

MSS. Collection #26

**Susanne B. Hoskins Papers, ca. 1840-1949 [bulk 1907-1921].
3 boxes (38 folders), ca. 650 items.**

INTRODUCTION

The Susanne B. Hoskins Papers focus on the career endeavors and occupational travels of Miss Hoskins. The collection includes personal and family correspondence, literary compositions, military documents, a booklet of family genealogy, printed matter and photographs (loose and album form). Most of the collection is composed of the photographic items and wartime correspondence of Miss Hoskins.

Provenance: This collection was donated by Katherine Hoskins of Summerfield, North Carolina, cousin of Susanne Breckinridge Hoskins. It was assigned the accession numbers 1981.24.1-11.

Processing: This collection was processed by Martha G. Hogan with the finding aid completed in December 1983.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Susanne Breckinridge Hoskins was born in September 1871 in Versailles, Kentucky, the daughter of Civil War Colonel Jesse E. Hoskins and Theodosia Mosby Hoskins. Nothing is known of her early years, with primary background material available beginning at the approximate age of thirty-six years. She received nurses' training at the Connecticut Training School for Nurses, New Haven, Connecticut, and was employed from 1915 to mid-1917 at the National Homeopathic Hospital in Washington, D.C.

During the First World War, she served in the American National Red Cross, Children's Bureau, France, in Evian-les-Bains and Lyon, nursing many small children, the sick, and elderly refugees from areas of that country overrun by German forces. Her service tenure began there in September 1917 and ended after peace was declared in 1918 and American militarized relief forces were evacuated from France in January 1919. She continued her association with the American Red Cross late into the 1940s.

After the war, Miss Hoskins was employed at various institutions throughout the United States, including: Gordon-Keller Memorial Hospital, Tampa, Florida; Mary Lanning Hospital, Hastings, Nebraska; Passavant Memorial Hospital, Jacksonville, Illinois; and Mecklenburg Hospital, Plainfield, New Jersey. Her moves were frequent, apparently coinciding with those made by her sister, Letitia Hoskins Menge, in an effort to be within close distance of each other. It was known that, as a nurse, Miss Hoskins was efficient and quite capable, most often holding supervisory positions where employed.

She returned to Guilford County in the late 1930s and was involved in local private-duty nursing, taking nursing calls at Wesley Long Hospital and with several city physicians. Miss Hoskins lived the domestic life of a spinster and died in October 1960 at the age of 89.

It is notable that Miss Hoskins was a descendant of Joseph Hoskins, a Quaker who settled in Guilford County in 1780, having migrated from Pennsylvania. He acquired land on which the Revolutionary War Battle of Guilford Courthouse was later to be fought; his homeplace would also come to shelter the headquarters of Lord Cornwallis, British commander of this military expedition. Through the years, the Hoskins family figured prominently in the Summerfield area, prospering as farmers and merchants to local trade.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The Susanne B. Hoskins Papers reflect primarily the nature of Miss Hoskins' career as a nurse, given to public and private service in the early twentieth century in the United States and in France during the First World War.

The bulk of this collection consists of personal correspondence and photographs and focuses on educational and medical data, and social activities arising from Miss Hoskins' various terms of employment as a supervisor of nurses in hospitals and agencies where she worked. Of particular interest are letters to her sister, Letitia Hoskins Menge, written during her tenure in France as a relief nurse devoted to the care of refugees from war-torn regions of that country. From her diaries and daybooks are taken accounts of her work there and elsewhere throughout 1913, 1917-19, and 1941-45; medical practices and patient cases are well-documented therein. In addition, information from the 1917-19 diary was compiled in manuscript form and, apparently, was sent to the *Ladies Home Journal* for possible publication.

The strength of the collection is found in Miss Hoskins' candid and imaginative descriptions of the lively career and social activities of an unmarried and well-traveled nurse through the early and mid-years of the 1900s. Scenes of wartime France, early photos of surgical procedures (albums of New Haven and Washington years), family Civil War correspondence, and several handwritten notes from Winston Churchill (1919, 1930) mark the highlights of her personal papers. However, there exists a continuing lack of biographical data and no reference to important features such as proposed publication of the manuscript, "On The Outskirts: The Diary of a War Baby Nurse" or the receiving of letters from a personage of such renown as Churchill.

