

7B. 1932 DIARY OF A HUNTINGDON HUSBAND'S: DIVORCE CASE



“I HOPE THE NEXT ONE YOU GET YOU CAN KEEP BETTER THAN ME.”

This may be one of the saddest and strangest diaries available for study on this course. The diary and accompanying documents are mainly concerned with a divorce case between a man and a woman who live d in Huntington, West Virginia, in the 1930's. Here's a link to Huntington:

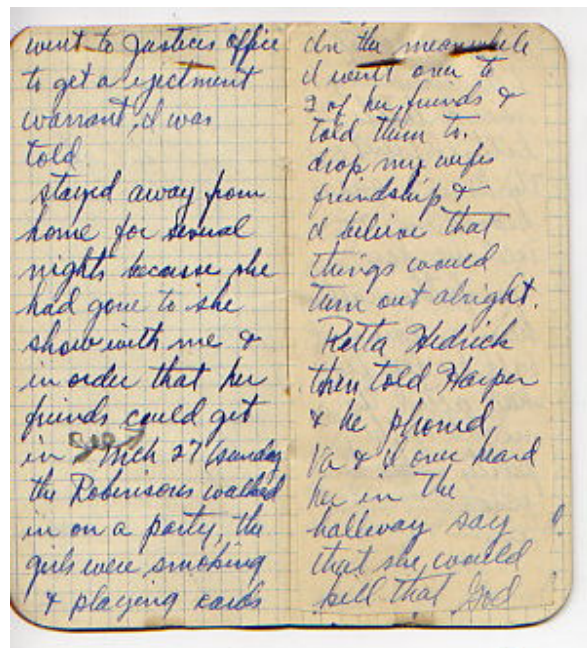
<http://www.cityofhuntington.com/pages/history.html>

Not only are there attorney's papers, cancelled checks, sheriff summons, western union telegrams and so on, but the handwritten diary recording this man's thoughts and his wife's activities concerning her affair with another man. I think we can assume the husband was keeping this record for the courts or other legal purposes because one of the legal documents shows him applying for custody of their two children. He also

appears to have hired a private detective. All of the manuscripts and the diary are from 1932 or thereabouts.

There are 24 pieces of ephemera and the diary. The diary is small, measuring about 2 1/2" x 5 1/2" and has 26 (counting front and back) pages of fairly powerful handwritten entries. I have left the names out of this part of the record as there is a faint chance some of the participants are still alive (though probably in their nineties by now).

“Affair started about 10 Feb. Wanetta, her friend, had been meeting boys at my house contrary to her Aunts _____ wishes. Among them was D.D. Jr. I come home one day rather sudden with J. McCaffey and found _____ there. He blushed and _____ made the excuse that he was waiting for Wanetta. Was used as a go between unexpectedly. I had basket ball games and did not object to her going to the skating rink as I thought it fair. She kept acting indifferently about cooking, did not seem interested in anything I done for her. She was always complaining that I never gave her any money (to the neighbors) and how bad I treated her. Things went on. She neglected her children and household duties but we didn't have any quarrels or heated up affairs. I left home because of a skating difference. Stayed at Adelphi Hotel.....My uncle Mr. _____ come to the hotel that night and suggested that a man might be in the case.....Stayed away till March 23 when I went in and broke up a party.....March 27, Sunday, the Robinsons walked in on a party, the girls were smoking and playing cards, to



their surprise ____ had D.D. there for herself. No telling how many nights he stayed while I was away. In the meanwhile I went over to 2 of her friends and told them to drop my wife's friendship and I believe that things would turn out alright. ____ then told ____ and he phones ____ (his wife) and I overheard her in the hallway say that she would "kill that ____ son-of-a-b____"..... March 31st, She and D.D. Jr. planned a trip to Wash unbeknownst to everyone....."

For the next three weeks the wife writes letters, to her family and her husband about needing more money but also about how much she is enjoying her holiday. She then returns home...



"May 4th, Left up town with Lucie and left Walter by himself all afternoon. One afternoon of this week D.D. Jr. was there till as late as 4:15 p.m. May 7th, She met D.D. at skating rink for a long while.....May 9th, Was up town with D.D. Jr. They had meeting place over N.Y. Studio and had equipped with small 5 watt lamp. May 13th, Gone at noon. I went home and that night she skipped out of the house after 11 o'clock and never got home till 2:15 a.m. Went up town and had Stacy Warren stay at the house while I was gone. Left note saying she was going after cigarettes and couldn't sleep.....1st Street Drug Store Affair. Phoned at noon and said she was going to country with friends. Got back at 5 o'clock. R____, H____, M____'s Cousin and D.D. in car.May 20th, Caught at 1st and Blvd. We had dinner at home. Detectives, they were uptown or some place all afternoon...."

She then leaves again, probably for good. Her parting words are: "I hope the next one you get you can keep better than me."