

Guide to MS-247:
Sinclair-Donaldson Papers



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections and College Archives

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August 2019

MS-247: Sinclair-Donaldson Papers

Processed by Michelle Williams, Barbara Holley Intern; Ryan Bigler, Class of 2019
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Size

2 boxes, 1 cubic foot

Location

Special Collections

Dates

Inclusive: Early 20th century-1985
Bulk: 1942-1946

Provenance

Special Collections purchased this collection in 2019 from James E. Arsenault & Company.

Biographical Note

Connie Sinclair (1911 July 5 - 2009 February 13) and her adoptive sister, Natalie "Jackie" Donaldson (1908 February 19 - 1974 March 4), served in an all African-American Women's Army Auxiliary Corp during World War II. Sinclair served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946, reaching the rank of first lieutenant. After the war, she became the director of the Service Club Number Two at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. She went on to teach Spanish at Van Buren Public School and Ramsey Junior High.

During the war, Donaldson rose to the rank of Captain and was a part of the first group of black commissioned officers who graduated from Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Donaldson would serve at Fort Huachuca, Arizona before her company was disbanded in 1945.

Historical Note

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed in May 1942, with members becoming the first women other than nurses to serve within the U.S. Army. The first jobs available were switchboard operators, mechanics, and bakers, but within one year, over 400 jobs were filled, including postal clerks, stenographers, and armors. In July of 1943, the W.A.A.C. was converted to an active duty status within the Army (W.A.C.), which gave women all the rank and benefits of their enlisted male counterparts. About 150,000 women served in the W.A.A.C. and W.A.C. during WWII between the years 1942 and 1945. The branch was disbanded in 1978 and the female units were unified with the male units.

Sinclair and Donaldson were part of the all African-American Thirty-Second and Thirty-Third W.A.A.C. companies, which became the first units assigned to a military installation within the United States. The companies were organized in Iowa in 1942 and in December of that year, reported to Fort Huachuca,

Arizona, the largest black military post at the time. Under the command of Fort Des Moines's first class of commissioned officers, including Donaldson, members performed clerical and administrative work.

Scope and Content Note

The Sinclair - Donaldson Collection includes photographs and ephemera saved by Connie Sinclair, an African-American W.A.C. member who served during WWII. It consists of sepia-toned and black and white photographs taken during training and enlistment, many captioned. Among the images are official Army photos, including women in a mess hall, the Nurse Corp at Fort Huachuca, and Native American soldiers at the same location.

Also contained within this collection are military pins, patches, and insignia, including the Pallas Athene and Sinclair's dog tag; a W.A.C. song book from 1944; and Sinclair's Service Recognition certificate. Two Service Club scrapbooks from the 1950's are contained in this collection from Sinclair's time as director. Also, family photographs, a family record book, letters, poetry, and newspaper clippings from the 50's and 80's.

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945 -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- Photography
World War, 1939-1945 -- Women -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- Participation, Female
World War, 1939-1945 -- Participation, African-American
Women soldiers -- United States -- History -- 20th century
African American soldiers -- History -- 20th century
African American women -- History -- 20th century
United States -- Armed Forces -- Women

Series Description

This collection is divided into five Series. **Series 1:** World War II, **Series 2:** Records of Family and Friends, **Series 3:** Newspaper Clippings, **Series 4:** Miscellaneous, **Series 5:** Service Club.

Box List

Box 1

1-0 Finding Aid, Biographical Information, and Inventory List

Series 1

- 1-1 Photographs – World War II
- 8x10 photographs (x25)
 - 5x7 photograph (x1)
 - 5x4 photograph (x1)
 - 6x4 photograph (x1)
- 1-2 Pins, Patches and Insignia
- Air Force patch

- Fifth Army patch
 - Paratroopers patch
 - Second Lieutenant pin
 - Captain pin
 - Major pin
 - Pallas Athene pin
 - Caduceus pin
 - U.S. Army pin
 - W.A.C. service medal
 - American Theater medal
 - Connie Sinclair dog tag
- 1-3 Memorabilia
- State of Illinois Service Recognition Certificate, Connie Sinclair – 1947
 - W.A.C. Song Book – 1944 January 1

Series 2: Records of Family and Friends

- 1-4 Photographs – Family and Friends
- Photographs (x31)
- 1-5 Record Book
- “My Personal History and Family Record” – presented to Corrine E. Stuart-Sinclair, by her daughter, Alberta – 1953 December 25
- 1-6 Letters
- To: Mrs. J. S. Hawkins, From: Natalie F. Donaldson
 - To: Daddy, From: Jackie
 - To: “honey,” From: “Me” and Connie
 - To: “sugar puddin’,” From: “Your child”
 - To: Dad, From: “All of your children”
 - To Pat Layton, From: Tommy
- 1-7 High School Dedication
- Dedication, Randolph High School, Class of 1969-1970; 1980 July 5

Series 3: Newspaper Clippings

- 1-8 Defender - 1955
- “Highlights of Dorie Miller Memorial Foundation Program in Chicago,” 1955 October 15
- 1-9 Arkansas Gazette - 1959
- Section E, 1959 May 24
- 1-10 Southwest Times Record - 1985
- Section A pp. 5-8, 1985 April 25
 - Section A pp.5-8, 1985 May 1
- 1-11 Miscellaneous Clippings
- “City of Nature” by George Matthew Adams
 - “The Unseen” by George Matthew Adams
 - “The Rebel Sock”

Series 4: Miscellaneous

- 1-12 Poetry
 - “Days”
 - “I have lived in this house...”
- 1-13 Receipts and Coupon Book
 - Edificio Windsor, 1946 February 6
 - Texaco Inc., 1967 March 9
 - Tuttle Drug Store, 1967 March 27
 - Tuttle Drug Store, 1967 April 27
 - The Fuller Brush Company
 - First Nation Bank coupon book
- 1-14 Club Baron
 - 7x5 photograph in sleeve; Souvenir of Club Baron, 437 Lenox Avenue, New York City
- 1-15 United Nations Letter to Connie Sinclair
 - To: Constancia Sinclair, “Information to Persons Interested in Examinations and Training for Interpreters”
- 1-16 Miscellaneous Papers and Ephemera
 - Arkansas state map (x2)
 - Pemex Travel Club Bulletin, 1951 May 1
 - Wrapping paper with various historical American flags
 - Note – To: Miss Donaldson, From: Sylvester Williams

Box 2

Series 2: Records of Family and Friends

- 2-1 Diploma – Natalie Franklin (Donaldson)
 - West High School, 1921 June 9

Series 5: Service Club Book

- 2-2 Scrapbook #1
 - Service Club #2 scrapbook dated 1950 with various disbound pages
- 2-3 Scrapbook #2
 - Service Club #2 scrapbook dated 1956
- 2-4 “Operation Army Service Club” Contest
 - Connie Sinclair – 3 typed pages

Related Collections

MS-126: Anita Faller Alford Collection

Contact Information

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