

Finding aid for the John S. Lawrence papers Collection 002

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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1983/1988
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title	John S. Lawrence papers
Date [inclusive]	1864-1921
Extent	8.0 Linear feet 19 boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>John S. Lawrence (1849-1924) was a Grand Rapids lawyer and businessman. He was an active member of the Democratic Party, a rare book collector and member or officer in numerous civic organizations, such as President of the Grand Rapids Historical Society and the Grand Rapids Library Commission. This collection primarily documents Lawrence's position as Master in Chancery of the United States District Court (1887-1924). There he acted as receiver for insolvent railroad companies and banks, including Northern National Bank and Big Rapids National Bank in Big Rapids, Michigan. Some of the papers provide documentation on the Depression of 1893 in the Grand Rapids area. Other papers relate to Lawrence's political interests and book collecting activities. The collection includes correspondence, Democratic County Committee records, several scrapbooks with reference to those he prepared for the Peninsular Club, legal records, title abstracts, miscellaneous papers, a catalog of his library books, and account books.</p>

Biography

John Strachan Lawrence was born in Waterford, New York, 15 April 1849, the oldest son of John and Cornelia Porter Lawrence. The family moved to Chicago when John Jr. was 14. John went on a trip to Europe with his parents in 1867, only to receive word upon their return to New York where his younger siblings had been staying, that his younger brother Porter had accidentally drowned.

John S. Lawrence graduated from Harvard University in 1871, and after studying modern languages at the University of Berlin, he returned to the United States to manage his father's lumber interests in Newago, Michigan for about five years. In 1877 he moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he studied law in the offices of Hughes, O'Brien, and Smillie.

Lawrence was admitted to the bar in 1879 and appointed Master in Chancery of the United States District Court in 1887, a position he held for 37 years. In 1887, the Comptroller of Currency appointed him receiver of Lowell National Bank and, in 1893, he was appointed receiver of Northern National Bank in Big Rapids, Michigan.

An active member of the Democratic Party, Lawrence was nominated for state senator in 1876 and was a candidate for regent of the University of Michigan in 1889. He was defeated by Charles Belknap in the congressional election of 1891. Lawrence was a member of numerous civic organizations including the Grand Rapids Historical Association, the Grand Rapids Library Commission, Police and Fire Commission, one of the original organizers of the Peninsular Club, and the University Club.

Lawrence maintained a lifelong interest in literature. He studied Romance languages under James Russell Lowell at Harvard and attended lectures by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Wordsworth Longfellow. He acquired a large personal library and a fine collection of rare books.

Of interest in the collection is a document related to a libel suit, Lawrence vs Mayor George Ellis and the GR Herald, dated 1909. It provides primarily autobiographical information by Lawrence, and mentions his windowed sister & family living in Muskegon, as well as his cousin and wife in Lansing, and relatives in Detroit. On July 31, 1922, the Grand Rapids Herald reported that Lawrence was the main beneficiary of the million dollar will of his cousin, William L. Porter of Horicom, N.Y. No research has been done to determine the final disposition of these funds, either before or at Lawrence's own death. He never married, but his sister Mary Lawrence Loomis of Princeton, New Jersey, as well as his name sake nephew John L. Loomis of Ann Arbor, were with him in Grand Rapids at his death 20 July 1924.

Scope and Contents note

Users of the Lawrence papers should be aware that parts of the collection were separated from the main body of papers, after the collection was received by the Grand Rapids Public Library in 1926. The

separated papers were cataloged under various subject headings in the card catalog and shelved in several different locations.

Between 1983 and 1988, some of the dispersed papers were discovered and refiled with the Lawrence collection. Circa 2000, some books with his bookplate were moved to the collection, while others remain undiscovered in the book holdings of the local history collection.

In February 2002 some photos found in Collection 54, Box 12 Folder 11 (Grand River Views - Log Jam 1883) were discovered to have the note "Lawrence Coll." on the verso. These have been left in Collection 54, with a photocopy representation of the images placed in the Lawrence Collection. There may be other photos given by Lawrence in Collection 054 in addition to the items located to date.

Book items which he donated to the Grand Rapids Public Library, known to be part of the Local History Book Collection, are marked with a bookplate in his name at the front of the book. Some examples of these books are being added to this archival collection, when the items physical condition requires more protective housing. Other materials with a Lawrence bookplate or marked as given by Lawrence may be found in other archival collections, with some cross-referenced here when found.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department 1983/1988

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Accession Number: 1983.001; Donor: John S. Lawrence Estate, 1926

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

240-2.3 Has a map of Part of Leonard & Co's Addition, from the "Lawrence Estate".

