Collection Creator: John Dowe

Collection: John Dowe Collection

Collection Dates: ca. 1848-2007

Collection Size: 21.45 linear feet

Abstract: The John Dowe Collection is a collection of materials related to Montgomery, Alabama’s Dowe family.

Repository: Montgomery County Archives, Courthouse Annex III, Montgomery, Alabama, 36104, (334)-832-7173


Languages and Scripts: The entire collection is recorded in English.

Administrative/Biographical History: John Dowe, creator of the John Dowe Collection, hailed from the prominent Dowe family of Montgomery, Alabama. Dowe died in Montgomery, Alabama on November 14, 2007 at the age of 96. Prior to World War II, John Dowe attended the University of Alabama. From 1942 to 1945 he served in the United States military’s Air Corps. Active in civic life, Dowe served as a scoutmaster in the Boy Scouts for over twenty years, and took part in activities associated with Montgomery, Alabama’s St. Peter’s Catholic Church.1 Throughout his long life, Dowe evidently continuously researched his family’s history. This collection is the product of that research.

Scope and Content: The John Dowe Collection consists of family correspondence, financial and legal records, photographs and postcards sent and received by the Dowe family, scrapbooks, publications, and ephemera. Most of the collection’s document-based records date from circa 1900 to 2007. The scrapbooks range from the 1880s to roughly the mid-twentieth century. The photographs begin in circa 1870 and appear to end in the early-to-mid 2000s. The Dowe Collection especially documents the history and activities of the Dowe family in Montgomery, Alabama, as well as their travels throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. It especially documents much of John Dowe’s life, from his birth in 1911, to his death in 2007.

System of Arrangement: This collection is organized into five series with multiple subseries in each series.

Series I: Research Files

- Subseries I: Research Binder
- Subseries II: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
- Subseries III: John Dowe Will
- Subseries IV: Lucie Dowe
- Subseries V: Newspaper Clippings
- Subseries VI: Oversized Research Files

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries

- Subseries I: General Correspondence ca.1848-2007
- Subseries II: Corresp.-William + Anna Knox ca. 1903-1924
- Subseries III: Corresp.-Anita Hall ca. 1910-1923
- Subseries IV: Corresp.-Myra Hall ca. 1916
- Subseries V: Corresp.-A. P. Cabel ca. 1948
- Subseries VI: Holiday and Birthday Cards
- Subseries VII: Diaries: John J. Dowe June 12, 1883-?

Series III: Photographs and Other Images

- Subseries I: Photographs
- Subseries II: Postcards

Series IV: Scrapbooks and Photograph Albums

- Subseries I: Scrapbooks
- Subseries II: Photograph Albums

Series V: Publications and Ephemera

- Subseries I: Publications
- Subseries II: Emphemera
- Subseries III: Manuscripts

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Many of the John Dowe Collection records are paper-based, including the correspondence, postcards, manuscripts, and ephemera. Other collection materials include photographs, including tintypes, books, photograph albums bound in leather, scrapbooks with hardcovers, etc.

Access Points:

Montgomery (Ala.)
Montgomery County (Ala.)
Montgomery (Ala.)--history
World War II
United States. Army. Air Corps
Boy Scouts
Catholic Church
United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Letters
Clippings (Newspapers)
Diaries
Photographs
Photograph albums
Scrapbooks
Postcards
Family vacations—United States
Family vacations—Canada
Family vacations—Europe
Ephemera
Alabama Historical Commission
University of Alabama

**Conditions Governing Access:** Collection is open for research.

**Accruals:** No further accruals expected.

**Acquisition Info:** In 2008 the Montgomery County Archives acquired the John Dowe Collection from the Alabama Historical Commission as a long-term loan. The agreement gave the Montgomery County Archives authority to processes the collection, as well as display items and records from it.

**Alternative Forms:** none.

**Additional Finding Aids:** There are no additional finding aids.

**Appraisal Process:** The Montgomery County Archives’ (MCA) mission statement notes the MCA collects non-government records, as long as they pertain to the history of Montgomery County. The MCA acquired the MGS Collection for this reason.

**Custodial History:** The John Dowe Collection was initially deposited with the Alabama Historical Commission. In September 2008, the Alabama Historical Commission transferred the John Dowe Collection to the MCA on a long-term loan.

**Suggested Citation:** Item, Item type, Box, Subseries, Series, Collection name

Example: John Dow to John Doe, Letter, January 1, 1901. Box 1, General Correspondence, Correspondence, John Dowe Collection.
Processing Information: A previous archivist, other than Dallas Hanbury, did an initial inventory when the MCA first accessioned the John Dowe Collection in 2008. Accordingly, when Hanbury began processing the collection in March 2016, he began by taking a detailed inventory of the collection. Upon completion of the initial inventory, Hanbury deaccessioned a number of materials, including:

- Numerous blank envelopes
- Four duplicate postcards of Montgomery, Alabama’s Saint Peter’s Catholic Church located at 219 Adams Avenue
- Six mostly blank deposit books of various sizes
- A small number of utility, grocery, and druggist bills
- A small number of Catholic Church mailings of various sizes
- One copy of a publication titled “Report of the Alabama Pension Commission for Years 1918 to 1922.” Before deaccessioning the item, Hanbury checked with the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) to make sure they had a copy of the publication. ADAH archivist Rachel Smith replied to Hanbury’s inquiry by stating the state archives has three copies of the above publication.
- Extra copies of a Dr. C. G. Laslie’s prescription pad.
- Twenty-four maps of the United States and various countries produced by the National Geographic Society. These maps are widely available and the ones in the Dowe Collection provided no evidential or informational value about John Dowe and the Dowe family.
- One Alabama highway map.
- One “University of Alabama Bulletin [:] College of Arts and Sciences Course Announcement for 1947-1948.” Hanbury checked with the University of Alabama’s Division of Special Collections to see if they wanted the publication. Institutional records analyst Kevin Ray informed Hanbury that UA Special Collections already had copies of the above item.
- Carbon copies of various medical test results, including for syphilis. These records date from the 1940s and contain the patients’ names, addresses, name of the doctor directing the lab that conducted the tests, and the actual test results. These records are copies of the actual test results and add nothing in terms of evidential or informational value regarding John Dowe and the Dowe family.
- Excess copies of various editions from the Montgomery Advertiser, from ca. 1906 to 1919.

While processing the John Dowe Collection’s photographs and postcards, Hanbury boxed both into two boxes per record type. Hanbury did this because the postcards and photographs varied in size and he did not want the larger photographs and postcards to crush their smaller counterparts.
Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use: It is presumed corporate and individual copyrights have been retained by copyright owners. Copyright restrictions apply. Users of materials should seek necessary permissions from the copyright holders to comply with U.S. copyright laws.

Related Materials: John and Johanna Dowe’s wills—the grandparents of John Dowe, the creator of this collection—are accessible at the MCA. The MCA also possesses a 2001 deed and preservation easement between John Dowe and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Furthermore, the MCA also holds an executor’s deed in which John Dowe’s estate transferred to the Alabama Historical Commission ownership of the Dowe family house and property at 334 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama.

Separated Materials: There are no separated materials.

Bibliography:


Inventory

Series I: Research Files
Subseries I: Research Binder

   Box 1 of 4

      Folder 1 of 3: Research Binder
      Folder 2 of 3: Research Binder
      Folder 3 of 3: Research Binder

Series I: Research Files
Subseries II: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records

Folder 1 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
Folder 2 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
Folder 3 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
Folder 4 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records

Box 2 of 4

Series I: Research Files
Subseries II: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records

Folder 5 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
Folder 6 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
Folder 7 of 7: Financial, Accounting, and Legal Records
Series I: Research Files
Subseries III: John Dowe Will

Folder 1 of 1: John Dowe Will

Series I: Research Files
Subseries IV: Lucie Dowe

Folder 1 of 1: Lucie Dowe

Series I: Research Files
Subseries V: Newspaper Clippings

Folder 1 of 2: Newspaper Clippings
Box 3 of 4

Series I: Research Files
Subseries V: Newspaper Clippings

Folder 2 of 2: Newspaper Clippings
Box 4 of 4

Series I: Research Files
Subseries VI: Oversized Research Files

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries I: General Correspondence ca.1848-2007

Box 1 of 1
Folder 1 of 3: General Corresp.; ca. 1848-1911
Folder 2 of 3: General Corresp.; ca. 1912-1964
Folder 3 of 3: General Corresp.; ca. 1964-2007

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries II: Corresp.-William + Anna Knox ca. 1903-1924

Folder 1 of 1: Corresp.-William + Anna Knox ca. 1903-1924

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries III: Corresp.-Anita Hall ca. 1910-1923

Folder 1 of 1: Corresp.-Anita Hall ca. 1910-1923

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries IV: Corresp.-Myra Hall ca. 1916

Folder 1 of 1: Corresp.-Myra Hall ca. 1916

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries V: Corresp.-A. P. Cabel ca. 1948

Folder 1 of 1: Corresp.-A. P. Cabel ca. 1948

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries VI: Holiday and Birthday Cards

Folder 1 of 1: Holiday and Birthday Cards

Series II: Correspondence and Diaries
Subseries VII: Diaries-John J. Dowe, June 12, 1883-?

Folder 1 of 1: Diaries-John J. Dowe, June 12, 1883-?

Series III: Photographs and Other Images
Subseries I: Photographs

Box 1 of 4: Images 3-9, 14-16, 19-20, 24-25, 27, 48, 64, 70-73, 77-80, 84, 89-101, 104-105, 115-116, 118-119, 121-145


Box 3 of 4: Oversized Images

Box 4 of 4: Photograph Identification Materials

Series III: Photographs and Other Images
Subseries II: Postcards

Box 1 of 2: Postcards 1, 7-45, 47-52, 54-57, 59-84

Box 2 of 2: Postcards 2-6, 46, 53, 58, 85-87

Series IV: Scrapbooks and Photograph Albums
Subseries I: Scrapbooks

Box 1 of 2

One 12x15.5in black scrapbook titled “The Ideal Scrapbook”
Box 2 of 2

One 11.5x14in scrapbook with dark gold, almost brown cloth backing. The front of the scrapbook has ornate raised detailing in the form of flowers. On the first page is written “From Bert to Maggie Christmas 1881.” Scrapbook content consists of newspaper clippings, images of flowers on cardstock, and idealized romantic scenes seemingly from newspapers, magazines, and other printed media.