The less important items are found in the series of printed matter, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous objects; these items, nevertheless, demonstrate the openness of Miss Hoskins' reflections as a participant in service to the communities of her residences before, during and after World War I.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence. 9 folders. 1863-1948.

This series contains primarily personal letters, the largest portion of which Miss Hoskins wrote to her sister, Letitia Hoskins Menge, from France during World War I (1917-19). Included also are five family letters (1863) from Union army officer Jesse Hoskins to his wife, Theodosia, and son, Ellis, written from battle positions in Tennessee. Others within the series are two handwritten and one typescript, signed notes from Winston Churchill (1919, 1930) in reference to his health and an interview between the two on one of his visits to New York City; letters

from friends made among American Red Cross personnel and nursing cohorts through the years, letters of reference attesting to her nursing and supervisory skills; postal cards (gravure, watercolor, print); a Xeroxed military greeting card (1943) and miscellaneous unmatched covers.

2. Military Documents. 1 folder (5 items). ca. 1917, 1919.

This series of official papers includes a transport pass and military identification with snapshot photo of "Susanne Hoskins" as carrier; both were issued by the French Ministry of War during World War I. Other documents (with one duplication) are military orders for return transportation of Miss Hoskins to the United States (1919), issued by the American Red Cross Bureau of Personnel and the Headquarters of American Expeditionary Forces, respectively.

3. Diaries & Daybooks. 7 folders (7 items). ca. 1913, 1917-1949.

The diaries and daybooks in this series focus on Miss Hoskins' nursing career in New Haven and Middletown, Connecticut; Washington, D.C.; and various locations in France during World War I. Earliest dates denote medical treatment and patient care; later accounts reflect the nature of day-to-day life of the author as a "war baby" nurse in France and the domestic life of a spinster and private duty nurse in Greensboro (1941-1944). Also contained are many personal notes on subjects of classical art, drama, music, literature; politics; and medicine. Six loose diary sheets (1981.24.2-D) are included, along with two copies of Miss Hoskins' diary account of her adventures as an American Red Cross nurse in France (1917-1919), found in manuscript form, one handwritten and the other [a typescript with a cover letter to the magazine staff of *Ladies Home Journal*, requesting possible publication](#); a return address from said magazine taken from a mailing cover; and a review of Morley's *Kitty Foyle*, presumably from the pen of Miss Hoskins.

4. Printed Matter. 2 folders. 1890-1949.

This folder of printed materials consists of personal certificates of Susanne Hoskins relating primarily to her foreign service tenure with the American Red Cross and attesting to her capabilities and efficiency as a nurse and supervisor. Also included is a United States pension certificate (1890), belonging to her mother, Theodosia Hoskins, and noting the Civil War service of her father, Jesse E. Hoskins. The series holds cards for membership in three nursing organizations (1948-1949): the American National Red Cross, the Greensboro Nurses' Private Duty Section, and the American Nurses Association. A New York playbill (1901) and a program from a benefit concert in France (1918) are housed within the folder. Another portion of the series includes a seventeen-page booklet entitled *Biographical and Family History Sketch of Joseph Addison Hoskins* (Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone and Co., Printers, pub. date unknown); the booklet traces the forbearers and progeny of Joseph Addison Hoskins, who resided in the Summerfield area of Guilford County and shared ancestral background with Susanne Hoskins.

5. Newspaper Clippings. 17 items. ca. 1918-1946.

These clippings are taken, for the most part, from unidentified sources; the exceptions being duplicate copies of a letter to the editor of the *Greensboro Daily News* on May 28, 1944, by Miss Hoskins in regards to the religious objection of Quakers (in reference to war service) and their

active participation with her in relief efforts in World War I France. Other items include an article from *The Star* (Washington?) on April 2, 1918, concerning Miss Hoskins' work as an American nurse aiding the "repatrias" in Evian-les-Bains, France; and a humorous clipping with snapshot of Professor O.J. Coffin of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism (1946?). Miscellaneous items denote the social activities at various hospitals where she was employed throughout her nursing career; playful anecdotes, cartoons, and poetry are likewise found herein.

