

Bridgewater State University

Maxwell Library
Archives & Special Collections

Louise Dickinson Rich Collection
1920 – 2012 (bulk 1942 – 1976)
(MSS-028)

*Finding Aid Compiled by
Orson Kingsley*

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Volume: 1.5 linear feet (2 document boxes)

Acquisition: All items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by Louella Mann and Dinah Clark with the exception of material from University Archives.

Access: Access to this record group is unrestricted.

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Louise Dickinson Rich Collection Biographical Sketch

Sarah Louise Dickinson (later known as Louise Dickinson Rich) was born in 1903. She was raised in Bridgewater, MA where her father was the publisher of the *Bridgewater Independent* newspaper. Louise Dickinson Rich (LDR) graduated from the Bridgewater Normal School in 1924 with a 3 year degree and returned in 1931 to receive an additional degree.

After teaching for a few years LDR moved to Maine. In 1942 her best-selling book, "We Took to the Woods," was published, beginning a long and successful writing career. This book was "a witty account of the sudden change in the life of a city-reared teacher transplanted to a Thoreau-like existence in the northeastern Maine wilderness." LDR would go on to write many other books, including "Innocence Under the Elms" in 1955. This book was a depiction of her life growing up in the town of Bridgewater in the early portion of the twentieth century.

February 21, 1955 was declared Louise Dickinson Rich day by the town of Bridgewater, and an event was held by the town and Bridgewater State Teacher's College in her honor. LDR died in Mattapoisett, MA in 1991 at the age of 87.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is made up of material from multiple sources. Most of the content was collected by a life-long friend of LDR who lived in Bridgewater (Dorothy Mann). Other material came from LDR's daughter, Dinah Clark. Material pertaining to LDR's time as a student at the Bridgewater Normal School came from University Archives.

Related collections include nearly all of LDR's books, a number of which are signed. Books written by Alice Dickinson Hoke, the sister of LDR and a Bridgewater Normal School graduate, are also held in Special Collections.

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Folder

1. LDR to Dorothy Mann, Feb. 28, 1944
2. Postcards sent from LDR at Forest Lodge to her children in Bridgewater, 1950
3. LDR to Miss Bouchard (BSU employee at the library), March 10, 1960
4. LDR to Dorothy Mann, Jan. 2, 1968
5. LDR to Dorothy Mann, Dec. 22, 1969
6. LDR to Dorothy Mann, Aug. 10, 1970
7. LDR to Dorothy Mann, Dec. 16, 1971
8. LDR to Dorothy Mann, May 18, 1976
9. LDR to daughter Dinah, Jan. 11, 1980
10. LDR to Dorothy Mann, undated
11. LDR notebook—includes book ideas, diary entries, thoughts on other writers, etc., 1950-1951
12. Photograph of LDR, c. 1920 (transferred to VMC002 General Portrait Collection; item number VMC002-674)
13. Photographs of LDR in Maine (13 in total), most from 1942-1943
14. Photographs of Ralph Rich and family in Maine (9 in total), c. 1942-1943
15. Photographs of LDR's home in Maine and of rural Maine (9 in total), c. 1942-1943
16. Photograph album created by Dorothy Mann; includes 4 photographs of LDR, 4 photographs of LDR's sister, Alice, 3 photographs of group shots containing both sisters, and 1 photograph of the Dickinson's home in Bridgewater, c. 1920-1921
17. LDR obituaries, 1991
18. LDR Bridgewater Normal School student records (copies from University Archives), 1920-1931
19. Bridgewater student newspaper-Campus Comment, "B.T.C. Alumna Nation's 'Best-Loved' Author", March 4, 1955
20. News clippings of LDR in Bridgewater, 1955
21. Letter to Dinah Rich Clark from Yankee Publishing; includes rough draft and publication, 1992
22. "Wish You Were Here," by LDR, from Saturday Evening Post, Sept. 4, 1937
23. "Under the Pavement," from Woman's Day Magazine, April 1950
24. "Nothing will Happen to Sonny," from Woman's Day Magazine, Feb. 1959
25. "Let Us Give Thanks," from Woman's Day Magazine, Nov. 1959
26. "An Old Victorian Sofa," from Woman's Day Magazine, Dec. 1959
27. "The Ill Wind," from Woman's Day Magazine, Sept. 1962
28. "Spring Cleaning," from Woman's Day Magazine, Feb. 1963
29. "The Dream House," from Woman's Day Magazine, April 1963
30. "A Good Bearin' Northern Spy," from Woman's Day Magazine, Oct. 1963
31. "I Remember Argus," from Woman's Day Magazine, May 1964
32. "The Impossible Position," from Woman's Day Magazine, Oct. 1964
33. "A Sign in the Heavens," from Woman's Day Magazine, Feb. 1965
34. "Summer Guests - Down East," from Woman's Day Magazine, July 1965
35. "Caretakers of Hallowed Ground," by Jim Collins, from Yankee Magazine, 2012

36. News clippings involving LDR, 1940s
37. News clipping - LDR interview, Boston Globe, Feb. 27, 1955
38. Miscellaneous material on LDR, 1942-2007
39. Memorial Order of Service for Rufus Silas Rich, 2012
40. DVD of 1940 National Whitewater Race on the Rapid River in Maine, includes screenshot photographs of LDR, 1940
41. DVD on the life of LDR by "Chronicle," Oct. 1995
42. LDR birth certificate (true copy), 1980
43. "The Unpublished Letters of Louise Dickinson Rich to Her Publishers," (8 page pamphlet), 1943

Box 2

-Ceremonial plate gifted to LDR on behalf of the town of Bridgewater, MA to honor Louise Dickinson Rich day, Feb. 21, 1955