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**MS 406
KIDDER, JEFFERSON PARISH, 1875-1908
PAPERS, 1902-1972****DESCRIPTION**

Jeff Kidder was a member of the Arizona Rangers from 1904 until he was killed by Mexican police in 1908. Most of this collection consists of material from the period shortly before and after his death on April 5, 1908: his daily diary from 1907, letters to Kidder, his letters to his mother and letters of condolence to his mother following his death. The collection also includes his enlistment and discharge papers from the Rangers, "Wanted" posters from 1907, newspaper clippings from the time of his shooting and several newspaper and magazine articles retelling the legend of the shooting of Sgt. Kidder.

One box, .5 linear foot

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jefferson Parish Kidder, Arizona Ranger, was born in Vermilion, South Dakota, on November 5, 1875. He was named after his grandfather who was a judge and an active politician in Vermont, Minnesota and the Dakotas. Jeff graduated from high school in Vermilion and then headed West. About the same time his parents moved to San Jacinto, California. After a time in Montana, Jeff ended up in Bisbee where he was associated with the Arizona Copper Company. He enlisted in the Arizona Rangers in April of 1903. Most of his time with the Rangers was spent patrolling the Arizona/Mexico border where he had the reputation of being "Hell on smugglers." Kidder was also reported to be a very quick hand with a six-shooter. In April 1908, Kidder's enlistment was up and, while waiting in Naco for Capt. Harry Wheeler to return from an assignment and swear him in again, Jeff went across the border into Mexican Naco. There he was lured into a bar and, according to legend, was shot by two Mexican policemen who fired without warning. After he was shot, Kidder drew his gun and wounded both of the policemen. While trying to drag himself back across the border, was reportedly set upon by seven or eight other Mexican policemen. Only after Jeff had died were Arizona authorities allowed to bring his body back across the border. The Elks of Bisbee gave Kidder a funeral and shipped his body to his mother, Mrs. Silas W. Kidder in San Jacinto. The legend of Jeff Kidder continued after his death with the tale of one of his fellow Rangers, Billy Olds, who supposedly resigned his commission and took off into Mexico after the men who shot Kidder. Olds returned several years later "with a very satisfied look."

ACQUISITION

The provenance of this collection is unknown.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

COPYRIGHT

Request for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society, Archives Department.

PROCESSING

Processing of this collection was completed in 1998 by Sue Conklin, Volunteer, under the supervision of Riva Dean, Archives Manager.

INVENTORY

- File 1- Documents - Kidder's enlistment and discharge papers from the Arizona Rangers, bills. 1904-1908
- File 2 - Correspondence - Letters to Kidder including several from Harry C. Wheeler, Captain of the Arizona Rangers. 1908.
- File 3 - Correspondence - Letters to Mrs. Silas W. Kidder (mother), including letters of condolence and some from Jeff Kidder to his mother. 1906-1908.
- File 4 - Dairies - Daily diary kept by Kidder for 1907 includes whereabouts each day and miles covered. No entries for January 16 to May 17. Full page of cattle brands. Type transcript. Also June 21 to anuary 7th (no year given). Random notes - names, addresses, cattle brands.
- File 5 - Posters - Four "Wanted" posters for criminals, 1907.
- File 6 - Newspapers - Newspaper clippings about the death of Kidder, 1908.
- File 7 - Miscellaneous - Magazine and newspaper articles plus one letter retelling the legend of the death of Sgt. Kidder. 1910-1972.