

University of Memphis

University of Memphis Digital Commons

Special Collections Finding Aids

Special Collections

6-9-2021

MSS0347. Minnie Dickson Robison collection finding aid

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-findingaids>

Recommended Citation

"MSS0347. Minnie Dickson Robison collection finding aid" (2021). *Special Collections Finding Aids*. 171. <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-findingaids/171>

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at University of Memphis Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Special Collections Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of University of Memphis Digital Commons. For more information, please contact khggerty@memphis.edu.

**University of Memphis Libraries
Special Collections Department**

126 Ned R. McWherter Library

Memphis, TN 38152 - 3250

Phone: (901) 678 - 2210

E-mail: lib_sc@memphis.edu

Minnie Dickson Robison collection

Title: Minnie Dickson Robison collection

Collection No: MSS.347

Extent: 1 cubic foot

Inclusive Dates: 1889-1955

Abstract: The collection comprises a number of diaries of Minnie Dickson Robison (1870-1955) of Covington, Tennessee, written between 1889 and 1955.

Processed by: James Montague, 2002; Gerald Chaudron, 2020-2021

Access: Open to all researchers.

Language: English

Preferred Citation: Minnie Dickson Robison collection, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: 2021 June

Biographical information

Mineola Alabama Dickson was born on June 30, 1870, in Tipton County, Tennessee, the eldest child and only daughter of James Fentress (1842-1896) and Rachel Jane Payne Dickson (1844-1938). James was a farmer for many years and did well in business following his marriage. He was educated at Portersville Academy and his family attended the Salem Reformed Presbyterian Church in that area, which is now known as Atoka. After graduation from high school, he enlisted in the Confederate Army in Company G, 51st Tennessee Infantry, and was first appointed orderly sergeant, then lieutenant, and was in the battles of Perrysville, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, around Atlanta, and Jonesboro, N.C. At Franklin, Tennessee, he was captured and soon after taken to Fort Delaware, and held prisoner until July 1865, when he returned home and resumed farming. On November 23, 1865, he married Rachel, the daughter of Banyan and Nancy M. (Wright) Payne. In the declining years of his father-in-law, James took over the running of much of Banyan Payne's vast land and business holdings.

Of the eight children born to James and Rachel, only three lived into their teens and beyond. Minnie's siblings included: Banyan Vernon (1877-1940) who became a physician, and Fentress Dickson (1881-1897). Minnie grew up and was educated in Covington. In 1895 she married Robert Melville Robison (1867-1942) who was born in Tippah County, Mississippi, the son of the Rev. Hugh Harris (1824-1881), a Presbyterian minister and former Confederate chaplain and prisoner of war, and Martha Ellis Robison. Robert was a banker and a farmer and the couple settled near Minnie's relatives. Robert and Minnie had three children: James Fentress (1897-1897), Rachel Adaline (1898-1927), and Robert Melville, Jr. (1901-1989), who became Executive Dean of Students and Assistant to the President of Memphis State University.

Minnie died in Memphis, Tennessee, on June 6, 1955 and was buried in Covington.

Scope and contents

The collection comprises 13 diaries written by Minnie Dickson Robison. The first begins on November 13, 1889 and finishes on November 13, 1891. Interestingly, she stamped and wrote her name as Minnie O. Dickson on the diary. Minnie did not write entries every day and several pages were removed at some point. When she began writing, Minnie was living in Covington, Tennessee, and attending school. She talks about her daily life and the people she knew; their births, marriages, illnesses and deaths. Minnie had decided views on dancing with boys ("One of the roads that lead to forbidden paths") and deplored the number of young men and women who married soon after graduating school. Nevertheless, she had traditional views on marriage and a wife's role. She transcribed her graduation essay at the end of 1890 titled "Whisperings of the Times as Regards Woman." She writes about visiting friends and family in Covington and the West Tennessee towns of Atoka, Brownsville, and Memphis, and, during a visit to the latter in late February 1894, she enjoyed a performance of the play "Ivy Leaf" at the Lyceum Theatre. Minnie noted that there were several men interested in her but she had fallen in love with a man whom she deliberately did not name.

The other diaries are from much later, beginning in 1941 and the last is from 1955, the year she died. These contain brief daily entries describing her activities, friends and family.

Related materials

Robert M. Robison collection, University Archives, Special Collections Department, University of Memphis Libraries.

Subject terms

Dickson, Minnie, 1870-1955.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 Diary belonging to Minnie Dickson, Covington, Tennessee, 1889 November 13-1891
 November 13.
unfoldered Diaries, 1941, 1944, 1946-1955. (12)
- 2 Loose items from diaries.