One 10x12.5in green scrapbook titled “Scrap Book.” Content seemingly entirely consists of newspaper clippings regarding various elements, sicknesses, and the cures for them.

One 11x 14in scrapbook whose backing is made of cardboard made to look like wood. Front Cover has two stripes of chevrons running vertically up and down the front. Between the two chevron strips the scrapbook is titled “Scraps.” The scrapbook’s content consists of newspaper clippings containing stories about the Catholic church worldwide, as well as news regarding Montgomery, Alabama’s Catholic churches. The scrapbook also contains some paper-based, likely mass-produced religious scenes.

One 9x12in leather bound scrapbook containing a child’s school notebook, a 1917 blotting calendar with an Asian print, perhaps Japanese, depicting a farmer drawing and carrying water from a body of water on a moonlit night; as well as various papers, drawings, and writings created by a child early in their education. This is likely John Dowe’s (Collection’s creator) school materials.

One 9x11in scrapbook with originally white cloth cover. On the scrapbook’s front, in green letters, is the title “Baby’s Record by Maud Humphrey.” This scrapbook is John Dowe’s, this collection’s creator, baby book. It contains one color illustration on the first page, then thirty-plus black and white illustrations throughout the rest of its pages. It also contains black and white photographs of John Dowe as a baby, his mother holding him during his early infancy, him as a young child, him in his later childhood years, descriptions of his first birthday, first Christmas, first Valentines’ Day, descriptions and newspaper clippings of the style of clothes he wore during his first three years of life, and much more.

One 6.5x8.5in black leather-bound scrapbook containing clippings of images depicting various religious scenes, saints, the Virgin Mary, and other Catholic Church associated imagery. Handwritten notes about each image accompany each image. Perhaps this notebook documents some sort of assignment John Dowe had at school, or tracked his religious education.

Series IV: Scrapbooks and Photograph Albums
Subseries II: Photograph Albums

Box 1 of 3
One 3.75x4.5in red leather bound photograph album. Contains two pictures of two women from the Dowe family.
One 5x7.75in dark red, almost purple, leather bound photograph album. The front cover is decorated with goldleaf like designs of flowers and insects. The middle of the front page of the album is titled “Album” also in goldleaf. The album is empty except for the first page which is titled “Paragon Autograph Album,” in a rich, colored design.

One 4.5x6in green leather bound photograph album. It contains very old images, likely dating back to the 1870s, of leaders of the Catholic Church, of the Dowe family, including the original John Dowe that immigrated from Ireland, and other family members related to the Dowe family. Many of the people in the images are identified.

One 5x6in brown leather clad photograph album with a metal clasp. The album contains photographs of presumably Dowe family members. Photographs include tintypes, as well as film-based photographs.

Box 2 of 3

One 8x10in photograph album clad in purple velvet. First page is labelled: Marie Dowe, July 21, 1909. This album contains photographs of presumably Dowe family members, including the original John Dowe that immigrated from Ireland.

Box 3 of 3

One 10x12in three-ring binder filled with plastic encapsulating sheets filled with photographs of Dowe Family vacations to Washington D.C., Quebec City, Canada, and possibly Ireland, as well as other places, possibly in Europe.

One 7x10in black faux leather bound photograph album containing photographs of various Dowe family members, ca. 1908-1911.

One 7x11.5in green hardback clad photograph album. The album’s cover has various raised designs on it, including a hearth with a fire in it, with a sailing ship and two vases on the mantel. The front of the album is titled: Photographs. The album contains photographs of family vacations to Yellowstone National Park and England, as well as family members at the Dowe family house in Montgomery, Alabama.

Series V: Publications and Ephemera
Subseries I: Publications

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1 of 5: “Our Baby”
Folder 2 of 5: “The Young Girl’s Month of July” (1897)
Folder 3 of 5: “The Infant Jesus of Prague and its Veneration” (1894)
Folder 4 of 5: Assorted Publications
Folder 5 of 5: “Drogheda & the Boyne Valley”
Series V: Publications and Ephemera
Subseries II: Ephemera

Box 1 of 3

Folder 1 of 8: “Lucie Dow Passport”
Folder 2 of 8: Stamp Collection
Folder 3 of 8: Stamp Collection
Folder 4 of 8: Stamp Collection
Folder 5 of 8: Stamp Collection
Folder 6 of 8: Canadian Money
Folder 7 of 8: John Dowe Boy Scouts Ephemera
Folder 8 of 8: Dr. C. G. Laslie Ephemera

Box 2 of 3

“Saturday Day Evening Post” Covers

Series V: Publications and Ephemera
Subseries III: Manuscripts

Box 3 of 3

Century-Old Landmarks of Montgomery With Guide Map

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1 of 1: “Blade of Grass”