

**Roanoke Public Libraries
Virginia Room
McKendrie Day Papers, 1920-1930**

Descriptive Summary:

Repository: Roanoke Public Libraries, Virginia Room

Accession number: 2011.11.5

Title: McKendrie/Day Family Papers

Physical Characteristics: 2 document storage cases

Donated by: Pat Douglas

Arrangement: Organized by the creator or subject of the documents.

Creator: Members from the McKendrie/Day family, with a focus specifically on Mabel McKendrie and Irene McKendrie

Reproduction restrictions: No known restrictions on publication. Virginia Room copy fees apply.

Processor: Alicia R. Sell, 21 July 2011; updated by Angela Stiefbold, April 14, 2025 to include Grace McKendrie's scrapbook

Biographical Note:

Charles McKendrie and Sarah Day were married on September 22, 1904 in Washington, DC. They lived in various homes throughout the Washington, DC, area, Essex County, VA, and Roanoke, VA. Charles came to Roanoke as a railroad worker, but developed his lifelong trade as a builder after loosing his job to a railroad strike. He learned the building trade from Tommy Carter of Roanoke, VA, where he built his first six houses. They lived in Roanoke from 1918 - 1928 and then returned to Washington, DC, where he continued his business.

Charles and Sarah had five children (1 boy, 4 girls) and adopted a son. Their first son, Herman Ishmel, died in infancy. Their youngest daughter, Irene, was tragically killed in a car accident on her 17th birthday. Irene's death in February 1930 was a significant loss for the family, and Sarah returned to Roanoke to live with the Clements family until August 1930. After moving back to Washington, DC, Charles and Sarah lived there for the rest of their lives.

Grace and Mabel McKendrie never married. They both lived in Washington, DC, for much of their lives as government workers, and traveled frequently. Jessie "Boots" McKendrie married Forrest Carlyle Brimacombe and had two sons.

Scope and Content:

The documents in the McKendrie Day Family Papers include family history documents and materials relating to Charles and Sarah McKendrie's four daughters, Grace, Mabel, Jessie "Boots," and Hilda "Irene." The majority of the materials focus on Mabel, Grace, and Irene McKendrie. Mabel's documents focus on her years spent as a teenager in Roanoke, VA (1926-1928). Her diary, travel journal and high school programs document the life of a budding teenager in 1920s Roanoke, VA. Her diary lists the names of friends

and families living in Roanoke, VA. Her manuscripts, undated, show her skills as a young writer. In one of her manuscripts, “Ellen of the Westland,” there is a torn page from a magazine advertising a writing contest with a \$25,000 cash prize for the best novel by a woman.

Grace’s scrapbook documents her graduation from Roanoke High School in 1925, and her early working life in Washington, DC, where she moved in 1926 and was employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ephemera from her travels to places including New York City and Boston are included in the scrapbook.

The documents relating to “Irene” McKendrie focus primarily on her tragic death in a car accident in Washington DC on her 17th birthday. Compiled in a scrapbook, there are photographs, letters, newsclippings, and sympathy cards, many of them from Roanoke residents.

Container List

Box 1 of 2

Series 1: McKendrie Family (Family History Information)

Family Documents (Folder 1)

Series 2: McKendrie, Hilda Irene

Scrapbook, In Remembrance of Irene McKendrie, compiled by Irene and Grace McKendrie (Item 1)

Photograph, Irene McKendrie (Folder 2)

Elementary School Diploma (SC, OF)

Series 3: McKendrie, Mabel

Manuscript – “Hermit Lane or The Love of a Hermit” by Mabel McKendrie (Folder 3)

Manuscript – “Unfailing Light” by Mabel McKendrie (Folder 4)

Manuscript – “Ellen of the West Land” by Mabel McKendrie (Folder 5)

Travel Diary, primarily Virginia and New York sites) (Folder 6)

Diary, 28 August 1925 – 29 July 1926. Roanoke, VA (Folder 7)

English Parallel school assignments. Roanoke, VA (Folder 8)

Jefferson High School Program flyers, 1926-1928 (Folder 9)

Series 4: McKendrie, Grace (see also Box 2)

Graduation booklet, National Business College (includes signatures and names of all classmates) and book “Abide with Me,” by Lyte, H.F. (Folder 10)

Series 5: McKendrie, Jessie “Boots”

Certificate, Mission Study (Folder 11)

Box 2 of 2

Series 4: McKendrie, Grace (continued)

Scrapbook, documents her graduation from Roanoke High School in 1925, move to Washington, DC, and travel to New York City, Boston, and other destinations, through 1930. Includes graduation exercise programs for Roanoke High School Class of 1925 and Jefferson High School Class of 1926.