

**THE
LIBERTY CORPORATION
ARCHIVES
MSS 160**

**Register
of the
INDEPENDENCE INSURANCE COMPANY RECORDS
1890-1962, bulk 1922-1942**

**Record Group 9
4.375 cubic feet**

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Mss 160, Record Group 9, 4.375 cubic feet including 54 volumes and oversize material.

INTRODUCTION

The Independence Insurance Company Records not only illuminate the business activities of the company but are also a prime source of information regarding African-Americans and the insurance industry and on the entrepreneurial efforts of W. Frank Hipp. Although relatively short-lived, 1930-1961, the company was viable in its sphere of influence. The material in this collection was accessioned by the Liberty Corporation Archives as accessions 82-58, 82-64, 83-6, and 83-15; it was accessioned by Special Collections as part of accessions 94-34 and 94-54. This register was created in 1999 by Alan Burns and revised by James Cross in 2000 and 2001.

COMPANY HISTORY

The Independence Insurance Company was founded in 1930 by W. Frank Hipp and was chartered that same year. The company quickly reinsured the sickness and accident business of The Liberty Life Insurance Company and thereby assumed those lines of insurance. Additionally, Independence also sold industrial life insurance targeted at a low-income, primarily African-American, clientele. From December 1931 until January 1942, Independence owned the Chamber of Commerce Building (also known as the Insurance Building and Liberty Life Building) in downtown Greenville, South Carolina. In December 1938, Independence sold all of its life insurance business to Southeastern Life Insurance Company. In 1956, Independence became a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Surety Life Insurance Company, another Hipp-family controlled enterprise. As part of the reorganization of the various companies in December 1961, the Independence Insurance Company name was changed to The Surety Insurance Company.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Independence Insurance Company Records document — through annual statements, correspondence and memos, financial records, insurance policies, legal cases, and other reports — some of the business operations the company participated in or practiced over its thirty-one-year lifespan. As stated above, ‘the company reinsured the sickness and accident business of The Liberty Life Insurance Company and thereby assumed those lines of insurance.’ Some of ‘those lines of insurance’ pre-date the founding of Independence by several years; one insurance policy in particular may date back to 1890. Other records include accident claims, annual statements, information on Southeastern Life, Liberty Life Insurance Company policies, an ordinary application register, payment and rate books, a policy register, stocks and stockholders information. Financial records and Legal Case files make up the majority of this collection’s records. Claimants include: Walter Alexander, Ellen Dingle, Lee Dubose, John Edwards, M.M.

Jarrett, John and Ella McKnight, Julia Ann President, and Rosanna Prioleau. Financial records consist of cash books, journals, ledgers (both general and rent), and trail balance books, mostly for the period 1931-1950. Of interest is a 1932 letter from Senator James F. Byrnes concerning WIS Radio.

For more information concerning the legal business and activities of the Independence Insurance Company please refer to Record Group 3.1, Liberty Life Insurance Company Legal Department Records, Series 5, Independence Insurance Company; and Record Group 5, Boyd Calhoun Hipp Papers, Series 4, Independence Insurance Company, which has a folder of balance sheets and operating statements for 1958-1961.