

# Guide to the Frances B. Denton papers

MS 655



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 655

**CREATOR:** Denton, Frances B., 1871-1948

**TITLE:** Frances B. Denton papers

**DATES:** 1884-1944

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.5 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence and personal memorabilia of Frances B. Denton, personal secretary to Col. E. M. House from 1885 to 1938.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0655>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0655>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

Frances B. Denton Papers (MS 655). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Scope and Contents

For over fifty years (1885-1938) Frances B. Denton (1871-1948) acted as Colonel E. M. House's personal secretary and ever-present confidante. "Miss Fannie" was the daughter of the Superintendent of the State Insane Asylum in Austin, Texas. Her father had been a close personal friend of Colonel House, while her mother was a friend (and distant relative) of the Hunter sisters - one of whom, Loulie, became Colonel House's wife, and the other, Annie, Sidney Mezes's wife.

Between 1912 and 1938 Miss Denton accompanied Colonel House on every one of his extended private or official trips - to and from Austin, New York, Washington, Magnolia, London, Paris, and the south of France; she typed all of his voluminous correspondence and organized his files; she supervised his social schedule and official appointments and arranged his daily routine; finally, she not only transcribed the famous "Diary" in toto, but was one of only four people (Charles Seymour, Gordon Auchincloss and Sir William Wiseman being the others) who were privileged to discuss and "dissect" in depth its contents with Colonel House. Indeed it would be no exaggeration to say that Miss Denton was closer to House, day in and day out, than any other person in his life not excluding his wife and children. This fact was recognized fully by Colonel House's entourage; by President Wilson (who had immediately granted Miss Denton full security clearance, thus enabling her to accompany Colonel House on all of his secret wartime missions to Europe and later on to the Paris Peace Conference); and by Charles Seymour, who repeatedly appealed to her for assistance and advice while preparing his four-volume edition of *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*.

Colonel House, in turn, trusted Miss Denton absolutely: he depended on her not only because of her honesty and personal loyalty to him, but also because of her intelligence, sound judgment and "instinct" about other people and things. Quite early on in his career Colonel House appointed Miss Denton his literary executrix. Later he named her a trustee (with complete authority to manage investments) of his children's trust funds. Later yet he dedicated his "diary" to her. Miss Denton was habitually left in charge of the various House family residences - in terms of everyday management, repairs, redecoration and the like. She also held power of attorney from Colonel House and helped him manage his own finances.

Thus, for the historian, Frances B. Denton is in many ways as important to an understanding of Colonel House as the Colonel himself. Unfortunately, Miss Denton proved to be all too self-effacing; and her sense of privacy and confidentiality was so highly developed that the small group of private papers which were incorporated in the original "House Collection" are, as a result, disappointing in the extreme.

Miss Denton's correspondence with Charles Seymour, and most of her correspondence with Colonel House, have been transferred to the "General Correspondence" series of the *Charles Seymour Papers* and *The Papers of Colonel E. M. House* respectively. The balance of the material is contained in one box and is divided into two series - "General Correspondence" and "Personal and Memorabilia". The correspondence includes some letters from Colonel House, given by Frances Denton Miller in 1978. The latter section includes a number of items from Marion Weeks (Miss Denton's favorite niece) given to the "House Collection" in 1956 and 1969.

## **Arrangement**

Arranged in two series: I. General Correspondence. II. Personal and Memorabilia.

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**Collection Contents**
**Series I: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

