

Finding Aid to the Steven G. Downing Papers

Downing, Steven G., 1874–1957

Steven G. Downing Papers, 1888–1957

.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 17

[Biography](#)

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by S. G. Downing, Fargo, ND, 1955 (Acc. 352)

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Steven G. Downing Papers, MS 17. Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Steven Gerard Downing was born September 10, 1874 at Erie, Pennsylvania, and a very early age he was adopted by Mr. & Mrs. Jerome F. Downing of Erie. Here he grew to manhood and in 1893 began work for the Insurance Company of North America as an examiner. In 1897 he married Harriett Norris of Erie and they had one son, Jerome. In 1911, Mr. Downing moved to his father's bonanza farms, the Downing Farm at Mooreton and La Moure, North Dakota. Here he oversaw the work of the superintendents. In 1925 he married Evelyn Sims, a hired girl on the farm. They had one son, Wellington. They were later divorced and in 1939 he married Linda Glaser from the La Moure area. They continued to live on the Downing farm where Mr. Downing had become superintendent. They had two children, Jerome and

another who died at birth. Because of financial difficulties the farms were sold and in 1943 Mr. Downing and family moved to Fargo where he worked at the Powers Hotel until retiring in 1950. In 1948 the Downings were divorced. Mr. Downing continued to live in Fargo until his death on April 23, 1957. He was buried in Riverside Cemetery in Fargo.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Steven G. Downing Papers** consist of correspondence, several interviews and various Subject Files related mainly to financial matters.

The [Correspondence Series](#) is arranged chronologically covering the period 1917 to 1950 with the most complete section being the 1930s and into the 1940s. The correspondence, which is almost entirely incoming, is family related. It includes letters from various Downing relatives from back East, his two sons, Jerome and Wellington, and the greatest portion with his foster-sister, Mrs. Davenport (Winnifred) Galbraith. The correspondence of Mrs. Galbraith concerns almost exclusively her financial problems in relation to the Downing Farm, and is good for a study of the 1930s. Unfortunately, almost all of Mrs. Galbraith's correspondence is undated. It is quite clear throughout all of the correspondence that Mr. Downing had personal financial problems. Also of note, are numerous letters from Mr. Downing's son Wellington as a young boy and during World War II while serving in the United States Navy.

The [Interview Series](#) contains written transcripts of interviews, done by Leonard Sackett, of Mr. Downing, his foster-brother Fred, and his former wife Linda, (then Mrs. Perrington). The interview with Mr. S.G. Downing is quite extensive (39 pages) covering mainly his life in North Dakota with some mention of the Downing family in Erie, Pennsylvania. The interview with Mrs. Pennington is quite short concerning mainly the period she was married to Mr. Downing. This interview also includes some notes from a conversation with a Mrs. Robert Lowe of Fargo.

The [Subject Files Series](#) contains a variety of material, mainly financial. There are collection agency receipts for the period 1945 to 1948; various inventories for the Downing Farm including cattle, horses, machinery, buildings, and grain (two of which are dated 1931 and 1932); miscellaneous insurance receipts, and various expense lists; and various personal property receipts of Mr. Downing for Cass and La Moure counties. The notes on Mr. Downing by Leonard Sackett are a personal observation of the man, as recorded in 1953.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box/Folder	Content
1/1	Biographical material and finding aid
	Correspondence Series
1/2	1888, 1917-1929
1/3	1930

1/4	1931
1/5	1932, January-June
1/6	1932, August-December
1/7	1933
1/8	1934
1/9	1935
1/10	1936-1937
1/11	1938
1/12	1939
1/13	1940-1941
1/14	1942
1/15	1943
1/16	1944
1/17	1945
1/18	1946-1947
1/19	1948
1/20	1949
1/21	1950
1/22	Undated
1/23	Undated-Wellington Downing, ca. 1930's
1/24	Undated-Mrs. Davenport (Winnifred) Galbraith, 1930's
1/25	Undated-Mrs. Davenport (Winnifred) Galbraith, 1930's

Interview Series

1/26	Fred Downing, 1954
1/27	S. F. Downing, 1953-1954
1/28	Mrs. Vernon Perrington, 1957

Subject Files Series

1/29	Collection agency receipts, 1945-1948
1/30	Farm inventories, 1930's
1/31	Miscellaneous, 1917-1931
1/32	Notes on S. F. Downing by Leonard Sackett, 1953-1954
	Property tax statements
1/33	Cass County, 1944-1949
1/34	La Moure County, 1939-1948