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- personal papers

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Lawrence, John S., 1849-1924

Series I. Correspondence

Collection Inventory

Series I. Correspondence		
	Box	Folder
Lowell National Bank (Lowell, Michigan), 1888,1890, n.d.	5	3
Sturgeon River Lumber Company, 1893.	5	4
Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1906.	5	5
Northern National Bank, Big Rapids, Mich.		
	Box	Folder
1893, A-Y.	1	1-4
1894, A-J.	1	5-6
1894, K-S.	2	1-2
1895, A-Y.	2	3-6
1896-97, A-G.	2	7
1896-97, H-W.	3	1-2

Comptroller of Currency (United States Treasury Department)

1898-99, A-Z.	2	3-7
8/12/1890 - 1/17/1891 (letterpress copies).	14	Vol. 1
7/20/1891 - 1/22/1892 (letterpress copies).	14	vol. 2
1/23/1892 - 5/24/1892 (letterpress copies).	15	Vol. 1
5/25/1892 - 10/6/1892 (letterpress copies).	15	vol. 2
General Correspondence, 1889-1890.	13	1
Taylor and Company, 1888-1889.	13	2
McElwee and Company, 1889-1891.	13	3
Balance Sheet, 1891.	13	4
Uncollectable Loans, 1888-1891.	13	5

Comptroller of Currency (United States Treasury Department)

	Box	Folder
1893	3	8
1894-1900.	4	1-6
		Box

Big Rapids National Bank (Big Rapids, Michigan)

Vol. 1 1893-1898 (letterpress copies).		16
	Box	Folder
Miscellaneous Correspondents, 1882-1896.	4	7

Big Rapids National Bank (Big Rapids, Michigan)

	Box	Folder
1897-1898.	4	8-10
1899-1901.	5	1-2
A-D, 1892-96.	13	6
E-H, 1893;496.	13	7
I-P, 1886-1895.	13	8
S-W, 1888-1895.	13	9

Series II. Legal Records / Publications**Claims**

	Box	Folder
C. L. Ayers Coal Company vs Manistee and Northeastern Railroad Co. and the Michigan Trust Company, 1919-1920.	6	1-5

Claims

C. L. Ayers Coal Company vs Manistee and Northeastern Railroad Co. and the Michigan Trust Company, 1919-1920.	7	1-2
Metropolitan Trust Company of New York vs the Manistee, Filer City and East Lake Railway Company, 1904-1910.	7	3
John E. Davidson and William Barnes, Trustees, vs the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, et al, 1895-1896.	7	4
Calvin P. Austin vs the Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, et al, 1887-1888.	7	5
Miscellaneous Railroad Claims, 1896, 1913, 1914.	7	6
Anderson - Green, 1917.	7	7
Hall - Wright, 1917.	8	1-2
Fourth National Bank of Grand Rapids vs the Newago Manufacturing Company, 1887-1890.	8	3
New England Trust Company vs the Manistee Light and Traction Company, 1910-1912. William Scott Estate	8	4
Ira Scott, et al vs James Smeed, et al, 1895-1896.	8	5
Ira Scott, et al vs Conroy M. Stockhan, et al, 1893.	8	6

Abstracts of Title

Ira Scott, et al vs Thomas T. Condley, et al, 1898.	8	7
Ira Scott, et al vs Isaac Woodruff, et al, 1892-1893.	8	8
Scott Case Accounts, 1891-1893.	8	9
Miscellaneous Scott Records, 1892-1897, n.d.	8	10
Robert N. Bassett Company, et al v,4. the Kalamazoo Corset Company, 1915.	8	11-12
O and W Thum Company (Tangelfoot Fly Paper) vs A. K. Ackerman Company (Grand Rapids Sticky Fly Paper Co.), ca. 1915-1922.	9	1-5
John S. Lawrence vs Mayor George E. Ellis and the Grand Rapids Herald (libel claim), 1908. L4:A9.1	9	6
Miscellaneous Legal Records, ca. 1887-1919.	9	7
Rules of Practice, as Amended and Adopted by the Superior Court of Grand Rapids, June 11, 1877. Formerly MKG340.G76; 00.[3094].1.	9	8
Abstracts of Title		
Grand Rapids		
	Box	Folder
Additions B-C, 1868-1886.	10	1

Series III. Democratic County Committee Records

Additions D-L, 1869-1890.	10	2
Additions M-W, 1869-1888.	10	3
	Box	Folder
Grand Rapids Township, 1872-1883	10	4
Town 8 N, Town 2 N, 9N, 1864-1889.	10	5
Miscellaneous Papers, ca.1880s-1890s.	10	6

