

**Guide to the
Charles S. Mellen Correspondence**

Accession Number: 1938-1

**Special Collections
Tuck Library
New Hampshire Historical Society**

Charles S. Mellen Correspondence

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Table of Contents

- [Collection Overview](#)
- [Biographical Note](#)
- [Chronology of Charles S. Mellen](#)
- [Sources](#)
- [Scope and Content Note](#)
- [Contents](#)

Collection Overview

Titles: Charles S. Mellen Correspondence

C. Mellen Letter Copybooks, 1897–1903

Charles S. Mellen Diaries, 2 Volumes, 1913

Charles S. Mellen Letter Copybooks, 1892, 1895–1897

Bulk Dates: 1888–1922

Accession Number: 1938-1

Physical Description: Five (5) boxes, 7 letter copybooks, 2 diaries. Approximately 6,500 items, total, including individual letters in letter copybooks. 3.5 linear feet.

Provenance and Acknowledgments: Gift of Charles Sanger Mellen Estate, 1938

Access Restrictions: No restrictions

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Repository: Special Collections, Tuck Library

For Additional Information:

New Hampshire Historical Society Library
30 Park Street
Concord, NH
603-856-0641

Summary:

This collection, covering the years 1888–1922 in Mellen's life, includes correspondence, both family and business; letter copybooks and diaries.

Biographical Note

Born in Massachusetts to New Hampshire stock, Charles Sanger Mellen, at age 4, moved with his family to Concord, New Hampshire. The Mellens lived in a tenement just a stone's throw from the house in which the general manager of the Maine Central Railroad was born and raised. The two future successful railway operators, no doubt, came in frequent contact. The Mellen family, however, soon from their modest living quarters to a finer residence.

Mellen attended Concord schools and, after graduation, started his career as a clerk in the office of the Northern Railroad for \$25 per month. He won the confidence and good will of both employer and fellow employees as a neatly dressed, quick-witted worker who mastered the details of his job and who had pleasant manners. Mellen transferred to the railroad's headquarters in St. Albans, Vermont, which proved to be a great training ground for the young Mellen. He returned to the Concord office and was promoted to chief clerk and then assistant treasurer after displaying a marked ability for accounting. He also had married Marion Foster of St. Albans. During his eight years at the Boston & Lowell railroad, he held various jobs: assistant to the general manager, auditor, and general superintendent. Mellen then went on to hold various positions in the Union Pacific Railroad and, in 1892, became general manager of the New York & New England railroad. That same year, his wife Marion died leaving two children, a son and a daughter. Mellen soon became second vice-president of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad. The following year Mellen married Katharine Lloyd Livingston of New York. They had five children. In 1897, Mellen was elected president of the Union Pacific railroad and for the next five years his life was filled with the daily problems of managing a railroad.

In 1903, Mellen became president of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad. He became involved with Republican politics in 1904, particularly with the Theodore Roosevelt campaign. In 1909 the New York, New Haven & Hartford merged with the Boston & Maine railroad. Mellen's ten-year administration, nevertheless, ended in disaster in 1913. The ever-growing criticism of the New Haven railroad by the press most likely led to Mellen's resignation. He was also involved in two legal indictments, one for manslaughter and one for violation of the Sherman Anti-trust Act. For the following four years Mellen was involved in extensive litigation. So troubled was his administration that, during most of 1913, he kept strict diaries of his daily business activities. Later, when his life settled down, Mellen served as a railroad consultant. His personal problems were not over, however, when he discovered his wife Katharine's involvement in an affair and he sued for separation. Charles S. Mellen returned to Concord, New Hampshire, in the early 1920s where he died in 1927.

Chronology of Charles Sanger Mellen

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| 1851 | Born August 16 at Lowell, Massachusetts, the son of George K. and Hannah (Sanger) Mellen. |
| 1855 | George Mellen moves his family to Concord, N.H. |
| 1869 | Charles graduates from high school in Concord, N.H. and takes position in cashier's office of the Northern New Hampshire Railroad. |
| 1872–1873 | Clerk to the Chief Engineer of the Vermont Central Railroad. |
| 1873–1880 | Chief clerk and assistant treasurer of the Northern New Hampshire Railroad. |
| 1875 | Marries Marion Beardsley Foster of St. Albans, VT. They have two children, a son and a daughter. |
| 1880–1888 | Holds positions on the Boston & Lowell Railroad: assistant manager, auditor. |

- From 1884–1888, General Superintendent of the Boston & Lowell and Concord Railroads.
- 1888–1892 Holds positions on the Union Pacific Railroad: general purchasing agent and, later, general traffic manager.
- 1892 General manager of the New York & New England Railroad. Marion Mellen dies in March 1892.
- 1892–1897 Second vice-president of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad.
- 1893 Marries Katharine Lloyd Livingston in November 1893. The family home is in New Haven where they raise five children.
- 1897–1903 President of the Northern Pacific Railroad.
- 1903–1913 President of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad system. From 1910–1913, president of the Boston & Maine and Maine Central Railroads as well as the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad.
- 1913 Resignation from the presidency of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad.
- 1913–1917 Involved in extensive and diverse litigation which grew out of his administration of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad.
- 1927 Dies November 17 at Concord, N.H.

Sources

Metcalf, H.H. "Charles Sanger Mellen," *The Granite Monthly* (Volume 65, No. 2) January 1913, pp. 1–15.

Scope and Content Note

The five boxes in this collection contain correspondence, in chronological order, that covers the period 1888–1922, of which the period 1888–1913 is devoted almost exclusively to railroad business.

At the start of the collection is Mellen's letter of resignation in 1888 from the Boston & Maine railroad as well as correspondence relating to his work as general traffic manager at the Union Pacific, general manager of the New York & New England railroad, and 2nd vice president of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad.

