

Leaves from the War Diary of a Cootie

Leaves from the War Diary of a Cootie
undated, c.1918

Title Statement

Leaves from the War Diary of a CootieGuide to Leaves from the War Diary of a Cootie MSS 16863

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16863

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1702

Unit Date

undated, c.1918

Mixed Materials [X032668454]

BW 57 (box)

Container

001 (folder)

Language

English

Creator

Abbit, John R.

Extent

.03 Cubic Feet 1 letter folder

Condition Description

Good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is minimally processed and open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

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Content Description

This collection contains an illustrated manuscript by John R. Abbit that tells the comic story of a mother louse and her children traveling across the bodies of American soldiers in the First World War. The manuscript measures 6 X 5 inches and contains thirty-one pages in its original blue wrappers. The spine is punched with grommets and bound with red ribbon. The dedication page is typed in red ink, and the volume contains fifteen pen-and-ink drawings initialed "J. R. A.," interleaved with facing; the verse is typed in red and black. The cover, handwritten in black and red ink, reads "Leaves from the War Diary of a Cootie Transcribed by John R. Abbit." The dedication reads, "To the many soldiers on whom I have lived and with whom I have fought. Parisita Pediculus Vestmenti." The narration is from the point of view of the louse, and there are fifteen entries in the diary. Each entry contains a dated typed diary entry detailing the life and experiences of the lice family and a pen and ink illustration based on the report. The narrative unfolds during September 1918. We follow the lice family as they move to the front lines. "Thank goodness we have at last reached the Front- A Cooties Rest Cure!" A favored place due to the lack of cleanliness where "Every day in the Trenches improves the flavor of this man." It continues as the cooties encounter the soldier's interventions, from a "Finger and Thumb" attack to hot water and soap at the hospitals to fleeing wounded soldiers. It humorously communicates valuable information about disease prevention. There is little information about the author-illustrator.

Keywords

World War, 1914-1918 -- Trench warfare
World War, 1914-1918 -- Health aspects
cartoons (humorous images)