

Finding aid for the Edwin Pettis family papers Collection 186

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	Pettis, Edwin, 1856-1941
Title	Edwin Pettis family papers
Date [inclusive]	1895-1986, n.d.
Extent	0.21 Linear feet One box
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Edwin Pettis (1856-1941) was deputy sheriff of Kent County and police captain for the Pere Marquette Railroad. His papers contain photographs, correspondence and genealogy of the Pettis and Ward families. The photographs are of family members, the family home in Ada, Michigan and the Ada area. Of special interest are letters from Edwin Pettis as under sheriff of Kent County, Michigan, to his wife Lettie during the Grand Rapids Water Scandal in 1901. The scandal resulted from bonds issued to fund construction of a water pipeline from Lake Michigan to Grand Rapids. The bonds were issued far in excess of the projected actual construction cost, with individuals attempting to pocket the surplus money.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

A native of Ada, Michigan, Edwin Pettis (3/1/1856 - 8/18/1941) went to nearby Grand Rapids, Michigan as a young man to work as a driver for the street railway system. From about 1900 to 1912 he was deputy sheriff of Kent County. Later Pettis served as police captain for the Pere Marquette Railroad, retiring at the age of 70.

Pettis married Lettie Ward in 1884, sister of attorney Charles E. Ward. The couple had five children: Charles (8/18/1884 - 12/23/1963), Don (9/2/1887 - 1/22/1917), Eugene (12/10/1889 - 7/17/1966), Glenn (12/29/1894 - 11/15/1968) and Dorothy (12/22/1901 -). Lettie Pettis died February 14, 1918. In 1920 Edwin Pettis married Fannie Warner, who died July 9, 1940. They had no children.

Scope and Contents note

Contains photographs, correspondence and genealogy concerning the Pettis Family. The photographs, arranged alphabetically by subject, are of the Pettis family, the family home in Ada, and the Ada area (1895-1920, n.d.). Included with the photos is a portrait of Charles E. Ward, prosecutor during the Water Scandal in Grand Rapids at the beginning of the twentieth century. Of special interest in the correspondence are letters from Edwin Pettis to his wife Lettie during the Water Scandal of 1901, which resulted from bonds issued to fund construction of a water pipeline from Lake Michigan to Grand Rapids. The bonds were issued far in excess of the projected actual construction cost, with individuals attempting to pocket the surplus money. The letters discuss Pettis' responsibility guarding the prosecution's key witness. The genealogies document the Pettis and Ward families, 1901-1986.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department 1993

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Edith Ellen Pettis, April 1987; accession number 1987.022

Controlled Access Headings

Family Name(s)

- Pettis
- Ward

Genre(s)

- personal papers
- photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Ada (Mich.) -- History -- Photographs
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Pettis, Edwin, 1856-1941

Subject(s)

- Municipal water supply -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Political corruption -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History

Series I. Photographs, 1895-1986, n.d.

Collection Inventory

Series I. Photographs, 1895-1986, n.d.		
	Box	Folder
Ada Dam, n.d. (1)	1	1
Ada, Michigan, ca. 1910. (1)	1	2
Houses		
	Box	Folder
Pettis family home, ca. 1895. (1)	1	3
House, n.d. (1)	1	4
Interior Pettis family home, ca. 1901	1	5
People		
	Box	Folder
Pettis, Eugene, ca.1910. (1)	1	6
Pettis family, ca.1900. (3)	1	7

Series II. Manuscript Material, 1900-1913, 1984-1986, n.d.

Pettis, Gene, ca.1920. (1)	1	8
Pettis, Glenn, ca. 1918. (2)	1	9
Pettis, Lettie, Glenn, ca.1900. (1)	1	10
Ward, Charlie, Florence Ellen, n.d. (2)	1	11
Ward, William Weatherbee, and wife, n.d. (1)	1	12
Groups, Identified, n.d. (2) Pettis, Edwin.	1	13
	Box	Folder
Schoolhouse, Egypt Valley Road and Pettis Ave., Ada, ca.1900. (1)	1	14
Series II. Manuscript Material, 1900-1913, 1984-1986, n.d.		
Correspondence.		
Edwin Pettis, 1901. (contains the water scandal correspondence).		
	Box	Folder
March 11, 1901, on Sheriff's office, Kent County letterhead, with the image of the Kent County building engrave top left. "My Dear Wife..." (2 sheets)	1	15
Aug. 24, 1901. Riverview Hotel letterhead "My Dear Wife" (2 sheets)	1	16

Correspondence.

Aug. 26, 1901. Cutler House, Grand Haven, letterhead. "My Dear Wife..." (1 sheet)	1	17
Sept. 30, 1901. Hotel Blatz, East Water St., Milwaukee. "My Dear Wife". (2 sheets)	1	18
Nov. 10, 1901. Livingston Hotel, Grand Rapids "My Dear Wife..." (4 sheets)	1	19
Nov. 15, 1901. Livingston (2 sheets)	1	20
Dec. 4, 1901. Livingston (2 sheets)	1	21
Dec. 23, 1901. Sheriff's, Office letterhead. Has a newspaper clipping attached to the letter RE the birth of a baby girl to Deputy Sheriff Ed Pettis and wife in Ada.	1	22
Mary Church to Sister and Brother, Sept. 24, 1907. (5 sheets)	1	23
Mary Church to Sister, Nov. 8, 1907 (4 sheets)	1	24
Don Pettis to Mother, Nov. 24, 1907. (3 sheets)	1	25
1. Charles Ward to Mrs. Lettie Pettis, Dec. 30, 1907 (typed, 2 sheets) 2. Mother from Don. Dec. 30, 1907 (handwritten, 5 sheets)	1	26
Carrie H. Emery, Dec, 2, 1908 on Charles E. War letterhead (1 typed sheet)	1	27

Correspondence.

Eugene Pettis to Mother, Apr. 19, 1913. on Hotel Dupont, Marine City, Mich. Letterhead. (2 sheets)	1	28
Dorothy Pettis Bain (genealogical), 1984-1986, n.d.	1	28
To Edith from Aunt Dorothy. July 18, 1984. (Typed.	1	29
To Edith from Aunt Dorothy. Jan 19, 1985 (4 handwritten sheets)	1	30
To Edith, Jan. 22 or 25, 1985. Typed pages, plus handwritten sheet plus poem and clipping.	1	31
To Edith, Nov. 3, 1986	1	32
A letter started on scratch or genealogy note paper, and numerous notes written on various old envelopes, attached.	1	33
25 typed pages addressed to Edith	1	34
	Box	Folder
Pettis family genealogy, Apr. 25, 1901.	1	35
Paper on parenting read by Lettie Pettis to the Ladies Literary Club of Ada, 1908.	1	37
Inheritance laws in Michigan, relating to women typewritten, 1900.	1	38
Ward family genealogy, n.d.	1	36