

Johnson Family papers

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1942-1945



WILLIAM
& MARY

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Descriptive Summary

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Unit ID

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Unit Date

1942-1945

Language

English

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1.25 Linear Feet

Repository

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

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Biographical / Historical

John Rochelle Lee Johnson, Sr., was born in Nansemond County, Virginia, in 1869. After receiving his degree from the College of William & Mary in 1893, he commenced a career of education and scholarship that would continue throughout his lifetime. He earned a Master's degree in English literature from the University of Chicago by attending summer sessions there in between academic years spent in Franklin, Virginia. In Franklin, Johnson would serve as a high school teacher and then principal before leaving to teach at the college level. He was a professor of English at Radford State Teachers College beginning in 1916, and then returned to the College of William & Mary as a professor in the Department of English in 1928. He would go on to serve in this position for the next nineteen years, during which time both of his sons attended and graduated from the school. He died in 1953 at his home in Williamsburg and was survived by his wife, Susie (Rawls) Johnson.

Robert Bruce Johnson, the younger son of J.R.L. and Susie Johnson, graduated from the College of William & Mary in 1933 and followed his father's example by becoming an educator in the state of Virginia. He began teaching at Glen Allen High School in Richmond, Virginia, in 1934, and continued in that position until he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force in September 1942. During his service in World War II, Johnson trained as an airplane mechanic at Lowry Army Air Field base in Colorado and eventually reached the rank of corporal in the Eighth Army Flying Force Fortress group stationed in England. Following his discharge from the army in September 1945, Johnson returned to teaching in Richmond and lived there until his death in 1977.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains the correspondence from Robert Bruce Johnson to his parents and his aunt during the period of his service in the U.S. Army Air Force from his enlistment in September 1942 to his discharge in September 1945 after the conclusion of World War II. Johnson began his service as a private with the 19th Anti-Submarine Squadron, where he served until the fall of 1943, when he was promoted to corporal in the 812th Bomb Squad. The letters include descriptions of his movements between bases, the training and classroom instruction that he is given as an airplane mechanic, and various trips taken off base. He attends training at Miami Beach Basic Training Center in Florida and Lowry Army Air Field in Colorado before spending the majority of his service at an unspecified base in England. He makes regular comments to his parents about his observations of the new locations he encounters, the quality of life on base, and his friendships in the Army. In a letter from July 2, 1944, Johnson notifies his parents that his girlfriend from Richmond has decided to marry someone else due to his long absence during the war.

John R. L. Johnson was a resident of Williamsburg, Virginia, in the class of 1894 at the College of William and Mary and a professor of English at the College of William and Mary.

Also included in this collection are two bound linen scrapbooks belonging to the Johnson family, consisting primarily of postcards and holiday greeting cards.

Keywords

Letters (correspondence)

Research notes

College of William and Mary--Faculty and Staff

Harvard Law School--Curricula.

Lecture notes

Textbooks

College of William and Mary--Alumni and alumnae

Harvard Law School

Description of Subordinate Components

Scrapbooks

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/312743

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Scrapbooks

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/312744

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 2 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/312717

Unit Date 1942-09-29-1942-10-10

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/312718

Unit Date 1942-10-24-1942-11-10

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 2 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/312719

Unit Date 1942-11-24-1942-12-14

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 3 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/312720

Unit Date 1942-12-17-1943-01-05

Mixed Materials 2 (Box)

Container 4 (folder)

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Mixed Materials 7 (box)