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## Fennell-Disher Collection (MSS 362)

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*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 362 FENNELL-DISHER Collection**

1 box. 8 folders. 155 items. 1901-1936.  
 Originals, photocopies, photographs, typescript.

2010.23.1

***BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE***

Mary Whitlock Fennell ("Whit"), the daughter of Lee Arthur Fennell (1870-1942) and Mary MacDugald Anderson (1872-1947) was born on 7 August 1911 in Cynthiana, Kentucky. When she was about eleven, her family moved to south Florida, where her father raised orchids and founded the Orchid Jungle at Naranja, near Homestead. Whit attended the University of Miami for a year, then transferred to the University of Kentucky, where she majored in home economics. After graduation in 1933, she began teaching home economics at Harrison County High School in Cynthiana.

Born on 15 March 1904 in Mason County, Kentucky, Isaac Clinton Disher ("Clint") was the son of John James Disher (1861-1947) and Edna Earl Collins. He grew up on his family's tobacco farm in Mason County and earned a degree in engineering at the University of Kentucky in 1924. After graduation, Clint took a job in New York City with Westinghouse, but the onset of the Depression forced him to return home to work on the family farm.

Whit and Clint met on 20 April 1933 and married in secret on 20 April 1934. They did not tell their parents of their marriage until June. In the meantime, Whit completed her teaching year and Clint worked briefly at a sales job in Columbus, Ohio while he searched for stable employment. When Clint obtained a job with the Bimel Refrigeration Company in 1935, the Dishers moved to Cincinnati, where their first child, Mary Nancy, was born. They became the parents of three more children: John Lee (b. 1938), David Clinton (b. 1944) and Myra Whitlock (b. 1947). In 1936, Clint took a job with Chrysler Airtemp in Cincinnati, and was transferred to its Louisville plant in 1938. While in Louisville, Whit worked as a home economist with the National Youth Administration. In 1941, the family returned to Cincinnati, where Clint spent World War II working as an engineer at the Wright-Patterson Aeronautical plant. After the war, he formed his own consulting business, supervising the mechanical construction of public and commercial buildings in Cincinnati and elsewhere in Ohio. Whit earned a master's degree and taught at a Catholic college in Cincinnati.

Mary Whitlock (Fennell) Disher died on 5 July 1978 and Isaac Clinton Disher died on 16 September 1979.

## **COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists primarily of the letters of Isaac Clinton “Clint” Disher and Mary Whitlock “Whit” (Fennell) Disher. Most were written to each other during their courtship in 1933-1934, when Whit was teaching school and living with two aunts in Cynthiana, Kentucky and Clint was living at his parents’ farm in Shannon, near Mays Lick, Kentucky. They wrote regularly during the week and saw each other on Sundays whenever possible. Other letters were written after their marriage in 1934 but before they were able to establish a household together, and a few were written after they settled in Cincinnati.

Folders 2 and 3 contain Whit’s letters to Clint, written from June 1933 to July 1934. She writes of her teaching duties and her upcoming resignation, her health and dental problems, and her friends and activities. She also writes to him during her visits to family in Chicago, Illinois and Homestead, Florida.

Folders 4 and 5 contain Clint’s letters to Whit, written from June 1933 to August 1936. Prior to their marriage, he writes of his health, his job search, and his work on the family tobacco farm. He also writes about playing bridge, a pastime which they both enjoyed. After their marriage, Clint writes from Columbus, Ohio of his work soliciting customers for a home furnace company, his general employment prospects, and how best to announce their marriage to their families. After their move to Cincinnati, he writes from Dayton, Ohio, where he is undergoing job training, and after the birth of their first child he writes to Whit while she is on visits in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Folders 6 and 7 contain typescripts of the letters in Folders 2-5 together with a few relevant letters from Folder 8. The typescripts were prepared in 2010 by Whit and Clint’s daughter, Nancy Disher Baird, and include additional family information, photographs, and some annotations. A letter from Whit to her mother dated 19 October 1936 and giving news of Clint’s Airtemp job is typescripted in Folder 7, but the original is not in the collection.

Folder 8 contains miscellaneous correspondence relating to the Fennell family, including two letters of inquiry to Whit’s mother regarding the genealogy of her family, the Andersons; materials relating to the greenhouse business of Whit’s father, Lee A. Fennell; and a monograph by Nancy Disher Baird on the horse boot-making business of an ancestor, Joseph Fennell. Also of interest in this folder are letters to Whit from friends after they learned of her marriage; a letter from her brother Tom after learning of her pregnancy; and her mother’s letter responding to the news of her secret marriage.