The folders containing correspondence relating to the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad business include letters from Lucius Tuttle, president of the Boston and Maine. Included also is correspondence in 1897 relating to Mellen's election as president of the Northern Pacific. A typewritten transcript of conversation between Mellen and J.P. Morgan and the beginnings of correspondence with Charles H. Coster, a Morgan partner, concern railroad financing.

Correspondence during the period 1898–1903 contains material devoted to the discussion of Northern Pacific business and to the running of a transcontinental railroad in the late 1890s. Of interest are letters concerning the relationship between the Northern Pacific and Great Northern railroads, notably letters from Mellen to Coster censuring James J. Hill of the Great Northern. The correspondence also contains comprehensive and detailed information about everyday problems and decision-making in managing a railroad.

Correspondence between 1903–1913 pertains to Mellen's ten-year presidency of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad. Of interest are letters from Theodore Roosevelt to Mellen (1903–1907). Correspondence in 1904 also entails Mellen's involvement in Republican politics and his support of Theodore Roosevelt's campaign. Letters of importance about railroad business concern the merger, accomplished in 1909, between the New York, New Haven & Hartford and the Boston & Maine railroads. Letters regarding the railroad's public relations relate to the ever-growing criticism of the New Haven railroad by the press.

Mellen's extensive legal problems, specifically his two indictments: one for manslaughter and one for violation of the Sherman Anti-trust act, are contained in letters that deal specifically with the course of litigation and the strategy adopted for Mellen's defense. Included is Mellen's letters of resignation from the Boston and Maine and Maine Central railroads.

Following his departure from the railroad the correspondence shows a less active Mellen, mostly in a role of consultant on railroad matters. The collection also contains material relating to Mellen's domestic difficulties and his separation from his second wife. The last letter in the collection is dated May 3, 1922.

The sixth and eighth box in this collection contain letter copybooks of almost exclusively letters written by Mellen, both personal and about railroad business. Box 6 contains five copybooks, one from his vice-presidency of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad (1897) and four from the period of his presidency of the Northern Pacific (1897–1903). Box 8 contains two copybooks, one from the period of Mellen's association with the Union Pacific (1892) and from his association with the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad (1895–1897), but excluding the time during his presidency. The beginning of each copybook is indexed according to correspondent.

The seventh box in this collection contains two diaries that cover the period January through August 1913. Compiled by Mellen's secretary, the diaries are succinct, typewritten accounts of Mellen's daily schedules. Even though this was the year of his troubles in the administration of the New Haven, the diaries reveal none of the effects upon him.

Contents

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Correspondence, May 25, 1888–December 14, 1892
1	2	January 17, 1893–December 31, 1894
1	3	June 6, 1895–December 29, 1897
1	4	January 3, 1898–June 29, 1898
1	5	July 1, 1898–August 23, 1898
1	6	September 2, 1898–October 31, 1898
1	7	November 2, 1898–December 29, 1898

Box	Folder	Description
2	1	Correspondence, January 19, 1899–April 28, 1899
2	2	May 1, 1899–September 28, 1899
2	3	October 2, 1899–October 30, 1899
2	4	November 2, 1899–December 30, 1899
2	5	January 2, 1900–February 27, 1900

2	6	March 3, 1900–June 29, 1900
2	7	July 1, 1900–October 29, 1900
2	8	November 8, 1900–December 31, 1900

Box	Folder	Description
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3	1	Correspondence, January 2, 1901–April 26, 1901
3	2	May 7, 1901–September 30, 1901
3	3	October 1, 1901–December 23, 1901
3	4	January 6, 1902–June 25, 1902
3	5	July 30, 1902–December 5, 1902
3	6	January 2, 1903–June 30, 1903
3	7	July 1, 1903–December 24, 1903
3	8	January 27, 1904–September 8, 1904
3	9	September 9, 1904–December 30, 1904
3	10	January 5, 1905–November 14, 1906
3	11	March 12, 1907–November 21, 1907
3	12	January 27, 1908–July 28, 1908

Box	Folder	Description
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4	1	Correspondence, May 5, 1909–December 27, 1909
4	2	January 6, 1910–September 14, 1912
4	3	Two statements (undated). Billard Co. financial transactions and a summary of stocks, shares, etc., covering period of 1907–1909 with headings of “Exhibit B,” “Exhibit C,” and “Exhibit E.”
4	4	February 10, 1913–March 13, 1913
4	5	April 7, 1913–June 30, 1913
4	6	July 1, 1913–September 15, 1913
4	7	October 1, 1913–October 30, 1913
4	8	November 3, 1913–December 29, 1913
4	9	January 1, 1914–February 24, 1914
4	10	March 4, 1914–May 25, 1914
4	11	June 13, 1914–July 30, 1914
4	12	August 1, 1914–October 26, 1914
4	13	November 4, 1914–December 31, 1914

Box	Folder	Description
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5	1	Correspondence, January 5, 1915–March 29, 1915
5	2	April 3, 1915–June 28, 1915
5	3	July 6, 1915–August 30, 1915
5	4	September 2, 1915–December 15, 1915
5	5	January 11, 1916–June 16, 1916
5	6	July 4, 1916–December 30, 1916
5	7	January 3, 1917–July 16, 1917
5	8	January 1, 1918–October 10, 1918
5	9	August 1, 1919–December 16, 1919
5	10	July 19, 1920–December 30, 1920
5	11	January 12, 1921–December 23, 1921
5	12	February 24, 1922–May 3, 1922

Box Description

6 Five letter copybooks, 1897–1903

Box Description

7 Two diaries, January–August 1913

Box Description

8 Two letter copybooks, 1892 and 1895–1897