

A Guide to the Papers of the Ellison Family 1838-1940

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History

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Descriptive Summary

Accession Number

2013.8.26

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

7 record storage boxes

Repository

Roanoke Public Libraries

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Beirne Ellison

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Biographical Information

Mr. Beirne Ellison was born August 29, 1870 in the community of Forest Hills in Summers County, West Virginia. Ellison worked as a teacher in the 1890s. He was often referred to as Professor Ellison. In 1900 he served as the principal of the Pembroke Grammar School in Kimbalton, Virginia. When Ellison was not teaching during the summers, he was employed in resort hotels. He managed the Mountain Lake Hotel in Giles County, Virginia for nearly 20 years. For a short while, Ellison also managed the Blue Ridge Springs Hotel in Botetourt County, Virginia. Ellison was offered a position by Union Mutual Life Insurance Company in Richmond, Virginia in 1909, but only relocated to Roanoke, Virginia in 1920, where he was the district agent for Union Mutual Life Insurance Co. Ellison passed away at the age of 83 on February 27, 1954. Charles L. Ellison and Leona B. Ellison (born Hobbs) were the parents of Beirne Ellison, as well as the parents of Beirne's siblings, sister Cora, and brothers Orley, Earl, Webb (Webbie), and Ira Ellison. Beirne Ellison was first married to Gracie (or Grace) Ellison, who died in September 1908. Beirne Ellison married his second wife Nannie (or Nancy, born Nannie M. Givens) Ellison in September 1910. Beirne had an Aunt Blane (also Blaine), but the exact family relationship was not determined. Beirne Ellison's father Charles Ellison was a teacher, who acted as an attorney and served as the county superintendent of schools in 1875. Charles Ellison was designated as the administrator of the estate of Jordan Lively, who was a property owner and whiskey distiller. Beirne Ellison's mother Leona Ellison, who died in 1894, had three sisters, Jane, Lizzie and Belle, and two brothers, William and Benton Hobbs. Beirne's wife Nannie Ellison's mother was named Mertie A. (or Martha) Slusser (or Sluser or Schusser). Apparently Beirne Ellison had four children, a son Marcus (or Mark) Ellison, and three daughters, Mary and Martha Ellison, twins, and Nancy Ellison. Marcus Ellison married De Lila Hayes in 1926.

Scope and Content

This collection is arranged into four main series, and seven subseries, in seven record storage boxes for a total of 10.25 linear feet. The first series is documents and records, which includes official records, lists, receipts, summons, deeds, wills, certificates, financial documents, bank deposits, cancelled checks, and tax statements. The second series is miscellaneous manuscripts, such as notebooks, poems and other non-correspondence of a non-official nature. The third series is published and printed materials. The fourth series is Ellison family correspondence and other correspondence, which is further divided into subseries for the correspondence of Beirne Ellison's parents Charles L. and Leona B. Ellison, for Beirne Ellison himself, with separate subseries for personal and for business and professional correspondence, for the correspondence of his wives Gracie and Nannie, and finally for the miscellaneous correspondence of other relatives and associates. Apparently Beirne Ellison compiled or retained this collection himself, a collection which includes correspondence, cards, and miscellaneous documents from his family and friends and family associates. The bulk of the materials in the collection were gathered from the 1880s to the early 1900s. A few of the documents go back to the ante-bellum period of the nineteenth century, one dated as early as 1838. Among the documents and records are various lists and certificates, including articles of agreement for teaching, teachers' certificates, church subscriptions, school term and monthly reports, and a wedding invitation for the marriage of Nannie Givens and Beirne Ellison on September 1, 1910. Other documents in the collection are receipts, bank statements, cancelled checks, petitions, articles of financial agreement and copies of deeds, including a deed from Mary F. Huffman to C. A. Sanders. Also among the documents and records are bills of lading and shipping orders, payment agreement notes, a lottery list, a lumber price list, and a railway schedule and train order. There is a menu from the Mountain Lake Hotel, tailor's measurements for Floyd Snidow, school grades, reports and surveys, various summonses, and a packet of C.O.D. orders for Beirne Ellison. One ante-bellum tax receipt lists the tax paid on a slave. Charles Ellison, Beirne's father, was a man of substance in West Virginia and Virginia. He was involved in many 19th century business deals and acted as the administrator of the estate of Jordan Lively, who was a property owner and whiskey distiller, whose last will and testament is among the documents. There is also a copy of the will of Samuel Huffman. Many of Charles Ellison's accounts and business and tax records are included in this collection, as are records from his associates, and some of his correspondence. Manuscripts are varied and include ledger books, notebooks, notes, marginalia, school papers, tests and assignments, poems, and other writings. Many of the notebooks include numerous inserts of various sorts, but have not been disturbed and were left as discovered. Non-official documents and non-correspondence were all included in this category. Publications and printed materials include a large run of church bulletins from 1932 to 1940, the bulk of which are from 1932 to 1938. There are several complete and incomplete books. School grammars, textbooks and atlases are among the publications in the collection. There are brochures, including

promotional literature on Mountain Lake and Mountain Lake Hotel, booklets, political flyers, catalogs, a miniature almanac, and a cookbook. Advertising is well represented, both as contents of letters (that is as “junk mail”