

Guide to the Montgomery Rollins Diaries, 1900-1915

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

Montgomery Rollins Diaries, 1900-1915

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
<http://www.nhhistory.org/>

Collection Number:

2011.053

Author of Finding Aid:

Sandra L. Wheeler

Creator:

Rollins, Montgomery, 1867-1918

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

2 boxes ; 0.54 linear feet

Abstract:

Montgomery Rollins (1867-1918) purchased a farm in Rollinsford, New Hampshire, in 1900 and for the next 15 years wrote about it, activities there, and vignettes of and stories about inhabitants of the area. He named it "Tidewater Farm" and it was a nostalgic return to original seat of the prominent New Hampshire family, though he lived and worked primarily in the Boston, Massachusetts, area. In addition, an undated autobiographical section describes the family home in Concord, New Hampshire, and the landscape and people on a former plantation owned by the Rollins family on Fort George Island, Florida.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The Montgomery Rollins Diaries were a gift of Edward and Montgomery Childs, and Ellen West Lovejoy on June 13, 2011.

Processing Information:

This collection was initially processed by William Copley in 2011 and refined by Sandra L. Wheeler in August 2021. The finding aid was written by Sandra L. Wheeler in August 2021. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use. The majority of diaries are typed.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

Preferred Citation:

Item title, Montgomery Rollins Diaries, 2011.053. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information:

Montgomery Rollins (1867-1918) was born in Concord, New Hampshire. His parents were Edward Henry (1824-1889) Ellen Elizabeth (West) Rollins (1826-1893). Montgomery's father served as U.S. Senator from 1877 to 1883, and Montgomery's brother Frank (1860-1915) as Governor of New Hampshire from 1899 to 1901. Montgomery, the youngest child by seven years, did not enter law or politics, but instead attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1885-1888) and became a banker in the family firm, E.H. Rollins and Sons. He worked in various offices before becoming a director of the main Boston Branch in 1890. He wrote a number of books about banking and money management, including reference books and handbooks on the subject. In addition, he wrote two works of fiction, *The Village Pest: A Story of David* (1917) and *The Banker and the Boarding House* (1918).

Montgomery Rollins and Grace Webster Peavey were married on October 28, 1891 in Dover, NH. Grace was the daughter of James Frank and Sarah K. (Webster) Peavey, born on November

25, 1867 at Dover. Montgomery and Grace had two daughters, Ellen West on July 13, 1895 and Sarah Webster on June 8, 1903, both at Brookline, MA. They lived in the Boston area and, after 1900, summered at Tidewater Farm in Rollinsford, NH. Montgomery died on April 18, 1918 at Newton, MA, and was buried in Rollinsford. Grace died on July 27, 1951 at Dover and is buried with Montgomery.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

The Montgomery Rollins Diaries about Tidewater Farm in Rollinsford, New Hampshire, were kept between 1900 and 1915. There are also additional, undated sketches about the same topic with titles such as “The Tribulations of Housekeeping.” All pages are typed, and some have been lightly edited, perhaps intending eventual publication. Entries, usually made from spring to fall (as the family’s primary residence was in the Boston area) describe activities on the farm and include character studies of local inhabitants and anecdotes about local happenings. Most people so described are named. Rollins provides background about Rollinsford and his family’s history there – though Tidewater Farm was not itself the ‘old homestead’ (which was sold in 1889 upon his father’s death), it was across the street from it.

Other materials seem to have similar subject matter, but are titled short sketches, perhaps excerpted from the larger diaries or written separately to be published.

An undated, untitled autobiographical section [Box 2, folder 8], in addition to descriptions of the family home in Concord, New Hampshire, contains an extensive description of visits to a family property on Fort George Island, Florida, starting in the 1870s. It appears to have been written in retrospect and includes undated (but probably late 1800s to early 1900s) photographs of the property and the people living on it. This piece has descriptions of structures, landscape, and people, including the African American residents, some of them formerly enslaved. The property was owned originally by someone referred to as “Mr. Kingsley” and stories about this man’s pre-civil war management of the plantation are recounted.

Although Montgomery Rollins was the son of U.S. Senator Edward H. Rollins and brother of Governor of New Hampshire Frank Rollins, their political lives and concerns are not mentioned in the diaries. Memories of extended family members and recollections of events, however, are nostalgically recalled.

Arrangement:

The “Diary of Tidewater Farm” is arranged chronologically, though it has been removed from the binders in which it was found. Entries are dated and most, but not all pages numbered.

Following the Tidewater Farm Diary, Rollins’ other writings are in alphabetical order by title. They are undated.

Contents List

Box 1

- Folder 1 Summary list of Rollins’ activities, 1885-1895
- Folder 2 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 1, pages 1-28, undated

Folder 3 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 1, pages 39-70, undated [no pages 29-38]
 Folder 4 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 1, unpagged, 1900 May-December
 Folder 5 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 1, unpagged, 1901 January-September
 Folder 6 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 1-37, 1902 March-August
 Folder 7 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 38-56, 1902 September-October
 Folder 8 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 57-84, 1903 January-April
 Folder 9 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 85-120, 1903 May-August
 Folder 10 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 121-137, 1903 September-December
 Folder 11 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 138-168, 1904 January-April
 Folder 12 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 169-201, 1904 May-August
 Folder 13 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, pages 202-234, 1904 September-December
 Folder 14 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 2, list of expenses unpagged, 1902-1904
 Folder 15 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 1-32, 1905 January-March
 Folder 16 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 33-60, 1905 April-September
 Folder 17 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 61-83, 1906
 Folder 18 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 84-95, 1907
 Folder 19 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 96-106, 1908

Box 2

Folder 1 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 107-120, 1909
 Folder 2 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 121-131, 1910
 Folder 3 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 132-147, 1911
 Folder 4 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 148-170, 1912
 Folder 5 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 171-190, 1913
 Folder 6 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 191-216, 1914
 Folder 7 Diary of Tidewater Farm, Volume 3, pages 217-247, 1915
 Folder 8 Untitled [autobiography], undated
 Folder 9 "A Foreward," undated [about the Flagg family]
 Folder 10 "Farm Hunting for Ned & Ashton," undated
 Folder 11 "The Old Flagg Place," undated
 Folder 12 "The Pond," undated
 Folder 13 "Relates of the Farms We Did Not Buy and of The One We Did," undated
 Folder 14 "Tribulations of Housekeeping," undated
 Folder 15 "We Build a Boat-House and Dig a Canal," undated
 Folder 16 Untitled fragment, undated
 Folder 17 Correspondence, outgoing, 1901 March 30

Subject Terms

People:

Rollins, Montgomery, 1867-1918
 Rollins family

Subjects:

Diaries
 Farm life
 Plantation life--Southern States

Slavery

Locations:

Concord, NH

Fort George Island, FL

Rollinsford, NH

Occupations:

Bankers

Farmers

Related Materials

The Rollins family has been a large and influential presence in the history of New Hampshire, and the Historical Society has many holdings about or once owned by family members. There are, for example, photographs of Rollins Park in Concord, photographs and engravings of various family members, the papers of Governor Frank Rollins (and the wedding gown worn by his bride), and broadsides related to the E. H. Rollins and Sons business. Researchers are directed to the online catalog for a full listing of the 300+ items.