

Finding Aid to the Merton Field Papers

Field, Merton, 1871-1959

Merton Field Papers, 1901-1959

.2 linear ft.

Collection number: MSS 28

[Biography](#)

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OVERVIEW

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

Provenance: Donated by Merton Field, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, 1953 (Acc. 111)

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Merton Field Papers, MS 28. Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Merton Field was born June 2, 1871 at Lewiston, Maine, the son of Jacob A. and Dorothy (Golder) Field. In 1880, the family moved to Apple Creek Township near Bismarck, North Dakota to join Mr. Field who had come west in 1877 and homesteaded in 1878. There, Merton Field grew up on the farm, working as a ranch hand. In the fall of 1891, he enrolled at the North Dakota Agricultural College (now North Dakota State University), as part of the first class at the institution. He graduated in 1895, also a member of the first graduating class. He continued at the College with teaching duties and studying. In 1899 he earned the first Master's Degree conferred by the College. Mr. Field then enrolled at the University of Minnesota where he studied to become a doctor, graduating in 1902.

Dr. Field worked in several small Minnesota towns as a general practice physician, including Easton, Minnesota Lake, Canby, and St. Peter. He also did post-graduate work during this period at Chicago, New York, and Harvard, specializing in Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat work. He then practiced at Northfield, Minnesota until about 1925 when he moved to Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, where he remained the remainder of his career, retiring in 1951. He lived there after retirement, dying September 17, 1959.

Dr. Field was married three times. First marriage was to Myra Hutton, who died in 1904 in Eston, Minnesota of tuberculosis. They had two children Dean and Lois. His second marriage was to Carrie Eva Tambling who died in September 1936. With Carrie he had two more children, Bernice and Leland. His third wife was Arloa Knight; there were no children through this marriage.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Merton Field Papers** consist of some correspondence, various manuscripts, and a small file of newspaper clippings.

In the **Correspondence Series**, letters were collected from several sources and include several letters by Dr. Field to H. L. Bolley, his former teacher at the NDAC and to Robert Reed, a fellow member of the first NDAC class. In later letters, Dr. Field reminisces about his early days of practice and family.

The **Manuscripts Series** constitutes the main portion of the collection. They consist of writing by Dr. Field including excerpts from his unpublished, autobiographical work, "By Many Trails". "The Blizzard" recounts the experiences of a John Porter and his dog Mac who were caught in the blizzard of 1888 and survived. The "By Many Trails" manuscript is a typed 131-page transcript done by the Institute staff in 1953 and includes the portions relating Dr. Field's childhood and college days. It includes many topics: His father's wagon trains from Bismarck to the Black Hills, the farm where he grew up near Bismarck, herding cattle, (pages 42 and 87) his schooling, death of his teacher in a blizzard (page 28), prairie fires (page 71), Nick Spain (page 20), his dog, Mac (page 61), college days at the NDAC (pages 91-116), and reflections on his life. It very poignantly tells the story of a boy growing up; from being a "boy from a North Dakota Ranch" to a man about to become a physician.

As part of his NDAC graduation requirement in 1895, Dr. Field had to write a research paper which was entitled "An Investigation of the Bacterial Condition of the Water of the Surface Wells of Fargo". The copy, which is handwritten, appears to be a draft copy containing numerous editorial changes. The "Survival of the Fittest" manuscript is Dr. Field's 1895 graduation oration. The file includes both the 11-page original, handwritten copy and a typed copy. It discusses, in a broad philosophical context, the evolution of modern man from the beginning of time. The final manuscript, "A Tale of Yesterday", recounts, in general terms, the events leading to the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the rescue of the survivors.

The **Newspaper Clippings Series** contains three items: "In the Cateau" by Dr. Field, a historical article on his pioneer father, and a report on a talk by Dr. Field in 1930 on evolution, and birth control.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

| Box/Folder | Content |
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| 1/1 | Biographical material and finding aid |
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Correspondence Series

| | |
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| 1/2 | 1901-1902, 1951-1959 |
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Manuscript Series

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| 1/3 | “The Blizzard” |
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| 1/3 | “By Many Trails” - |
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| 1/4 | pages 1-23 |
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| 1/5 | pages 24-41 |
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| 1/6 | pages 42-76 |
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| 1/7 | pages 77-100 |
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| 1/8 | pages 101-131 |
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| 1/9 | “An Investigation of the Bacterial Condition of the Water of the Surface Wells of Fargo” |
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| 1/9 | pages 1-45 |
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| 1/10 | pages 46-91 |
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| 1/11 | “Survival of the Fittest” |
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| 1/12 | “A Tale of Yesterday” |
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Newspaper Clippings Series

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| 1/13 | 1906, 1916, 1930 |
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