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Finding Aid to the John W. Robinson Papers

Robinson, John W., 1879-1980
John W. Robinson, Papers, 1906-1961
.5 linear ft.

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OVERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. John Wade Robinson was born March 26, 1879, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the fifth of six children. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Robinson family travelled to Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico working as mule skimmers with the railroad. In 1883, John J. Robinson, Dr. Robinson's father, traveled to Dakota Territory with his brother, arriving in Grand Forks looking for suitable land. They met a man who told them about a new town in McLean County to be named Victoria and John J. and his brother both took up homesteads and started a general store there in the fall of 1883. Victoria was re-named Coal Harbor by the time the rest of the family came in 1884, when John W. was five years old. John W. went to school in a one room school house in Coal Harbor and received his secondary education in Bismarck. He went on to study at The University of North Dakota in Grand Forks from 1896-1899, where he was a letter-winning track athlete. In 1900, John entered veterinary school at the Chicago Veterinary College. He registered as a veterinarian in 1903 and opened his own office in his father's stock farm barn.

In 1905, he opened up a drug store and veterinarian office in Coleharbor, which was ten miles from the original site of Coal Harbor. Later that year, the Soo Line extended its railroad to Garrison, ND and John was persuaded to move there by his brother-in-law, and there he stayed. By 1907 with two drug stores in

Coleharbor and Garrison, he decided he should become registered in pharmacy and enrolled at the North Dakota Agricultural College. He was a registered pharmacist in 1908. Dr. Robinson married Elsie Boeck in 1909 and they had two children together.

Dr. Robinson was a driving force behind the formation of the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association in 1903. He remained active in the Association and eventually served as president in 1939. In 1907, Robinson was selected as a charter member of the North Dakota Livestock Sanitary Board. He remained on the Board until his retirement in 1960--it also marked the end of his seventeen-year presidency of the Board. In 1956, the Saddle and Sirloin Club of North Dakota Agricultural College honored Robinson by naming him "Man of the Year in Agriculture."

In addition to his professional work as a veterinarian, he was extremely active with the Masons. One of his most important personal accomplishments was being appointed Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of North Dakota in 1932.

The Veterinary Science and Bacteriology Laboratory at North Dakota State University was built in 1976 to house laboratories, animal isolation units, and equipment for teaching the new two-year Animal Health Technician (now the four-year Veterinary Technology Program) curriculum. On October 31, 1981, the building was dedicated as Robinson Hall, in honor of the highly influential and respected North Dakota veterinarian. See:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ndsu-university-archives/sets/72157625573101113/>

Robinson died on February 26, 1980--exactly one month short of his 101st birthday.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Dr. John W. Robinson papers consist of correspondence from 1906-1961. The correspondence is arranged chronologically and alphabetically. A good deal of the correspondence deals with Robinson's various roles as a member of the Live Stock Sanitary Board. In addition, there is general correspondence dealing with a variety of veterinary concerns, inquiries and requests from businesses, associations, and North Dakota farmers. There is also correspondence with a number of colleagues, including Dr. W.F. Crewe (State Veterinarian), Dr. Van Es (Professor of Veterinary Science, NDAC), and Dr. T.O. Brandenburg (State Veterinarian). The papers also contain a folder of personal letters from Dr. Van Es as well as papers regarding the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, such as meeting programs and speeches.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

BOX 1

- 1 Finding Aid
- 2 Correspondence – primarily with Dr. L. Van Es regarding animal diseases and prevention – 1906
- 3 Correspondence 1907
- 4 Correspondence 1909
- 5 Correspondence 1910
- 6 Correspondence 1911
- 7 Correspondence 1913
- 8 Correspondence 1914
- 9 Correspondence 1916
- 10 Correspondence 1917
- 11 Correspondence 1920
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- 13 Correspondence 1922
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- 42 Correspondence 1954
- 43 Correspondence 1955
- 44 Correspondence 1956-1957
- 45 Correspondence 1958
- 46 Correspondence 1959
- 47 Correspondence 1961
- 48 Personal Correspondence from Dr. Van Es (1923-1955)
- 49 North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association Papers and Annual Meeting Programs (1919-1961
– gaps)