Descriptive Summary

Title: Donald Ryder Dickey Personal Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1911-1916

Collection number: 296

Creator: Donald R. Dickey 1887-1932

Extent: 1 box (0.5 linear ft.)

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library History and Special Collections for the Sciences

Los Angeles, California 90095-1490

Abstract: Collection consists chiefly of personal letters to Dickey, some newspaper clippings of persons and happenings of interest to him, numerous wedding invitations, and a copy of his will, dated 1916.

Physical location: Biomedical Library History and Special Collection Cage Manuscripts

Language of Material: Collection materials in English

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Donald Ryder Dickey personal papers (Manuscript collection 296). Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library History and Special Collections for the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

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Acquisition Information

In 1940 Mrs. Donald R. Dickey donated the Donald R. Dickey Collection of Vertebrate Zoology and Library of Vertebrate Zoology to the University of California, Los Angeles. This document box was included in the donation.

Biography

Donald Ryder Dickey (1887-1932) was an adventurous, pioneer wildlife photographer as well as an ornithologist and mammalogist. He was well known in his time for: his photographs (both still and moving) of birds and mammals; his lectures on wildlife; and eventually, for his substantial specimen collection of birds and mammals. Drawn to outdoor life in his childhood and youth, he considered this nothing more than a hobby until he experienced a serious heart attack in his senior year at Yale and was sentenced to immediate and complete bedrest. Allowed to graduate with his class because of his high academic standing, he returned after graduation to his parents' home in Pasadena for two years of inactivity. He visited a friend's ranch in the Ojai Valley after about a year, and there, from his steamer chair, he began to observe, and after a time to photograph, local birds and their nests.

As Dickey became stronger he also became more active, taking longer and longer photographic jaunts and starting to collect small mammals in an amateur way. When he had finally regained full strength, in about 1916, he found that he was "too interested by that time in what started as a hobby, to forego it for a conventional business life." Eventually he determined to establish a research center for vertebrate zoology in Southern California, consisting of a study collection of specimens with photographs and books to support it. In 1926 the California Institute of Technology provided housing for the by-then-sizeable collection and named Dickey "Research Associate in Vertebrate Zoology"; in 1940 the collection was moved to UCLA. The collection covers North and Central America, but focuses mainly on southwestern fauna including the Pacific slopes of Mexico and Central America, with important pictorial records also of the birds of Laysan Island, Hawaii, and the large mammals of New Brunswick, Canada.

In June, 1921, Dickey married Florence Van Vechten Murphy and they had one son, Donald Jr. They built a home in Pasadena, California.

Scope and Content

These papers - letters, newspaper clippings, social invitations - though small in number, provide a window on an important phase of Dickey's life, when he was slowly regaining his health after an almost-fatal heart attack and beginning active life again. A few letters from his mother and female friends originated from Paris and Switzerland in August 1914, during the
Related Material

UCLA BIOMEDICAL LIBRARY HISTORY AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FOR THE SCIENCES. Manuscript Coll. #59: "Donald Ryder Dickey Photographic Collection"

UCLA BIOMEDICAL LIBRARY HISTORY AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FOR THE SCIENCES. Manuscript Coll. #110: "Donald Ryder Dickey Field Notes"

UCLA BIOMEDICAL LIBRARY HISTORY AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FOR THE SCIENCES. Manuscript Coll. #301: "Donald R. Dickey personal photo album, ca. 1921-1926"

UCLA BIOMEDICAL LIBRARY HISTORY AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FOR THE SCIENCES. Manuscript Coll. #213: "Anna Ryder Dickey Collection"

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

Dickey, Donald R. (Donald Ryder), 1887-1932 -- Archives

Zoologists -- United States -- Archival resources

Box 1, Folder 1-14  Letters addressed to Donald D. Dickey. 1911-1916, bulk 1913-1916

Scope and Content Note

personal letters, many undated, from only partially identified correspondents; some newspaper clippings about various individuals

Note

folders arranged alphabetically

Box 1, Folder 15  Yale University. 1916

Scope and Content Note

announcements; newspaper clipping

Box 1, Folder 16  Social invitations. 1913-1916

Scope and Content Note

over 40 invitations to weddings and subsequent "at home" card; some invitations to dances, etc.

Box 1, Folder 17  Miscellaneous newspaper clippings. undated

Box 1, Folder 18  Travel permit. 1914

Scope and Content Note

issued by the U.S. Department of State, a request "to permit Donald R. Dickey, a citizen of the United States, safely and freely to pass and in case of need to give him all lawful aid and protection."

Box 1, Folder 19  Donald R. Dickey's Last Will and Testament 1916

Scope and Content Note

carbon copy of the document, unsigned