

Guide to the Drayton Howard Doherty Papers, 1910-1927

Title: Drayton Howard Doherty Papers, 1910-1927

Creator: Doherty, Drayton Howard, 1893-1969

Extent: .4 linear foot

Inclusive Dates: 1910-1927

Collection Number: 1641

Provenance: Purchased from Charles Apfelbaum, July 2004

Processed by: John Beeler, 2005

Restricted: no

Copyright Statement: This collection may be protected under Title 17 of the U.S. Copyright Law.

Preferred Citation: The Drayton Howard Doherty, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.

Reference Code: USALM1641

Language: English

ABSTRACT:

This collection pertains principally the World War One service of Dr. Drayton Doherty (1893-1969) of Selma, Alabama. It contains more than sixty letters from Doherty to his parents during his service in France, in which he served as a medical officer, chiefly with the British Second Army. Other items in the collection include some official correspondence relative to Doherty's military service, a miscellany of personal papers, and three photographs

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Drayton Howard Doherty was born in Selma, Alabama on 2 January 1893, the son of James Patrick and Eliza Aycock Doherty. He was educated first at Howard

W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library
The University of Alabama
Drayton Howard Doherty Papers
Page 2 of 3

College (later Samford University), from which he received a BA in 1910, and at Johns Hopkins Medical School, where he graduated M.D. in 1915. He interned at Roosevelt Hospital, New York City, 1915-17 before returning to Selma, where he joined the staff of Vaughan Memorial Hospital. America's entry into World War One in April 1917 prompted Dr. Doherty to enlist in the U.S. Army only two months after his return to Selma. He was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the Army's Medical Corps (date unknown) and sent to France, where he served principally with the British Second Army. His "gallantry and devotion to duty in action" during the German offensives of early 1918 resulted in his winning the British Military Cross (20 June 1918) and he was subsequently prompted to Captain on Armistice Day, 11 November 1918.

Dr. Doherty was posted back to the United States in the spring of 1919 and discharged on 18 April. He returned to his medical practice in Selma, where he spent a lengthy and distinguished career, rising to the post of chief of staff at Vaughan Memorial. He also served on the Board of Directors of the New Vaughan Memorial Hospital and City National Bank, as a Trustee for Howard College, and on the Dallas County Democratic Party Executive Committee. He received a Presidential Citation for his work as a medical examiner for the Selective Service system. His professional affiliations included the Dallas County, Alabama State, and American Medical Associations, the American College of Surgeons, the Southern Surgical Association, and the American Board of Surgeons. He was also a member of several fraternal organizations and of the First Baptist Church, Selma.

Dr. Doherty was married to Grace Davis, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Davis of Saint Stephens, Washington County, Alabama. He died on 12 January 1969. No children survived him. For a brief personal reminiscence of Dr. Doherty, see "Dr. Drayton Doherty and Mrs. Cootsie," in Clifton K. Meador, *Symptoms of Unknown Origin: A Medical Odyssey* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005): 20-26, esp. 23.

Sources: Marie Bankhead Owen et al., *The Story of Alabama: A History of the State* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1949): 4:194; *The Selma Times-Journal*, 13 January 1969; the Drayton Howard Doherty papers.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

Virtually all of this collection relates to Doherty's service during World War One. Of especial interest to historians and students of the Great War are more than sixty letters written to his parents between July 1917 and March 1919, describing his activities and experiences. His service on the fighting front in northwest France and southern Belgium encompassed the great German offensives of March-June 1918, and the subsequent Allied advance which culminated with German acceptance of the armistice terms in early November. Doherty's unit, the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment, was stationed at Faveuriel, France, near the River Somme, when the German Army launched a massive attack on that sector of the British lines on 21 March 1918. Like the rest of the Army, his unit was pushed back some 40 miles over the course of the next six days in heavy and costly fighting. When the line finally stabilized, the regiment was pulled out of the line for a

W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library
The University of Alabama
Drayton Howard Doherty Papers
Page 3 of 3

rest, but was then sent to the Ypres sector, in southern Belgium, just in time for the next of the German onslaughts, which targeted that area, in particular Mt. Kemmel, in late April.

Many of the letters are relatively brief and the military censor's hand is often evident, but several of the letters, in particular that of 24 May 1918, contain vivid descriptions of Doherty's front-line service.

The remaining material consists of official correspondence relative to Doherty's service in France, several brief telegrams to his parents, a few photographs of Doherty, a small number of personal items, including announcements for his undergraduate and medical school commencement exercises, some items relative to his participation in post-Great War American Legion activities, a photocopy of his obituary from the *Selma Times-Journal*, and a another newspaper photocopy from June 1918 with printed excerpts from one of Doherty's letters home.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Description
6452	1	Military Correspondence, 1918-1919
	2	Personal correspondence, July-2 November 1917
	3	Personal correspondence, 9 November 1917-18 February 1918
	4	Personal Correspondence, 4 March-4 October 1918
	5	Personal Correspondence, 13 October 1918-21 March 1919
	6	Miscellaneous
	7	Photographs