

Parsons, Henry C., Papers

Henry C. Parsons Papers
1863-1905



Title Statement

Parsons, Henry C., PapersHenry C. Parsons Papers, 1863-1905 Ms.1990.109

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1990.109

Unit Date

1863-1905

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains the papers--including correspondence, legal records, and financial documents--of Henry C. Parsons (1840-1894), official of the Richmond & Alleghany Railroad, Atlantic and Northwestern Railroad, and Kanawha Construction Company, and owner of Natural Bridge, Virginia.

Creator

Parsons, Henry C., 1840-1894

Extent

0.2 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Henry C. Parsons Papers were purchased by Special Collections in 1990.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Henry C. Parsons Papers commenced and was completed in June 2013.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Henry C. Parsons Papers, 1863-1905, Ms1990-109, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Henry Chester Parsons, son of Jethro and Comfort Parsons, was born in St. Albans, Vermont on September 25, 1840. After obtaining a bachelor's degree at the University of Vermont, Parsons enlisted as a captain in the 1st Vermont Cavalry and was placed in command of Company L. Wounded at Gettysburg, Parsons received a medical discharge on January 4, 1864. Soon afterward, he married Eliza Jane "Nellie" Loomis of Springfield, Massachusetts; the couple would have three daughters. Following the war, Parsons moved to West Virginia, settling in Cabell County, and engaged in real estate business. Later, he became a director of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway. In partnership with others, he purchased the right-of-way of the James River and Kanawha Canal and built the Richmond & Alleghany Railroad on what had been the canal's towpath. Parsons served as vice president of the railroad and as president of the associated Alleghany Coal and Iron Company. Plans called for the R&A to be extended to Toledo, Ohio through a connection with the to-be-built Atlantic and Northwestern Railway at Kanawha Falls, West Virginia. The Kanawha Construction Company, with Parsons as chief stockholder and H. D. Whitcomb as president and chief engineer, was organized to build the Atlantic and Northwestern. Parsons became involved in a dispute with his partners in the R&A, however, and they purchased his interest in the companies by selling him their shares in the Natural Bridge of Virginia. (The R&A extension failed to be completed, and the line was sold in 1889, eventually becoming a branch of the C&O.) In 1884, Parsons published a small collection of poems titled *The Reaper*. Henry C. Parsons was killed by Thomas A. Goodman, a Chesapeake & Ohio Railway conductor, in Clifton Forge, Virginia on June 29, 1894. He was buried at High Bridge Presbyterian Church in Natural Bridge, Virginia.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the papers--including correspondence, legal records, and financial documents--of Henry C. Parsons, railroad executive and owner of Natural Bridge, Virginia. Parsons' correspondence relates largely to the operations of his enterprises at Natural Bridge, the Alleghany Coal and Iron Company, and the Richmond & Alleghany Railroad. Included are several letters from Edward H. Fisher, who served as Parsons' private secretary while with the Richmond & Alleghany Railroad and later as Parsons' manager at Natural Bridge. Among Fisher's letters are three lengthy, detailed descriptions of his work at Natural Bridge. The most predominant correspondent in the collection is H. D. Whitcomb, president of the Kanawha Company, regarding construction of the Atlantic and Northwestern Railroad and an Ohio River crossing at Pt. Pleasant, West Virginia.

The collection also contains a few pieces of correspondence addressed to others, including several letters from S. G. Agee to Nellie Parsons regarding the sale of timber on her land. Many of the remaining letters seem to relate to a land transaction between Robert Patton, S. P. Capehart and Jerome T. Bowyer. A single letter from D. F. Houston, of Roanoke, relates to Virginia politics and the Republican Party.

Among the financial records in the collection is an 1863 quarterly report on clothing and equipment issued to Company L, 1st Vermont Cavalry. Other financial documents in the collection include receipts and account

statements relating to the Alleghany Coal and Iron Company, the Kanawha Company, and the Richmond & Alleghany Railroad. Legal records include a part of the Richmond & Southwestern Railroad act of incorporation, various deeds, and summaries of legal cases. A folder of notes and ephemera completes the collection and includes the calling card of N. K. Burger.

Keywords

Civil War
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Railroad
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by document type.

Description of Subordinate Components

Outgoing correspondence

Unit Date 1881-1885

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Incoming correspondence

A-E

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Axtell, Decatur

Unit Date 1883

Bartholomew, George M.

Unit Date 1881

Extent [3 items]

Davis, J. W.

Unit Date 1885

Extent [2 items]

Dennis, Robert F.

Unit Date 1885

Extent [3 items]

Dudley, Thomas H.

Unit Date 1885

Extent [3 items]

r

box-folder 1 (box)
Container 3 (folder)

Fairchild, George W.
Unit Date 1881

Ficklen, James B.
Unit Date 1881-1882
Extent [2 items]

Fisher, Edward H.
Unit Date 1881-1883
Extent [11 items]

Fisher, Thomas J.
Unit Date 1882

Fowler, Elbert
Unit Date 1884

G-M

box-folder 1 (box)
Container 4 (folder)

Jolliffe, William
Unit Date [1871?]

Johnson, W. W.
Unit Date n.d.
Extent [fragment only]

Macneill, George
Unit Date 1881-1883
Extent [6 items]

Miller, Henry
Unit Date 1881

Moore, J. S.
Unit Date 1880

N-T

box-folder 1 (box)
Container 5 (folder)

Parsons, C. W.
Unit Date 1880

Parsons, Joseph H.
Unit Date 1881

Patton, Mary

Unit Date n.d.

Randolph, W. C. N.

Unit Date 1883

Robertson, Jno. B.

Unit Date 1877

Rogers, Jno D.

Unit Date 1885

Rosenberger and Diggs

Unit Date 1870

Russell, Otis H.

Unit Date 1881-1884

Extent [3 items]

Slote and Janes

Unit Date 1870

Swank, James M.

Unit Date 1885

Thayer, W. T.

Unit Date 1885

Tompkins, Chas. C.

Unit Date 1881

Tucker, Henry St. George

Unit Date 1885

Wa-Wg

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Walker, H. S.

Unit Date 1881

Walter, Thomas

Unit Date 1885

Watts, William H.

Unit Date 1885

Weeks, Joseph D.

Unit Date 1880

Wells, H. H.

Unit Date 1885

Wh-Z

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Extent [2 folders]

Whitcombe, H. D.

Unit Date 1875-1884

Unidentified

Unit Date 1870-1883, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Other correspondence

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Agee, S. C. to Mrs. H. C. Parsons

Unit Date 1897-1899

Extent [4 items]

Bowyer, J. T. to S. P. Capehart

Unit Date 1869

Capehart, S. P. to J. T. Bo[w]yer

Unit Date n.d.

Foster, G. W. to C. W. Parsons

Unit Date 1882

Houston, [D.?] F. to James M. Swank

Unit Date 1885

Knight, E. B. to George W. Cargill

Unit Date 1869-1870

Extent [2 items]

Lackey, Maria S. and H. T. to Mrs. H. C. Parsons

Unit Date 1901

Parsons, E. P. to E. N. Bagg

Unit Date 1884

P., N. L. [Parsons, Nellie Loomis] to Horace Brenton

Unit Date 1905

Reilly, John W. to Mr. Tompkins

Unit Date 1885

Reinhart, J. W. to Jno. G. Fisher

Unit Date 1881

Watts, William H. to Thomas Reid

Unit Date 1885

Extent [on Millboro Springs letterhead]

Financial records

Unit Date 1863-1885, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Legal records

Unit Date 1869-1876, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Notes and ephemera

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)