

William Draper Lewis Personal Correspondence

MSS.002

Finding aid prepared by Jordon Steele.

Last updated on April 28, 2011.

University of Pennsylvania, Biddle Law Library, Manuscripts Collection

2008

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Biddle Law Library: Manuscripts Collection
Creator	Lewis, William Draper, 1867-1949
Title	William Draper Lewis Personal Correspondence
Call number	MSS.002
Date [inclusive]	1874-1949
Extent	1 linear foot (about 235 items)
Language	English
Text [Box]	1
Abstract	<p>William Draper Lewis was born in Philadelphia in 1867. In 1891, he received both a law degree and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1892, he became editor of the <i>American Law Register</i>, one of the oldest legal periodicals of the time. That same year, Lewis married Caroline Mary Cope. They had four children, Henry, Alfreda Cope, Anna, and William Draper Jr. and resided in Germantown, Pennsylvania. In 1896, Lewis joined the law department at the University of Pennsylvania as Dean and Professor of Law. Under Lewis' leadership, the law school flourished as he recruited new faculty, broadened the curriculum, and strengthened the collections of the Biddle Law Library. He served as Dean until 1914 but continued on the faculty until 1924. In 1923, Lewis became the founding director of the American Law Institute (ALI). Lewis died in Northeast Harbor, Maine in 1949. The collection, 1874-1949, documents Lewis' personal life and span the years 1874-1949. A letter from Lewis to his mother written at age six and a letter from his</p>

son Henry to his widow Carrie written the year after his death are also included. The collection includes letters to and from his wife, children, grandchildren, and friends. The collection documents Lewis' observations and opinions on the current events of his time, and his roles as husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Cite as:

[Identification of item], in the William Draper Lewis Personal Correspondence, MSS.002, Biddle Law Library, University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Biography/History

William Draper Lewis was born in Philadelphia in 1867, the son of Henry and Fannie Hannah Wilson Lewis. On June 22, 1892, he married Caroline Mary Cope. They had four children, Henry, Alfreda Cope, Anna, and William Draper Jr. The Lewis family resided in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Lewis was educated at Germantown Academy and then attended Haverford College, graduating with a B.S. in 1888. In 1891, he received both a law degree and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania. He lectured in economics at Haverford from 1890 to 1896, and in 1891 was an instructor in legal history at the Wharton School. In 1892, he became editor of the *American Law Register*, one of the oldest legal periodicals of the time. In 1896, he joined the law department at the University of Pennsylvania as dean of the school and professor of law.

Under Lewis' leadership the law school flourished as he recruited new faculty, broadened the curriculum, and strengthened the collections of the Biddle Law Library. He played an instrumental role in the development of the case system of teaching law—a system first used at Harvard and now in general use by the principal law schools of this country. He also raised enough money to move the school out of the old criminal court buildings in Independence Square and into its own facility and current West Philadelphia location near the rest of the University. He served as Dean until 1914 but continued on the faculty until 1924.

During his tenure as Dean, Lewis produced a number of scholarly works including his own edition of *Blackstone's Commentaries* (1897); casebooks on such topics as interference in trade and equity jurisdiction; and an eight-volume collection of essays on *Great American Lawyers* (1907-1909). With George Wharton Pepper he prepared a twenty-three-volume *Digest of Decisions and Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Law, 1754-1898* (1898-1906).

Originally a Republican, Lewis was a friend and admirer of Theodore Roosevelt and followed him into the Progressive Party in 1912. He served as the chairman of the platform committee of the first and second Progressive National Conventions in Chicago in 1912 and 1916 and was the unsuccessful Bull Moose nominee for Governor of Pennsylvania in 1914. In 1919, he published the *Life of Theodore Roosevelt* with an introduction by William Howard Taft. In 1923, Lewis became the founding director of

the American Law Institute (ALI). The ALI had been conceived by a committee of distinguished lawyers, judges, and legal scholars, known as "The Committee on the Establishment of a Permanent Organization for the Improvement of the Law." In addition to Lewis, this committee included Elihu Root, George Woodward Wickersham, Harlan Fiske Stone, and Benjamin Nathan Cardozo. Alarmed by growing dissatisfaction in the country over the administration of justice, the sponsors of the ALI hoped to establish a center for the improvement of the American law. Their particular goal was to combine the resources of all branches of the profession to produce a massive restatement of the common law, a critical summary and evaluation of the state of legal doctrine under different topical headings. Under Lewis' directorship the ALI completed the its first Restatement of the Law. Lewis served as director of the ALI until ill health forced his retirement in 1947.

As a family man, educator, administrator, and director Lewis inspired respect and deep affection in those around him. His earnestness, diligence and his warm personality were often mentioned by his colleagues as historically significant factors in the success of his professional projects.

Lewis died at his summer home in Northeast Harbor, Maine, after a long illness in 1949.

Scope and Contents

The William Draper Lewis Personal Correspondence document Lewis' personal life and span the years 1874-1949. A letter from Lewis to his mother written at age six and a letter from his son Henry to his widow Carrie written the year after his death are also included. The collection includes letters to and from his wife, children, grandchildren, and friends. The collection documents Lewis' observations and opinions on the current events of his time, and his roles as husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Arrangement note

Chronological.

Administrative Information

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Access Restrictions

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

Use Restrictions

Copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

Custodial History note

William Draper Lewis' personal correspondence eventually passed from him to his daughter Anna Kneeder. She collected additional letters from family members with a view toward someday seeing them all "typed up" for the family. The letters were transcribed and arranged in chronological order by Sarah Bean Williams, who then edited them into the book *Affectionately, Father: The Personal Letters of William Draper Lewis 1867-1949*. This collection includes both the original letters and Williams' transcriptions.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Betty Marshall Kitchel Lewis, wife of Lewis' son Henry, formally transferred ownership of the papers of William Draper Lewis to the Biddle Law Library of the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania on July 15, 1997.

Processing Information note

Processed by Melissa Backes in September 1997.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

The William Draper Lewis Papers at the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center document Lewis' early career and association with the University of Pennsylvania.

The American Law Institute Archives document Lewis' later career as organizer and director of the ALI, including his work on the First Restatement of the Law, the administration of the criminal law, and the International Bill of Rights.

Controlled Access Headings

SUBJECT(S)

- University of Pennsylvania. Trustees

Other Finding Aids note

An item-level container list is available offline in spreadsheet form.

List of Correspondents in Collection

This index is an alphabetical list of correspondents. Each entry is followed by the person's relationship to Lewis.

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Baily, Katherine, granddaughter
- Cope, Anna Brown, sister-in-law
- Cope, Francis R., mother-in-law
- Cope, Lila D. (Dimmie), sister-in-law
- Cope, Thomas Pym, brother-in-law
- Fairbanks, Mary, employee and friend
- Garrison, Frank, friend
- Kneedler, Anna Lewis, daughter
- Kneedler, Howard, son-in-law
- Lewis, Belle Street Wellford, daughter-in-law (m. Draper)

- Lewis, Caroline Mary Cope, wife
- Lewis, Fannie Wilson, mother
- Lewis, Henry, son
- Lewis, May Erdman, daughter-in-law (m. Henry)
- Lewis, William Draper, Jr. (Draper), son
- Pepper, George Wharton, friend
- Sampson, Alfreda Cope Lewis, daughter
- Sampson, Edward Jr. (Ted), grandson
- Sampson, June Spong, grand daughter-in-law
- Shumate, Mary B., mother of daughter-in-law Belle
- Wickersham , George, friend