

C Davidson Jr., Robert L. (1893-1968), Papers, 1915-1919
3154 9 folders

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of Robert L. Davidson contain letters written by 1st Lieutenant Robert L. Davidson, Jr., to his family during World War I, most of which were published in the *Sedalia Democrat* newspaper; typewritten descriptions of some incidents occurring during his training period, and later in France, and two copies of the *Stars and Stripes*, the army newspaper published in France during the War.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Robert L. Davidson on 14 February 1964 (Accession No.61).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert L. Davidson Jr. was born in Wellington, Kansas, January 14, 1893. He attended the public schools of Kansas City, Missouri, then attended William Jewell College and Drury College, receiving an A. B. degree in 1915. In 1927 he received an A. M. degree from the University of Missouri. Davidson began a teaching career that took him to Sedalia, Nevada, and finally Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where he became the principal of the Central High School. He was in charge of teacher placement at the University of Missouri from 1929 to 1946 and retired as assistant director of the University Extension Division in 1963.

Davidson was accepted for Infantry Officer training at Fort Riley, Kansas, in May 1917. He was one of 300 Americans sent to Toronto, Canada, to be trained as a pilot by wounded English pilots. He was sent to France in March 1918, and then assigned to the 12th Aero Squadron, one of the first four squadrons to see action in France. He then became a part of the flying corps for the Army and ran photograph missions for the war effort.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers have been arranged into the following three series: **Miscellaneous**, **Correspondence**, and **Manuscripts**. The **Miscellaneous** series contains a religious pamphlet by E.P. Marvin titled *Assurance*; miscellaneous newspaper clippings regarding the air war in Germany and France; undated letters from Davidson to his parents, two from Canada, lacking first page, and one from an unknown location. The **Correspondence** series, 1914-1918, includes Davidson's letters to his family while in the American Expeditionary Forces Aero Squadron on the Eastern front of France. The early letters describe his flight training, taught by British soldiers convalescing from war injuries in Canada, and ground training at Fort Worth, Texas; then on to France where he was an observer and photographer, flying missions across the German lines. The **Manuscripts** series contains typewritten copies of his letters and a typewritten manuscript describing the enlistment and Military Aeronautics training in Fort Riley, Kansas; Toronto, Canada and Fort Worth, Texas.

FOLDER LIST

- f. 1 Newspaper clippings and undated letters
- f. 2 Correspondence - February 5, 1914-October 31, 1917
- f. 3 Correspondence - November 10, 1917-May 15, 1918
- f. 4 Correspondence - May 30, 1918-August 16, 1918
- f. 5 Correspondence - August 24, 1918-October 5, 1918
- f. 6 Correspondence - October 14, 1918-December 24, 1918
- f. 7-8 Typewritten copies of his letters.
- f. 9 Typewritten manuscript describing the enlistment and Military Aeronautics training in Fort Riley, Kansas; Toronto, Canada and Fort Worth, Texas.

INDEX TERMS

Subject	Folders
Airplanes--Piloting	2
Duncan, Finis	1
Firearms	2
Greeting cards--Christmas	1
Missouri, Sedalia	2
Prinz, Leroy	7
Rogers, Jimmie	4
Royal Flying Corps, World War, 1914-1918	2, 7
School of Military Aeronautics, Toronto, Canada	2, 7
Smith, Paul	7
Stack, Joe	7
Stars and Stripes	4, 5
U.S. Army, World War, 1914-1918	1-9
Wilborn, Ira	7
World War, 1914-1918, Correspondence	1-9
World War, 1914-1918, Flight Training	2
World War, 1914-1918, France, Paris	6
World War, 1914-1918, Second Battle of the Marne	4, 5
World War, 1914-1918, U.S. Army, 147th Aero Squadron	1
World War, 1914-1918, U.S. Army, Signal Officers Reserve Corps, Aviation Section	1-9