b. 1, f. 1	Andrews, Edward H. (1)	1942
b. 1, f. 2	Auchincloss, Edward House (1)	1941
b. 1, f. 3	Auchincloss, Janet (House) (8)	1904-1905; 1943-1948
b. 1, f. 4	Bible, Howard W. (1)	1941
b. 1, f. 5	Bonsal, Stephen (6)	1919; 1941-1945
b. 1, f. 6	Bradley, Rolland (8)	1932; 1933
b. 1, f. 7	Bradley, Sarah E. (1)	undated
b. 1, f. 8	Breedlove, Stella, (1)	1944
b. 1, f. 9	Caspari, Ottilie, (3)	1929
b. 1, f. 10	Chance, Wade, (1)	1944
b. 1, f. 11	Cruger, Paul B. (1)	1929
b. 1, f. 12	Denton, Ashley N. (1)	1913
b. 1, f. 13	Denton, M. H.(4)	1894-1895; 1918
b. 1, f. 14	Frazier, Arthur Hugh (3)	1940-1944
b. 1, f. 15	Frazier, Freda (1)	1941
b. 1, f. 16	Guardian Trust Company (1)	1943
b. 1, f. 17	House, Edward Mandell (14)	1905-1932; undated
b. 1, f. 18	House, Loulie (Hunter) (1)	1939
b. 1, f. 19	House, T. W. (2)	1941-1942
b. 1, f. 20	Hunter, Jay Elam (2)	1889
b. 1, f. 21	Koch, Howard (1)	1939
b. 1, f. 22	Lamkin, Mary H. (1)	1942
b. 1, f. 23	Mezes, Annie (Hunter) (7)	1890; 1904
b. 1, f. 24	Mezes, Sidney Edward (1)	undated
b. 1, f. 25	Needham, Mary Louise (2)	1942
b. 1, f. 26	Pope, John H. (1)	1945
b. 1, f. 27	Reynolds, Helen M. (25)	1933-1941

b. 1, f. 28	Smith, Arthur D. H. (2)	1941-1942
b. 1, f. 29	Travieso, Martin (5)	1933
b. 1, f. 30	Viereck, George Sylvester (10)	1931; 1937; 1938; 1941
b. 1, f. 31	Weeks, Marion (13)	1913; 1919; 1926
b. 1, f. 32	Williams, Wythe (1)	1941
b. 1, f. 33	Miscellaneous (5)	1907-1942; undated

**Series II: PERSONAL AND MEMORABILIA**

b. 1, f. 34	Correspondence between Jay Elam Hunter and Dr. and Mrs. Denton with memorandum by Marion Weeks	1884-1885
b. 1, f. 35	Draft of scenario on life of Theodore Roosevelt sent to <i>Liberty</i> magazine	undated
b. 1, f. 36	Short-hand notebooks	1926
b. 1, f. 37	Miscellaneous newspaper clippings	1920-1958; undated
b. 1, f. 38	Miscellaneous memorabilia	undated
b. 1, f. 39	Photographs, mostly of Colonel House	1924; undated
b. 1, f. 40	Marion Weeks correspondence and memorabilia	1898-1958; undated
b. 1, f. 41	Condolence letters to Frances B. Denton on the death of Colonel House (1938) and the death of Mrs. House	1938; 1941
	Condolences on the death of Col. House Received from: Richard Carvell, 1981 Sep 16	
b. 1, f. 41	Bonsal, Stephen	1938 April 8
b. 1, f. 41	Condon, Bob	1938 March 28
b. 1, f. 41	Frazier, Hugo	1938 March 31
b. 1, f. 41	Green, John E., Jr.	1938 March 28
b. 1, f. 41	Jones, Cyril H.	[1938]
b. 1, f. 41	Morris, Ira N.	1938 March 28
b. 1, f. 41	Patterson, Richard C., Jr.	1938 October 17
b. 1, f. 41	Roberts, Henry	[1938] March 29
b. 1, f. 41	Seymour, Gladys	[1938 April 8]
b. 1, f. 41	Smith, A.W.D.	1938 March 29
b. 1, f. 41	Williams, Wythe	1938 March 28
b. 1, f. 41	Wynne, Cyril	1938 March 28
b. 1, f. 41	_____, Ellery English	1938 April 11
	Condolences on the death of Mrs. House	
b. 1, f. 41	Mitchell, Billy	1941 January 7
b. 1, f. 41	Washburn, Robert	1941 January 8
b. 1, f. 42	<a href="#">Portrait photograph of Frances B. Denton</a>	Circa 1920s



## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Geographic Names**

United States -- Foreign relations

### **Names**

Bonsal, Stephen, 1865-1951

Denton, Frances B., 1871-1948

Frazier, Arthur H.

House, Edward Mandell, 1858-1938

Viereck, George Sylvester, 1884-1962

Weeks, Marion, 1887-1968