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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.CASTLEMW
Title       Castle, Mabel Wing. Papers
Date        1865-1957
Size        2.5 linear feet (5 boxes)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
            University of Chicago Library
            1100 East 57th Street
            Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Mabel Wing Castle was a writer, teacher and activist, wife of Henry
          Northrup Castle, mother of Elinor Castle Nef, sister-in-law of George
          Herbert Mead, and mother-in-law of Committee on Social Thought founder
          John U. Nef, Jr. The collection contains correspondence, personal diaries,
          and photographs. Material spans the dates 1865-1957, with the bulk dating
          from 1890 to 1940.

Information on Use

Access  The collection is open for research.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Castle, Mabel Wing.
           Papers Papers [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note

Mabel Wing Castle was born June 19, 1864 to Leander Joseph and Zillah Annette Lovering
Wing in Providence, RI. She attended Wellesley College, graduating in 1887, and spent time
both during and after college teaching Greek, first at a high school in Maine and then at
Wellesley High. In 1891 she was encouraged to accept a job teaching Greek at the Punahou
School (Oahu College) in Hawaii, which she did.

In 1892, Mabel Wing met Henry Northrup Castle at a concert where she played the piano.
Castle, a widower with a young daughter, was the son of Samuel Northrup Castle, patriarch of
a wealthy and prominent family on the islands. He was also the close friend and brother-in-law
of philosopher George Herbert Mead, who later became guardian of John Ulric Nef, Jr. Mabel
Wing and Henry Northrup Castle were married on Christmas Day 1892.
In November of 1894, Mabel Wing Castle’s only child Elinor Henry was born. Henry Castle was at the time in Germany with his first daughter Dorothy, visiting his first wife’s family. In January 1895, alarmed by news of impending revolution in Hawaii, Henry booked passage for Dorothy and himself on the ill-fated German passenger ship Elbe. When the ship collided with another and sank, Henry and Dorothy perished, having never met baby Elinor.

After Henry’s death, Mabel Wing Castle continued to live in Hawaii, writing for the Advertiser (one of the papers owned by her late husband) and caring for members of his family. She and Elinor also travelled extensively during these years, often for health reasons. Mabel had a kidney removed in Chicago in 1899, vacationed in California when Elinor was unwell, and spent the years 1907-1911 in Europe with her daughter and assorted other members of her family, as their health variously allowed or required.

In 1911 Castle moved back to the United States to Lexington, MA, where Elinor attended school in Massachusetts and then in Connecticut. She was active in the women’s suffrage movement through WWI, and continued to travel extensively, often to Chicago to visit sister-in-law Helen Castle Mead. Elinor attended the University of Chicago and also spent much time with the Meads, where she met their ward John Ulric Nef, Jr. The two were married in 1921.

In the 1920s, Castle channeled her interests and energies into vocational guidance, working with various clubs and committees. By 1932, however, she had become active in the peace movement, and served as an officer in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, an anti-war organization founded by Jane Addams. Now living in California, Castle was also active in the Women’s University Club, particularly in poetry-related projects. She herself was a writer of poetry throughout her adult life. Her first book of poetry, Sonnets for Seventy came out in 1937, on the occasion of her 50th reunion at Wellesley. The second, Birthday Party, came out in 1944 just after her 80th birthday.

Still active in the 1940s with the Women’s International League, Mabel Wing Castle chaired that organization’s Jane Addams Peace Fund Committee (also called the Jane Addams Memorial Fund Committee) from 1942 to 1948. When the Committee was superseded by the Jane Addams Peace Association, Castle became the first president of its board of directors, serving until her death. The Peace Association established a Scholarship Fund in her memory.

Mabel Wing Castle died in Chicago on April 22, 1950. Her reminiscences, recorded by Elinor, were published after both of their deaths by John U. Nef, Jr. under the title My Mother’s Reminiscences.

Scope Note
The collection is arranged in four Series. Series 1, Personal, contains diaries (arranged chronologically) autograph and date books, a few personal papers and ephemera, and texts of memorial addresses and other posthumous materials.

Series 2, Correspondence, contains personal and family correspondence (in subseries 1 and 2 respectively). Personal correspondence is arranged chronologically, and correspondence with Henry Northrup Castle is foldered separately. Family correspondence is arranged alphabetically by main correspondent.

Series 3, Writings, contains articles and poems by Mabel Wing Castle.

Series 4, Photographs, contains photographs of members of the Castle and Mead families, and of family friend Julia Swanzy, dating from around the turn of the century.

