

Oscar L. Dortch Papers

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Introduction

The Oscar L. Dortch papers consist of approximately 900 items donated to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. Lawrence Dortch. Primarily containing personal and business correspondence, both incoming and outgoing, the collection spans the period from January of 1911 through June of 1913.

Oscar L. Dortch was superintendent of mining for the International Agricultural Corporation of New York, as well as holding significant personal investments in stock, property, and mining rights in Tennessee. He also served as president of International Mineral and Chemical Company of Columbia, Tennessee, but it is not clear whether this was an autonomous company or part of I.A.C of New York. Much of Mr. Dortch's business correspondence centers on negotiations to buy and re-sell properties and mining rights, however, his main focus during the years represented seems to have been the negotiations to sell the Volunteer State Company of Giles County, of which he was a major stockholder, to I.A.C. This sale may have been the original reason for preserving the documents.

The personal correspondence has three primary themes: the attempt to purchase and ship a horse for the daughter of T.C. Meadows, one of his I.A.C. associates in New York; his efforts to help establish one of Mr. Meadow's relatives on a farm; and the difficulties Mr. Dortch encountered with the purchase and service of the two Dayton- Stoddard automobiles he purchased during the period.

The collection provides insight into the efforts to capitalize on Tennessee's phosphate resources, and on the business methods involved in the trade of corporate investments. The collection has been microfilmed, and there are no restrictions on its use.

Scope and Content

The Oscar L. Dortch collection contains incoming and outgoing (carbon copies) business correspondence, personal correspondence, and a small number of canceled checks and bank notes, all dated between January 1, 1911 and June 10, 1913. Originally contained in three cardboard file boxes and divided roughly alphabetically, the collection has been re-arranged into three separate series. Series 1 contains personal correspondence, foldered by year; Series 2 contains business correspondence, foldered by month and year; and Series 3 contains canceled checks and bank notes in a single folder. The documents within each series have been re-arranged in chronological order.

The condition of the original documents when acquired was generally poor. Mr. Dortch kept neatly typed carbon copies of his out-going correspondence, but used very poor quality paper which has discolored and become extremely brittle with age. Every effort should be made to use the microfilm rather than the extremely fragile originals. The extent of the collection was reduced from 1 cubic foot to .75 cubic feet by removal of the original cardboard containers.

Container List

Box 1

Series 1: Personal Correspondence

Folder 1	1911
Folder 2	1912
Folder 3	1913

Series 2: Business Correspondence

Folder 4	January through March 1911	
Folder 5	April through June	1911
Folder 6	July through September 1911	
Folder 7	October through December	1911
Folder 8	January	1912

Box 2

Folder 1	February	1912
Folder 2	March	1912
Folder 3	April	1912
Folder 4	May	1912
Folder 5	June	1912
Folder 6	July	1912
Folder 7	August	1912
Folder 8	September	1912
Folder 9	October	1912
Folder 10	November	1912
Folder 11	December	1912
Folder 12	January	1913
Folder 13	February	1913
Folder 14	March	1913
Folder 15	April	1913
Folder 16	May	1913
Folder 17	June	1913

Series 3: Financial Documents

Folder 18	Canceled checks, bank notes 1911- 1913.
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