

TITLE: Dale Ralston Collection

DATE RANGE: 1904-1974

CALL NUMBER: Y-MS3

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6 linear ft. (10 boxes)

PROVENANCE: Possibly donated by his wife, Ludmelia Ralston 1974.

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CREDIT LINE: Dale Ralston Collection, Y-MS3, Yuma County Library District

PROCESSED BY: Linda Whitaker, April 2013

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Dale (Gleason) Ralston was born March 7, 1889 in San Francisco to Zenobia Septima Lansdale, a piano teacher who married several times. He was adopted by his stepfather, Robert Gordon Ralston, a "railroad man." Both Dale and Zenobia's early lives from 1903-1920 were characterized by frequent moves within California and Arizona searching for employment and following various mining prospects or real estate investments. His mother eventually moved to Quartzsite, Arizona when she married William C. Lacy.

After graduating from Yuma Union High School in 1906, Dale Ralston attended two years at the University of Arizona College of Agriculture, Mechanical Arts and Mining. From 1909-1918, he traveled extensively and worked as a miner, a construction worker, and occasionally a fisherman from Canada to Mexico.

In 1918, Dale was drafted into the Army at age 29 and served as a demolition instructor at Camp Cody, New Mexico. He became an active member of the American Legion H.H. Donkersley Post No. 19 and WWI Veterans. He was particularly active in the Masons and Yuma Lodge No. 10 where he served in several leadership positions.

From 1920-1936, he served as an assistant in the Yuma County Engineer's office. He went on to work in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as an Inspector, Chief of Surveys, Civil Engineer and Construction Engineer until 1957 when he retired after suffering a heart attack. Dale Ralston married Ludmelia Holstein, 16 years his junior and a school teacher in 1935. They had two children, Robert Dale and Elisabeth. He was preceded in death by his wife in 1976. On April 20, 1977 Dale Ralston died in Solano, California.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

The correspondence and photographs in this collection are significant for their volume and detail. The correspondence between Zenobia Lacy (mother) and son Dale Ralston 1904-1918 is voluminous. Their letters document a hard life along the Colorado River whether it was prospecting, building canals, farming, road construction or land speculation. Some of the print material is fragile. There are over 200 photographs, most taken by Dale Ralston from the 1920s to 1930s, of mining and survey sites, canals and levees, the construction of the Phoenix-Yuma Highway, and his friends, pets, cars, colleagues, and wife, Ludmelia. Album fragments dating from 1897 to the 1920s also include early family photographs and images of Quartzsite, Arizona.

Arranged in six series, then alphabetically and chronologically within. **Series I: Personal** includes the Ralston marriage certificate, pioneer biographical sheet submitted by Ludmelia Ralston for her husband, a chronology of early moves, financial files, and professional certificates. **Series II: Correspondence** arranged alphabetically by sender or subject; includes letters between mother and son, family, friends, and potential employers. **Series III: Writings** include Dale Ralston's diaries, survey field notes, short stories, and essays - some of which are not authored by him. **Series IV: Photographs** include over 200 black and white images that capture the men and equipment used for mining, canal and road construction as well as the Lacy-Ralston travels to California and Mexico. **Series V: Memorabilia** includes business ledgers collected by Dale, his membership cards from group affiliations, and various ephemera. **Series VI: Oversized** includes panoramic military photographs.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	Personal: Biographical Documents (marriage certificate, commendations, news clippings, chronology of moves)	1901-1974
	2	Personal: Home Budget	1942-1948
	3	Personal: Lacy, Zenobia S. (mother's tax records and other documents)	1915-1938
	4	Personal: Lacy, Zenobia S. (mother's piano teacher notebook and related materials)	1920
	5	Personal: Ralston, Ludmelia Holstein (application for teaching position, love letter to Dale)	1957, n.d.
	6	Correspondence: Baumgardner, J.W.	1914-1915
	7	Correspondence: Cannon, Frank M.	1908-1931
	8	Correspondence: Condolences (mother's death)	1935
	9	Correspondence: Engineering (various projects)	1915-1934
	10	Correspondence: Genung, C.B.	1904, 1913, 1921
	10a	Correspondence: Invitations	1963-1975, n.d.
	11	Correspondence: Leavitt, Bessie L. (aunt)	1898-1931
	12	Correspondence: Lacy (Gleason), Zenobia S. (mother to son)	1897-1903
	13	Correspondence: Lacy (Gleason), Zenobia S.	1904-1905

		(mother to son)	
	14	Correspondence: Lacy (Gleason), Zenobia S. (mother to son)	1909, 1919, 1931-1934
	15	Correspondence: Lacy, William (stepfather)	1915
	16	Correspondence: "Lois"	1933
	17	Correspondence: Lansdale, H.L (grandfather)	1897-1904
	18	Correspondence: Love, Everett G. (boyhood friend)	1904-1905
	19	Correspondence: Military (includes letters to mother)	1918-1919
2	1	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	1903
	2	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	January-June, 1914
	3	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	July-December, 1914
	4	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	January-March, 1915
	5	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	April-October, 1915
	6	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	November-December, 1915
	7	Correspondence: Ralston, Dale (to his mother; fragile)	1916-1928
	8	Correspondence: Ralston Ranch	1912-1953
	9	Correspondence: Sinclair (Huskey), Mary Louise	1941-1956
3	1	Correspondence: State Board of Registration (Engineering)	1927-1930
	2	Correspondence: Various (to Dale Ralston)	1904-1940
	3	Correspondence: WWI Veterans	1957-1958
	4	Correspondence: WWI Veterans	1959
	5	Correspondence: WWI Veterans	1960
	6	Correspondence: WWI Veterans	1961
	7	Correspondence: WWI Veterans	1962
	8	Correspondence: WWI Veterans	1963-1964
	9	Correspondence: YMCA, San Francisco (fragile)	1901-1904
	10	Writings: Baseball Game (between Mesa High School and Phoenix High School; includes correspondence to Ralston as team manager)	1907-1908
	11	Writings: Diary	1904
	12	Writings: Diary	1904-1907
4	1	Writings: Diary	1919
	2	Writings: Diary (typed, two-page entry)	1931