## **SHELF LIST**

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Fennell-Disher Collection</b>	<b>1901-1936</b>	<b>155 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory and family biographical material		7 items
Folder 2	Mary Whitlock Fennell – Letters to Isaac Clinton Disher	Jun. -Dec. 1933	30 items
Folder 3	Mary Whitlock Fennell – Letters to Isaac Clinton Disher	Jan. -Jul. 1934	32 items

Folder 4	Isaac Clinton Disher – Letters to Mary Whitlock Fennell	Jun. -Dec. 1933	28 items
Folder 5	Isaac Clinton Disher – Letters to Mary Whitlock Fennell	Jan. 1934-Aug. 1936	38 items
Folder 6	“Dear Whit – Dear Clint” – Typescript of letters in Folders 2-5, by Nancy Disher Baird (pp. 1-90)	2010	1 item
Folder 7	“Dear Whit – Dear Clint” – Typescript of letters in Folders 2-5, by Nancy Disher Baird (pp. 91-181)	2010	1 item
Folder 8	Miscellaneous Fennell family correspondence	1901-1936	18 items

### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD***

MSS FENNELL-DISHER Collection 1901-1936  
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Letters of Mary Whitlock (Fennell) Disher, a teacher from Harrison County, Kentucky, and Isaac Clinton Disher, an engineer from Mason County, Kentucky, written in the 1930s during their courtship and marriage. Includes typescripts with family data, photos and other illustrative information. Also includes miscellaneous Fennell family correspondence.

1 box. 8 folders. 155 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs, typescript.

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### ***SUBJECT ANALYTICS***

Anderson, David – Photo B1,F7  
 Anderson family – Relating to B1,F8  
 Anderson, Joseph Banister, 1847-1934 B1,F8  
 Baird, Nancy (Disher), b. 1935 B1,F1,6-7  
 Baird, Nancy (Disher), b. 1935 – Relating to B1,F5,7  
 Courtship  
 Delta Chi – Mentioned B1,F2  
 Disher family – Photos B1,F6,7  
 Disher family – Relating to B1,F1,4,5  
 Disher, Isaac Clinton, 1904-1979 – Correspondence B1,F2-5  
 Disher, Isaac Clinton, 1904-1979 – Photos B1,F6,7  
 Disher, Mary Whitlock (Fennell), 1911-1978 – Correspondence B1,F2-5,8  
 Disher, Mary Whitlock (Fennell), 1911-1978 – Photos B1,F6,7  
 Dyer, Jane B1,F8

Exhibitions and fairs – Chicago, Ill., 1933 – Comments about, 1933 B1,F2,4  
 Fennell, Charles, 1884-1950 – Relating to B1,F1  
 Fennell, Dorothy Grace (Bogges), 1901-1997 – Relating to B1,F2  
 Fennell family – Photos B1,F6  
 Fennell family – Relating to B1,F1,8  
 Fennell, Joseph, 1833-1919 – Relating to B1,F1  
 Fennell, Lee Arthur, 1870-1942 – Correspondence B1,F8  
 Fennell, Lee Arthur, 1870-1942 – Relating to B1,F1,8  
 Fennell, Lee Cameron, b. 1934 – Relating to B1,F3  
 Fennell, Vesta Margaret (Bridges), b.1913 – Relating to B1,F2,3  
 Fennell, Mary MacDugald (Anderson), 1872-1947 – Correspondence B1,F8  
 Fennell, Mary MacDugald (Anderson), 1872-1947 – Relating to B1,F3,8  
 Fennell, Mary “Mayme,” 1879-1957 – Relating to B1,F2  
 Fennell, Thomas Anderson, 1902-1977 – Correspondence B1,F8  
 Florida – Travel and description, 1933 B1,F2  
 Georgia – Travel and description, 1933 B1,F2  
 Horses – Racing, 1870s – Relating to B1,F1  
 Horticulture – Florida, 1930s – Relating to B1,F1,8  
 Irby, John S. B1,F8  
 Rohs, Gertrude Elizabeth (Hummel) – Relating to B1,F8  
 Schools – Harrison County, 1933 – Relating to B1,F2,3  
 Teachers and teaching – Harrison County – Relating to B1,F2,3  
 Tobacco – Trade, 1934 – Relating to B1,F4  
 Valentines, 1934 B1,F3

Niedermeier/Jeffrey 03/25/2011