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Guide to the Mabel Wing Castle Papers 1865-1957



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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