	3	Writings: Essays, Short Stories, Speech (some by Dale Ralston)	1948, n.d.
	4	Writings: Field Notes	1915-1916
	5	Writings: Field Notes (Camp Cody, New Mexico)	1918
	6	Writings: Field Notes	1921-1923
	7	Writings: Field Notes	1929-1934
	8	Writings: Field Notes	1933-1934
	9	Writings: Field Notes (crystals, mineralogy, gemology, model of La Jolla Farm, essay on saloon dance halls and gambling palaces)	n.d.
5	1	Photographs: Album (given to Ludmelia Holstein in 1921 by her uncle Edward Bier documenting his job in the State of Washington; fragile)	1914-1918
	2	Photographs: Album Pages (Dale Ralston, mother, friends, mining, irrigation, Yuma earthquake; various locales in Arizona, California, and Mexico)	1900-1928
	3	Photographs: Album (first year of marriage, children's birth, family gatherings, news clippings)	1935-1940
	3	Photographs: 17 Club Picnic	1932
	4	Photographs: California Coast (Sciots and Master Masons Meeting; San Diego, Oceanside, Los Angeles area))	1929, n.d.
	5	Photographs: Camps (various)	1928-1934
	6	Photographs: Dale Ralston	1898, 1920s-1930s, n.d.
	7	Photographs: Dale and Ludmelia Ralston (with family and friends)	1920s-1970s, n.d.
5A	1	Photographs: Family and Friends (includes early photos of Quartzite, Arizona)	1904-1970
	2	Photographs: Ludmelia Holstein Ralston	1922-1929, 1950s, n.d.
	3	Photographs: Military (Camp Cody, New Mexico)	1918
	4	Photographs: Phoenix-Yuma Highway Construction 1 of 3	1920
	5	Photographs: Phoenix-Yuma Highway Construction 2 of 3	1920
	6	Photographs: Phoenix-Yuma Highway Construction 3 of 3	1920
6	1	Photographs: Prospectors, Mines, Mining Towns 1 of 2	Circa 1914-1915
	2	Photographs: Prospectors, Mines, Mining Towns	Circa 1914-1919

		2 of 2	
	3	Photographs: Railroads	n.d.b
	4	Photographs: San Diego Bay	1921
	5	Photographs: Smarr Ranch (Fallbrook, California) 1 of 2	1928-1929
	6	Photographs: Smarr Ranch (Fallbrook, California) 2 of 2	1928-1929
	7	Photographs: Unidentified (possibly Ludmelia Holstein's family visiting Arizona)	n.d.
	8	Photographs: Unidentified	n.d.
	9	Photographs: Yuma and Gila Irrigation Projects (1 of 3)	1936-1939
	10	Photographs: Yuma and Gila Irrigation Projects (2 of 3)	1936-1939
	11	Photographs: Yuma and Gila Irrigation Projects (3 of 3)	n.d.
	12	Photographs: Zenobia and William Lacy (mother and stepfather)	1916-1930s, n.d.
7	1	Memorabilia: Engineering Memberships (various)	1920s-1950s
	2	Memorabilia: Membership Cards (American Legion H.H. Donkersley Post #19)	1920s-1960s
	3	Memorabilia: Membership Cards (B.P.O. Elks Lodge 476)	1920s-1930s
	4	Memorabilia: Membership Cards (Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Arizona)	1960s-1970s
	5	Memorabilia: Membership Cards (La Société des 40 Homes and 8 Chevaux)	1920s-1970s
	6	Memorabilia: Membership Cards (Masons)	1920s-1970s
	7	Memorabilia: Membership Cards and Painters Union Dues	1903-1914
	8	Memorabilia: News Clippings and Advertisements	1913-1915
	9	Memorabilia: Salome, Arizona	n.d.
	10	Memorabilia: University of Arizona College of Agriculture, Mechanical Arts and Mining (brochure, cartoon, Spanish exercise, dance card, grades)	1906-1908
	11	Memorabilia: Voter Registration and Identity Cards (various)	1930s-1940s
	12	Memorabilia: Wanted Dead or Alive Notice, Maps, signed Lost Dutchman Mine book	1920s, 1964
	13	Memorabilia: WWI Savings, WWII Ration Books for Dale, Ludmelia, Robert, and Elizabeth Ralston	1920s, 1940s
8	1	Memorabilia: Ledger (La Fortuna Mining	1898

		Company) 1 of 2	
	2	Memorabilia: Ledger (La Fortuna Mining Company) 2 of 2	1898-1899
	3	Memorabilia: Ledger (Stage Day Book)	1896-1897
	4	Memorabilia: Ledger (State Board of Public Welfare Notary Record)	1933-1937
9		Oversized: Family Album (captioned)	1940-1950
10		Oversized: Family Album (captioned)	1940s