6. Miscellaneous Items. 3 folders. 1917-1949.

Found within this series are three sheets of American Red Cross stationery, letterhead of the Paris, France headquarters, and four Republique Francais postage stamps (ca. 1917). Also included (and housed elsewhere) are three small souvenir scarves (American and British flags) and decorative pin. Additional folder contents consist of financial receipts relative to Miss Hoskins' occupational travel and participation in various nursing associations during World War I and in the late 1940s. Scrapbook contents include items of personal note: a magazine clipping regarding professional data of Miss Hoskins' brother-in-law, Dr. George A. Menge; poems, limericks, and cartoons from magazines; and an invitational calling card from a family in France (1918).

7. Photographic Materials. 16 folders (ca. 225 items). ca. 1840-1945.

The materials in this series range from loose photos of Miss Hoskins' tenure as a Red Cross nurse in World War I France to albums reflecting her nursing education in New Haven, Connecticut; employment at the National Homeopathic Hospital in Washington, D.C.; and employment at the Gordon-Keller Memorial Hospital in Tampa, Florida. Early twentieth century surgical procedures are clearly pictured, as are patients and staff of the various institutions. Loose album sheets of scenes of Tampa and the United States Naval Hospital are featured; a carte de visite album of tintypes and daguerreotypes displays family portraits, as do several snapshots (ca. 1870, ca. 1890). Scenes of the care of the repatriated children and adults in France are evident, along with snapshots of American Red Cross nursing personnel and scenery of the French countryside.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Correspondence – Family (1863, 1937)
	2	Correspondence – Winston Churchill (1919, 1930)
	3	Correspondence – S.B. Hoskins, Incoming (1917-1918)
	4	Correspondence – S.B. Hoskins, Incoming (1920-1922, ca. 1930, 1944-1948)
	5	Correspondence – S.B. Hoskins, Outgoing (1917)
	6	Correspondence – S.B. Hoskins, Outgoing (1918)
	7	Correspondence – S.B. Hoskins, Outgoing (n.d.)
	8	Correspondence – Postal and Greeting Cards
	9	Correspondence – Miscellaneous Covers

FOLDER LISTING

Series	Folder	Contents
2	1	Military Documents
3	1	Diaries & Daybooks, ca. 1913
	2	Diaries & Daybooks, 1917-1918
	3	Diaries & Daybooks, 1927-1928
	4	Diaries & Daybooks, 1944-1949
	5	Diaries & Daybooks – Manuscript
	6	Diaries & Daybooks – Typescript
	7	Diaries & Daybooks – Review
4	1	Printed Matter – General
	2	Printed Matter – Genealogy
5	--	Newspaper clippings (filed as a group in general clipping file)
6	1	Miscellaneous – General
	2	Miscellaneous – Financial Items
	3	Miscellaneous – Scrapbook Items
7	1	Photographs – Loose snapshots, Hoskins Family
	2	Photographs – Loose snapshots, New Haven, Connecticut
	3	Photographs – Loose snapshots, France
	4	Photographs – Loose snapshots, Tampa, Florida
	5	Photographs – Loose snapshots, Medical
	6	Photographs – Loose snapshots, Miscellaneous
	7	Photographs – Loose snapshots, album source, New Haven, Connecticut
	8	Photographs – Loose snapshots, album source, France
	9	Photographs – Loose snapshots, album source, Washington, D.C.
	10	Photographs – Loose snapshots, daybook source
	11	Photographs – Album source, Mrs. P.T. Hoskins
	12	Photographs – Album, New Haven, Connecticut
	13	Photographs – Album, Washington, D.C.
	14	Photographs – Album, France
	15	Photographs – Loose album sheets
	16	Photographs – Photographic postal cards