

A Guide to the Charles Jackson Letter Books, 1890-1904 SC 0234

Charles Jackson Letter Books

1890-1904



Title Statement

A Guide to the Charles Jackson Letter Books, 1890-1904 SC 0234

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

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SC 0234

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Unit Date

1890-1904

Language

English

Abstract

The Charles Jackson Letter Books, 1890-1904, consist of three books created by Charles A. Jackson throughout his career. They contain assorted correspondence, legal cases, and personal viewpoints of Charles Jackson as he acted as a New York lawyer and Virginia business operator. He was heavily involved in the Shenandoah Land & Anthracite Coal Company.

Creator

Jackson, Charles A., 1842-1906

source

Michael Brown Rare Books LLC

Extent

0.4 cubic feet 3 Folders

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

Acquisition Information

Purchased by Special Collections from Michael Brown Rare Books, LLC on March 8, 2017.

Processing Information

The pages of the letter books are composed of a fragile tissue paper, with some glued together making access to content very difficult.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Charles Jackson Letter Books, 1890-1904, SC 0234, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Bio/Historical Note

Charles A. Jackson, born March of 1842 in New York City, NY, was the son of William A. Jackson and Helen F. McCarty. He studied at Columbia University and married Mary E. Bradhurst in 1865. Mary Bradhurst was the niece of Henry Maunsell Bradhurst, the owner of the Bradhurst Homestead in New York City and son of its founder John Maunsell Bradhurst. Because of this relation, some dealings of the family fortune would fall to Jackson, some of which are described in the letter books.

In a January 1881 issue of the *New York Times*, Jackson is mentioned in an article indicating that New York Mayor Grace had appointed Jackson to the position of School Inspector of the sixth school district. The article also describes his political involvement, revealing his Democratic candidacy for State Senator in New York in 1879. Other civil service positions included his appointment as member of the Change of Grade Commission by New York Mayor Van Wyck in 1899 as well as his involvement in political groups like County Democrats and Tammany Hall. He was also involved in and supported the Manhattan Democratic Clubs, Columbia Alumni Association, and Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Jackson would later become involved with the Shenandoah Land & Anthracite Coal Company. The company was originally based in New York, but later was incorporated in Virginia in 1887. The company purchased 93,000 acres of land in the Shenandoah Valley in the Virginia counties of Rockingham, Augusta, Pendleton, and Hardy with the purpose of shipping coal and iron. Jackson would document business and tax-related correspondences in his letter books.

Jackson studied law and frequently acted as an attorney. In 1900, his law office was located at 16 Exchange Place, New York City. He lived at 308 Madison Avenue. His most well-known court case was the 1890-1892 libel charge levied by Dr. Mary Amanda Dixon Jones, a prominent gynecologist and women's physician, against the *Brooklyn Eagle* newspaper. The *Eagle* had printed several false articles about Jones' medical practices. Jackson acted as Chief Lawyer for Jones' case against the *Eagle*. The court ruled, however, in favor

of the *Eagle* and charges were dropped. Detailed notes on the case are present in the legal daybook.

Jackson died in his summer home in Stamford, Connecticut on April 16, 1906.

The letter books themselves use a method developed by James Watt in 1780. The thin, tissue-like paper intended for use as the letter book copy was moistened and placed overtop the original letter written in iron gall ink. The two sheets were then placed in a screw press that separated any excess ink from the original. The excess ink would separate and be imprinted as a reverse image on the letter book copy. The letter book copy would then be bound into the hard-cover letter book. The mirror image of the letter's contents could then be easily read through the opposite side of the tissue-thin paper.

Scope and Content

The Charles Jackson Letter Books, 1890-1904, consist of three books created by Charles A. Jackson throughout his career. They contain assorted correspondence, legal cases, and personal viewpoints of Charles Jackson as he acted as a New York lawyer and Virginia business operator.

The first volume is a legal daybook that consists of 81 pages of entries between December 13, 1890 and March 29, 1897. The entries are primarily concerned with legal cases Jackson undertook as an attorney. The most prominent case is the 1890-1892 *Brooklyn Eagle* libel charges which span in the entries from February 9, 1891 to December 17, 1891. The entries consist of meetings with Dr. Jones and general notes on the case. The other entries are other cases and events that Jackson worked on during his time as an attorney. One such case is between a Thomas T. Reed and his former wife Mrs. Shields. Jackson attempted to have Mr. Reed pay Mrs. Shields to which Reed responded that she "never was nor ever will be my wife" and refused to pay Mrs. Shields' requested hotel bills.

The second volume begins the letter book recordings of correspondence from Jackson. The letters are copied onto the tissue-like letter book pages via a method detailed above. These letters are various in subject and make mention of various events and dealings Jackson was involved in, both legal and business. Both volume two and three begin with an index of letter recipients and their corresponding page. Volume two includes many correspondences with assorted associates of Jackson from New York and Virginia. Some Virginian business venture correspondence includes letters to Col. Joseph C. Horn in Stribling Springs, Augusta County, Virginia who was contracted as an agent for Shenandoah Land & Anthracite Coal Company in the Shenandoah Valley. Other correspondents include J. R. McCutchen, the County Surveyor of Augusta County, Judge Louis C. Bailey of Alexandria, Virginia, and Thomas T. Reed from one of his cases in New York. There also includes correspondence with Bradhurst family members, dealing with issues of Jackson's wife's large estate.

The third volume is specifically labeled as a letter book for Shenandoah Land & Anthracite Coal Company. The correspondence within is mostly the business dealings with the company and correspondents within Virginia. A large bulk of the letters are addressed to J. J. L. & R. Bumgardener, a local legal firm handling land assets for the company in Virginia. Additional letters are addressed to those mentioned from the second volume in addition to J. C. Stiegel of Harrisonburg, Virginia who had been contracted to assist in land dealings for the company, primarily in the timber located on specific tracts of land for the construction of railroad ties. A letter of note includes a crudely drawn map created by Jackson to illustrate an area of purchase and its bounds. Another letter of note deals with Jackson attempting to set up a meeting with a potential business associate he knows personally, De Witt Smith, Esq. Jackson is annoyed at Smith's vagueness and lateness when attempting to set up a meeting, and makes several sarcastic comments. This letter is of more particular note as it is typed instead of hand-written in iron-gall ink. This volume also includes some instances of separate letters attached with adhesive to a different letter on letter book tissue paper. These letters should be handled with care when flipping pages or reading to prevent tearing.

Keywords

Businessmen -- Virginia -- Records and correspondence

Lawyers -- New York (State) -- Records and correspondence

Business records -- Virginia

Virginia -- History -- 19th century

Virginia -- Economic conditions -- 19th century

New York (State) -- History -- 19th century

Virginia -- History -- 20th century

Virginia -- Economic conditions -- 20th century

New York (State) -- History -- 20th century

Letter books

Daybooks

Bibliography

Davis, Brian. "Before the photocopier." http://www.archifdy-credigion.org.uk/uploads/before_the_photocopier.pdf (Accessed June 7, 2017).

Arrangement

The legal daybook and two letter books are arranged chronologically and individually foldered.

Description of Subordinate Components

Legal Daybook

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2874

Unit Date 1890-1897

Mixed Materials [1000886259] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Letter Book

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2875

Unit Date 1899-1900

Mixed Materials [1000886259] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Letter Book

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/2876

Unit Date 1900-1904

Mixed Materials [1000886259] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)