



**John J. Riordan Papers
(C4383)**

Collection Number: C4383

Collection Title: John J. Riordan Papers

Dates: 1917-1990

Creator: Riordan, John Joseph, 1892-1982

Abstract: The John J. Riordan Papers document the World War I military career of a veterinary officer, his long and distinguished career as a professional veterinarian in Tarkio, Missouri, and his efforts to record his wartime experiences through the writing of his memoir, *Horses, Mules and Remounts: The World War I Memoir of a Veterinary Officer*. The book, published in California, was marketed by John F. Riordan, the author's son. The collection covers the period 1917 to 1990 and includes personal correspondence, photographs, business papers, and multiple drafts of Riordan's memoir as it evolved into its final form. The collection is notable for Riordan's unique perspective on the war from the point of view of a veterinary officer. Of interest is a photograph featuring General John J. Pershing and several other high ranking generals as they review 40,000 troops in 1919. The papers have been organized chronologically.

Collection Size: 2.4 cubic feet
(55 folders, 81 photographs)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is stored off site. Please provide us at least two days advance notice if you would like to research this collection. Call 573-882-1187 or e-mail us at research@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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reproductions and permission to publish. The donor maintains the copyright to the published work in this collection, *Horses, Mules and Remounts: The World War I Memoir of a Veterinary Officer*.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *John J. Riordan Papers* (C4383); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by John F. Riordan on June 25, 2007 (Accession No. CA6152).

Processed by: Processed by Erin Smither, April 3, 2019

Historical Note:

John Joseph Riordan was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, on April 1, 1892. His parents were Daniel Joseph Riordan and Margaret Conroy Riordan. He spent his formative years in St. Joseph and attended veterinary school at St. Joseph Vet College, graduating in 1917. In September 1917, Riordan began service in World War I as a veterinary officer. He was assigned to Veterinary Hospital Number 5, under the command of Major Reid Blair. He earned three battle stars for his service in three major campaigns, The Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on November 11, 1919, Riordan was assigned to manage a dipping vat for horses, before his assignment in occupied Germany at Veterinary Hospital #4. Riordan commanded the 4th Corps Mobile Veterinary Hospital troops, the only African American troops in the occupation forces.

After the war, Riordan served for the Horse Purchasing Board Number 5 in Kansas City, Missouri. He resigned from this post in 1920 to establish the Riordan Brothers Veterinary Supply Company in St. Joseph, Missouri, with his brother Dr. Chast Riordan. By 1922, he had established a private veterinary practice in Fillmore, Missouri. He also practiced in St. Joseph, New York, and finally settled in Tarkio, Missouri, where he practiced from 1936 to 1957. His practice covered a large geographic area in Missouri, including Rockport, Westboro, Fairfax and Burlington Junction. He specialized in large animals and often travelled long distances to see patients. In 1976 Dr. Riordan began writing his memoirs about his military service in World War I. He titled the book, *Horses, Mules and Remounts: The World War I Memoir of a Veterinary Officer*. He died on November 14, 1982, in Kansas City, Missouri, at 90 years old, allegedly the last survivor of the 890 veterinary officers who served in the American Expeditionary Forces. His son, John F. Riordan, edited his father's memoir, saw to its publication, and marketed and sold the book. He donated many copies to libraries, veterinary schools, and veterans' groups.

Arrangement:

This collection was arranged into three series:

World War I
Private Veterinary Practice
Memoir

Scope and Content Note:

World War I

This series contains the wartime diaries of John J. Riordan, as well as his correspondence with his family and friends in the United States while serving in World War I as a veterinary officer with the American Expeditionary Force from 1917 to 1920. The series contains copies of Riordan's military orders, documentation of his promotions in rank, discharge papers, and original photographs of comrades, officers and interesting places in Europe. The series has been arranged by grouping personal correspondence together, followed by photographs, military orders, and a summary of Riordan's military career. Each folder has been arranged chronologically.

Private Veterinary Practice

This series contains records documenting Dr. Riordan's large animal veterinary practice in Tarkio, Missouri, from 1930 until 1957. Documents include financial and bank records, account books, information about appointments and other client information, as well as professional correspondence with vendors and clients. The series has been arranged chronologically and documents the doctor's entire career in his practice.

Memoir

This series records the process by which Dr. John J. Riordan, DVM, wrote his memoirs documenting his experiences as a veterinary officer in the American Expeditionary Force during World War I. The series contains drafts of the manuscript, including comments and corrections, outlines, and notes, illustrating the evolution of the manuscript from handwritten rough draft to the final published version. Included are images used in the publication, artwork for the book's cover and spine, an epilogue authored by Riordan's son John F. Riordan, and correspondence and marketing materials detailing the distribution, sales, and donation of volumes all over the country and the world. This collection has been arranged in an attempt to maintain the original order of the drafts of the manuscript in an attempt to show the evolution of the manuscript and the process by which it was created. The series is arranged chronologically.

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- | | | |
|----------|----------|--|
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| | f. 2-3 | Correspondence, 1917-1919 |
| | f. 4 | Postcards to parents, 1917-1920 |
| | f. 5 | Postcards to siblings, 1917-1920 |
| | f. 6 | Postcards to others, 1917-1920 |
| | f. 7 | Original World War I photographs, 1917-1952 |
| | f. 8 | Photocopies of military orders, 1917-1921 |
| | f. 9 | Military orders, discharge papers, and promotion to first lieutenant, 1919-1920 |
| | f. 10 | John J. Riordan, DVM resume of military service, no date |
| f. 11-33 | | Private Veterinary Practice |
| | f. 11 | Silver Fox Company business incorporation records, 1930-1931 |
| | f. 12 | Bank deposit book, 1930-1931 |
| | f. 13 | Sales records, 1932 |
| | f. 14 | Account book pages, 1936 |
| | f. 15 | Receipt book, 1930-1952 |
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| Box 002 | f. 21 | Journal for Tarkio, Missouri, practice, 1946-1947 |
| | f. 22 | Cash book, 1948 |
| | f. 23-25 | Journal for Tarkio, Missouri, practice, 1948-1951 |
| | f. 26 | Veterinary practice correspondence, 1951 |
| | f. 27-28 | Journal for Tarkio, Missouri, practice, 1953 |
| | f. 29 | Appointment Book, 1953 |
| | f. 30-33 | Journal for Tarkio, Missouri, practice, 1957 |
| f. 34-55 | | Memoir |
| Box 003 | f. 34 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" outline, 1976 |
| | f. 35 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" original handwritten copy, 1976 |
| | f. 36 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" photocopy of handwritten manuscript with notes and outline at end, 1976 |
| | f. 37-40 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" handwritten draft with corrections, 1976 |
| | f. 41 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" preliminary draft, 1976 |
| | f. 42 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" typed draft of epilogue, 1983 |
| | f. 43 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" manuscript with comments, 1983 |
| | f. 44 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts: The Memoirs of a WWI Veterinary Officer" corrected copy, 1983 |
| | f. 45 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts: The Memoirs of a WWI Officer" final copy without photos or epilogue, 1983 |
| | f. 46 | "Horses, Mules and Remounts" final draft, 1983 |
| | f. 47 | Unbound printed pages of "Horses, Mules and Remounts," 1983 |
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| | f. 49 | Veterinary caduceus and stamps for cover artwork, 1983 |

- f. 50 Photographs used in "Horses, Mules and Remounts," 1917-1920
 f. 51 Photograph negatives, 1983
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