fellow nurses, correspondence and records pertaining to Ethel's time as a nurse during World War I, Ethel's Army Discharge papers, and requests for pension. Also includes Ethel's army bracelet, and collected poetry.]

Box

- 2 Cocktail Fork, undated
Photograph Album, circa 1917-1919
Scrapbook, 1917-1919
Charcoal portrait of Frederick Davidson, undated
Ethel Davidson Registered Nurse Certificate, 1906 March 12
Photograph Album, 1920s
[Photograph album belonging to friend of Frederick Davidson from Davidson's first enlistment in the Army. The album includes photographs of soldiers during their free time and aerial photographs of the US Capitol building, Mt. Vernon and Grant's Tomb. Accompanied by a description and history of the album from donor Mary Davidson Wagner.]

Box

- 3 Wood paneling piece, Benedictine Monastery, Worcester England, Carved into the wood is the date AD 1261
[Paneling from the Friars chamber, brought from Worcester, England by Thomas Hale when he came to the United States in 1947. Accompanied by a description and history of the album from donor Mary Davidson Wagner.]
Plaque for Percy Elgin Davidson. Shaped like a ship wheel and reads "He Died for Freedom and Honor", undated

Box



4

Metal box which contained Frederick's Army records, undated

[Accompanied by a biography of Frederick Davidson from Mary Davidson Wagner.]

Mary Kathleen Hale Certificate of Citizenship, 1919 July 25

Frederick Davidson Army Records, 1937-1970

[Includes Joan and Frederick's Marriage Certificate and Joan's Passport.]