Series III. Democratic County Committee Records

	Box	Folder
Ledger, 1890.	5	6
Vouchers, 1890.	5	7-8

Series IV. Scrapbooks and Personal Information**Scrapbooks**

	Box	Folder
Original scrapbook. [1885-1921] Political and personal.	5	9
Political. 1903-1914. Photocopy only. Original housed at 239-	5	10

Biographical

U. S. Court Cases, 1887-1921. Photocopy only. Original housed at 239-	5	11
Labeled "4. 1886-1903" on the cover. Original. Formerly MKG9.L43. v.2	13	10
		Box
Spine label: J.S. Lawrence Scrapbook. Elections, notices, 1864-1872 [1877]		239-38
History of the Peninsular Club, told in newspaper clippings, 1881-1883/compiled by John Lawrence. Formerly MKG367.L37 v.1		239-60
Peninsular Club Scrapbook, Formerly MKG367.L37 v.2		239-60
Peninsular Club Scrapbook, 1890 Formerly MKG367.P37a		239-60

Biographical

	Box	Folder
Newspapers articles, Census information, and family genealogy information.	19	1

Photographs

	Box	Folder
Portrait photos, including Lucius Paddock, Charles Paddock, Martin Ryerson, D. Darwin Hughes, E.M. Doubleday, Henry M. Hinsdale, E. Crofton Fox, Rev. J. Morgan Smith, Henry S. Fralick, George Luton	19	2

Series V. Miscellaneous Documents.

William Black	19	2
Album. Windward Islands. Travel photographs. Formerly R917.9.W72. 00.[2313].1	18	x

Series V. Miscellaneous Documents.**Library books**

	Box	Folder
Misc. handwritten lists of books	11	1
Catalog of Books in the Library of John S. Lawrence	11	2

Account Books, 1896-1899.

	Box
Receiver's Certificates of Proof of Claim. L4:A4.1	12
Payment schedules for investors of Big Rapids Bank. L4:A4.5	12
Car Book - record of goods shipped by train. L4:A4.4	12

Organizations Records

City of Grand Rapids

Organizations Records

	Box	Folder
The Story of a Home : an outline of what is being done for children by the D.A. Blodgett Home. Feb. 1922 Formerly MKG362.7.B62s 00.[3364].1	17	0.5
The Country Club of Grand Rapids. G.R. : Valley City Engraving and Printing Co., Issued May 15, 1896. 00.[1328].1 Formerly MKG367.C83	17	1
Articles of Association, Pension Act and By-Laws of the Grand Rapids Fireman's Fund Assoc. of G.R., Mich. 1895. 00.[1376].1 Formerly MKG352.3.G762	17	2
Kent Country Club, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Membership list, Treasurer's Report, By-Laws, 1905.00.[2757].1 Formerly M796.K41	17	2.5
Rules Governing the Kent Scientific Museum, adopted by the Board of Library Commissioners of the city of Grand Rapids, Mich. Apr. 29, 1910.00.[1377].1 Formerly MKG507.K41	17	3
Masons		
	Box	Folder
History, ByLaws and Roster, DeMolai Commandery, no. 5, K.T. Grand Rapids, Mich. 1884. Formerly MKG366.F87 00.[3373].1	17	3.1
	Box	Folder
OwashtaNong Boat Club. Yearbook. 1887 Formerly MKG367Ow1 00. [3360].1	17	3.3

Maps

Peninsular Club. Yearbooks Formerly MKG367.P37 1881 00.[3362].1 1881-1885. 00.[3362].2	17	3.5
Tamarack Mining Co., Report, June 30, 1891 and June 30 1892. [Annual Report] Boston : L. Barta and Co. 00.[1565].1-2 Formerly M622.T15	17	4
Grand Rapids Herald Almanac for 1899 : a volume of statistical, official and historical, City, State, National and General Information. ..v. 1,no. 1, Jan. 1899. Quarterly. 00.[1853].1 Formerly MKG316.76	17	5
William B. Ogden and early days in Chicago : a paper, read before the Chicago Hist. Society, Dec. 20, 1882. / by Hon. Isaac N. Arnold. 00. [1647].1 Formerly M92.Og2	17	6
Adams Express Co. "Contract"s. Contain stamps. 2 dated 1898 and 1899. 00.[2083].1-4	17	7

Maps

Box

[Plat] Kent County, Wyoming township + pt. Of Walker. 6 N 12 W. Entry added
1/12/2004

FF-12-D