

# A Guide to the Yardley Family Papers, 1814-1906

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1814-1906

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## History

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Accession number**

8148

**Language**

English

**Physical Characteristics**

This collection consists of ca. 160 items.

**Repository**

Special Collections, University of Virginia Library

# Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

## Acquisition Information

This collection was made a gift to the Library by Miss Rae Southall of Charlottesville, Virginia, on January 10, 1966.

## Preferred Citation

Yardley Family Papers, Accession #8148 , Special Collections Dept., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

# Scope and Content Information

The Yardley family papers contain ca. 160 items, 1814-1906, and consist mostly of family correspondence. A large portion of the correspondence involves Manly R. Yardley, oldest son of John Yardley, and his sons, Claude and Ralph Waldo Emerson Yardley.

Manly Yardley served several years in the 1st New Hampshire Cavalry, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, (ca.1864-1867) during which time he seems to have been very unhappy. He wrote to his father [1864 March 15] and to his cousin, William, [1866 June 19] about his hatred of the army and his desire to leave it. A letter dated simply Thursday, 1867 from D. Farwell to John Yardley suggested J. M. Edwards as counsel to get his son discharged from the army. Since there is no further mention of the army, it seems he did manage to arrange a discharge.

On July 26, 1868, Manly wrote to his parents from Missouri, where he apparently went in a great hurry. He said he left to be free of his former employers, the Phillips, who he claimed swindled him out of \$230. He described Mrs. Phillips as "the meanest, treacherous, hateful" person and says Mr. Phillips should be sent to the house of correction for selling ale on Sunday. Manly had a rough time in Missouri and apologized constantly in his letters for failing his parents and not being a good son [1868 November 14]. Of some interest is the letter of November 26, 1868, in which Manly discussed the political situation in Missouri and the status of ex-Confederate soldiers there.

The next series of letters concern Russell M. Yardley and begin 10 years later. Manly married Elizabeth Straub of Mansfield, Ohio, and painted for his livelihood. Evidenced by a group of letters from his sister, Adelia, it seems he left his wife and young son, Claude. Adelia blamed Elizabeth for not being a good wife [1882 September] but managed to get the two back together. Over the next ten years, he frequently travelled, trying to earn a living as a painter, writing home periodically to describe his successes and failures. The letters from him stop in 1894, and there is no further mention of him by his wife or children after 1899.

Russell M. and Elizabeth Yardley's oldest son, Claude, left home to attend college in Delaware, Ohio, in 1898. Soon after he arrived, he discovered he needed nicer clothes to fit in with the other boys and decided against becoming a minister [1898 October 24]. While in college, most of Claude's letters asked for money, apologized for asking for it and promised repay his loans. In 1904, Claude moved to Charlottesville; all of his letters are on Red-Land Club letterhead, but his association with the club was never specified. The Red-Land Club (or Redland Club) was called "the swell and aristocratic club of Charlottesville" by a magazine writer in 1906. The club allowed no dogs or gambling and required a coat and tie in the sitting room. A series of letters in 1906 describe his life in Charlottesville, although little mention is made of his work there.

Ralph Waldo Emerson Yardley, Russell M. and Elizabeth Yardley's second son, went to Columbus, Ohio, in 1902 to work as a draftsman [1902 June 15]. In 1904 he began studying architecture at the University of Illinois in Champaign. His letters [1904 February 14-1905 November 27] described in great detail his activities while at college: his membership in Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, directing church choirs, travelling with the University glee club, dates with sorority women, pranks played on friends, etc. This series of letters provides an amusing and interesting account of the life of a popular young college man in the early 20th century. Ralph's love and concern for his mother and his younger sister, Laura, is obvious in these letters; he wrote regularly, sending any extra money he had. In one letter to Laura, Ralph solved and explained an algebra problem she had apparently sent him [1904 December 2]. In 1906, Ralph began working in an architecture firm in Columbus, where his life settled down into contented bachelorhood.

The remainder of the collection consists of various letters among other members of the Yardley family and related families. Legal papers in the collection include a deed for land in Parkersfield, New Hampshire [1814 March 26], military appointments and the resignation of John Yardley [1842-1846] and an adoption agreement between Joseph and Harriet Yardley and Ellen Cobb for Clara Cobb [1860 February 25]. The

collection also contains six unidentified photographs.

## **Contents List**

**Legal papers of the Yardley and related Bryant families  
1814(1842-1846)1860**

**Letters from Manley R. Yardley to his family 1864-1888**

**Correspondence of the Yardley and related Bryant and Straub  
families 1865-1904**

**Letters to Russell M. and Elizabeth Straub Yardley 1869-1903**

**Miscellaneous papers of the Yardley family 1873-1905**

**Letters to John Yardley 1877-1887**

**Letters from Delia Yardley Farwell to Russell M. Yardley 1882-  
1885**

**Composition book of essays by Claude R. Yardley 1892**

**Letters from Claude Yardley to Russell M. and Elizabeth  
Yardley 1894-1906**

**Letters to Claude Yardley 1900-1904**

**Letters from R. W. E. Yardley to Laura Yardley 1902-1906**

**Photographs (unidentified) n.d.**