Related Resources
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Castle, Henry Northrup. Papers
Mead, George Herbert. Papers
Nef, Elinor Castle. Papers
Schütze, Eva Watson. Photographs

Subject Headings
• Castle, Henry Northrup, 1862-1895
• Castle, Mabel Wing, 1864-1950
• Mead, George Herbert, 1863-1931
• Nef, John U. (John Ulric), 1899-1988
• Nef, Elinor Castle, 1894 or 5-1953
• Jane Addams Peace Association
• Jane Addams Peace Fund Committee
• Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
• Hawaii

INVENTORY
Series I: Personal
Box 1
Folder 1
    Diary, 1891
Box 1
Folder 2
    Diary, 1892
Box 1
Folder 3
    Diary and Ephemera, 1893
Box 1
Folder 4
    Diary, 1895
Box 1
Folder 5
    Appointment Book, 1898
Box 1
Folder 6
    Autograph Album/Scrapbook, 1939-1945
Box 2
Folder 1
    Emerson Birthday Book
Box 2
Folder 2
    Clippings – Frederic Yates Exhibition, 1897
Box 2
Folder 3
    Passport, 1923
Box 2
Folder 4
    Memorial Service – Texts of Addresses Given, 1950
Box 2
Folder 5
    Jane Addams Peace Association, Annual Report, 1951
Box 2
Folder 6
    Christmas Cards – Pictures and Remembrances of Mabel Wing Castle, 1951
Box 2
Folder 7
    Correspondence following Mabel Wing Castle’s Death, 1951-1957

Series II: Correspondence

Subseries 1: Personal Correspondence

Box 2
Folder 8
    Correspondence – Wing, Leander, 1888
Box 2
Folder 9
Correspondence – 1890
Box 2
Folder 10
Correspondence – Includes one Letter by Henry Northrup Castle, 1892-1893
Box 2
Folder 11
Correspondence – Castle, Henry, 1893
Box 2
Folder 12
Correspondence – Castle, Henry, 1893
Box 2
Folder 13
Correspondence – Castle, Henry, 1893
Box 2
Folder 14
Correspondence – Castle, Henry, 1894
Box 2
Folder 15
Correspondence – Castle, Henry, undated
Box 2
Folder 16
Correspondence, 1894
Box 2
Folder 17
Correspondence, 1895
Box 2
Folder 18
Correspondence, 1896
Box 3
Folder 1
Correspondence, 1897
Box 3
Folder 2
Correspondence, 1898
Box 3
Folder 3
Correspondence, 1899
Box 3
Folder 4
Correspondence, 1900
Box 3
Folder 5
Correspondence, 1901
Box 3
Folder 6
   Correspondence, 1902
Box 3
Folder 7
   Correspondence, 1903
Box 3
Folder 8
   Correspondence, 1904
Box 3
Folder 9
   Correspondence, 1905-1906
Box 3
Folder 10
   Correspondence and Greek Diary, 1907-1908
Box 3
Folder 11
   Correspondence, 1909
Box 3
Folder 12
   Correspondence, 1910
Box 3
Folder 13
   Correspondence,
Box 4
Folder 1
   Correspondence, 1912
Box 4
Folder 2
   Correspondence, 1913
Box 4
Folder 3
   Correspondence, 1914
Box 4
Folder 4
   Correspondence, 1915-1916
Box 4
Folder 5
   Correspondence, 1917
Box 4
Folder 6
   Correspondence, 1918-1921
Box 4
Folder 7
   Correspondence, 1922
Box 4
Folder 8
Correspondence, 1923-1926
Box 4
Folder 9
Correspondence, 1927
Box 4
Folder 10
Correspondence, 1929
Box 4
Folder 11
Correspondence, 1930-1935
Box 4
Folder 12
Correspondence – Christmas Letter, 1937
Box 4
Folder 13
Correspondence, 1938-1940
Box 4
Folder 14
Correspondence, 1941-1943
Box 4
Folder 15
Correspondence, 1944-1950

Subseries 2: Family Correspondence

Box 4
Folder 16
Harriet "Hattie" Angeline Castle Coleman – Typescript Copy of Letter Written to Edward and Mary Hitchcock, 1865
Box 4
Folder 17
Mary Eloise Castle – Correspondence, 1895
Box 5
Folder 1
Mary Tenney Castle (b. 1819) – Correspondence, 1894
Box 5
Folder 2
Samuel Northrup Castle (b. 1808) – Correspondence, 1889-1893
Box 5
Folder 3
Samuel Northrup Castle (b. 1880) and William Richards Castle – Correspondence, 1917
Box 5
Folder 4
Harriet "Hattie" Angeline Castle Coleman – Correspondence, 1895-1924
Box 5
Folder 5
George Herbert Mead – Correspondence, 1894-1927
Box 5
Folder 6
Helen Castle Mead – Correspondence, 1882-1928
Box 5
Folder 7
Correspondence to Ermine Cross regarding death of Helen Mead, 1929-1930
Box 5
Folder 8
Leander Joseph Wing – Correspondence, 1888-1912
Box 5
Folder 9
Zillah Annette Lovering Wing – Correspondence, 1888-1892

Series III: Writings
Box 5
Folder 10
Poetry, Essay, and Notes – Manuscripts, 1886-1947
Box 5
Folder 11
Wellesley Magazine – Includes an Article on "A Taste of Hawaiian Royalty" by Mabel Wing Castle, 1893
Box 5
Folder 12
Clipping – "Early Impressions of Matthew Arnold" by Mabel Wing Castle, 1902
Box 5
Folder 13
Report to Wellesley College Class of 1887, 1912
Box 5
Folder 14
Poetry – Reprint, 1933

Series IV: Photographs
Box 5
Folder 15
Photographs – Castle and Mead Family, Julia Swanzy, circa 1880-1910