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HANSON, JOSEPH MILLS, 1876 - 1960

PAPERS, 1866 – 1960's (?)

Quantity: .75 linear ft.

ACCESS: This collection is open for research without restrictions.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Photographs are located in Box 2.

PRINTED MATERIAL: Single article located in Box 2

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PROCESSED BY: Amy Cooper, May, 2000

History

Joseph Mills Hanson was the son of Annie Mills and John R. Hanson. John R. Hanson, a native of New Hampshire, arrived in Nebraska in 1858, and lived opposite Strike-the-Ree's camp. He befriended the Sioux chief and was one of the first to stake claim on the land when the Sioux were forced out in 1860. John R. Hanson played a key role in the development of the city of Yankton. He served as a clerk of the first territorial legislature, territorial auditor, and judge advocate. In 1865, President Lincoln appointed him Indian Agent for the Upper Missouri region. Hanson also dealt in real estate and successfully landed a grading contract for the Dakota Southern Railroad from Sioux City to Yankton. He married Annie Mills in 1872, and they lived just outside of Yankton in a house (which ultimately burned down) known as Prospect Place. J. R. Hanson died in 1912. Hanson County is named in his honor. Annie M. Hanson died in 1923.

Joseph Mills Hanson was born in Yankton, Dakota Territory, in 1876. He attended school in the east, and was a student at Chauncey-Hall School in Boston and a cadet at St. John's School in Manlius, New York. After his schooling, he went to work for the Otis Elevator Company as a salesman. This undoubtedly was the result of his uncle's influence, since his mother's brother was a ranking officer in the company. Hanson stayed in the position for eight years before turning to writing.

Hanson's most successful writing was his 1909 publication of "The Conquest of the Missouri." In that same year he married Frances Lee Johnson. She died in 1912.

During World War I, Hanson became a commissioned officer in the South Dakota National Guard. He was Captain of Yankton's Company M, which served on the Mexican border in 1916 and then was activated for overseas service. Hanson left field duty to take a staff position with the American Expeditionary Force in France, and began to write a chronological history of American involvement in the war for the "Stars and Stripes," a paper for enlisted personnel.

Hanson returned to Yankton after the war and married Rosamond Brightman Wellington in 1926. In 1930, they left Yankton to reside in the east, abandoning his efforts to cultivate the Hanson family farm. Hanson worked as a Civil War historian, and an Assistant Historian for the National Park Service. He became Superintendent of Manassas National Battlefield Park in 1942 and served in this position until his retirement in 1947. He died on February 11, 1960.

During his lifetime, Hanson published several historical works, pageants, poetry and the marching song for the state's Young Citizen's League. In addition to "The Conquest of the Missouri," he published many other works including "Frontier Ballads," "With Sully into the Sioux Land," "With Carrington on the Bozeman Road," "Pilot Knob," "South Dakota in the World War, 1917 - 1919," "The World War through the Stereoscope," and "The Trail to El Dorado." He also published historical articles and poetry in various journals and papers.

Scope and Content Note

The Joseph Mills Hanson Papers include papers which come from Hanson's time as an author and historian, as well as papers belonging to his parents, Annie M. Hanson and John R. Hanson, some of which pre-date his birth. The papers are organized into seven series: Correspondence, Diaries, Manuscripts, Legal Documents, Photographs, Printed Material and Ephemera.

The **Correspondence** series includes letters primarily to and from Joseph Mills Hanson's mother, Annie Mills Hanson. Letters from Mrs. Hanson to her son date from approximately 1903, and primarily concern daily matters of housekeeping and community items of interest. Likewise, three handwritten letters addressed to Mrs. J. R.

Hanson from Joseph Mills Hanson are undated but seem to be from the time Hanson spent in Manlius, New York, at the St. John's Military Academy. One typed letter is dated 1919 and comes from Chaumont, The. Marne, when Hanson was serving overseas. The miscellaneous correspondence is a mix of letters to Annie and John R. Hanson, and letters to others. One letter, dated October, 1866, is from Abraham, Annie's brother, to his mother concerning his potential marriage.

The **Diaries** series contains two small pocket diaries belonging to Annie M. Hanson. One is dated 1873, and the second was presented to her in 1905 and seems to have been kept sporadically until 1912. The diaries are handwritten in pencil, with several years' notes kept on the same page (one page per day). The diaries detail major events, the weather and daily life.

The **Manuscripts** series contains the typewritten drafts of several of Joseph Mills Hanson's writings. Some may not have been published (for example, "The Enlightenment of Cadet Whitney"). Others may have been drafts for Hanson's major works. There is, for example, a typescript entitled "The Missouri: A Giant Unemployed," which may have contributed to his work "The Conquest of the Missouri." Typescripts include historical writings, poetry, and drama. Many have holograph editorial markings.

The **Legal Documents** series contains business agreements, deeds and leases, receipts, insurance policies and stock certificates, and three documents from the South Dakota Supreme Court, signed by J. R. Hanson. Also included is J. M. Hanson's Cadet Certificate from St. John's School in Manlius.

The **Photographs** series includes one photograph of Joseph Mills Hanson during his tenure at the Otis Elevator Company, as well as a postcard that likely dates from his service in the military during World War I, specifically from the time he was on the Mexican border. Also included is a photograph of "A. G. (?) Mills," presumably Abraham, Annie's brother, which was taken in Rome in 1872. There are three unidentified photographs, one of a young girl perhaps taken in the 1920's, one of a young man perhaps taken in the late 1800's, and one of an elderly man from the same time period.

Printed Material contains a single article from the *Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan* about Joseph Mills Hanson that was removed from the Chilson Collection edition of his book, "Frontier Ballads."

The **Ephemera** series contains a small amount of material, including miscellaneous pamphlets, a notebook and tickets to the SD State Fair for 1897.

Box No. Description**Box 1**

CORRESPONDENCE

Incoming

From Mrs. J. R. Hanson (Annie M. Hanson, mother)

April 21, 1903 (?)

May 27, 1903 (?)

June 14, 1903 (?)

Outgoing

To Mrs. J. R. Hanson

Undated (3 letters)

Feb. 22, 1919

Miscellaneous

Undated. To Mrs. J. R. Hanson, from Susann (?)

October 28, 1866. To Mother [Mrs. Mills] from Abraham [Mills]

October 31, 1872. To [John Q. Burbank, Esq.] (?) from (?) [Beadle]

December 17, 1876, to Mr. J. R. Hanson from T. [Greenleaf] (?)

December 10, 1878 to Aunt Ellen, from [Dellie L.] (?)

DIARIES

Annie M. Hanson

1873

1905 – [1912] (?)

MANUSCRIPTS

“Enlightenment of Cadet Whitney,” n.d.

“Missouri; A Giant Unemployed,” n.d.

“Pageant of Yankton,” n.d.

Poetry, untitled, n. d.

“War of the Powers,” n.d. (2 folders)

Untitled, 1912 (2 folders, missing 1st 8 pgs.)

Untitled drama, n.d.

Box 2

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Business Agreements

J. R. Hanson (1 folder)

January, 1870

July 31, 1871

August 23, 1871

Real Estate (1 folder)

Deeds and leases

Receipts, 1869 – 1903 (1 folder)

South Dakota Supreme Court (1 folder)

J. R. Hanson

September 23, 1872

February 27, 1879

Miscellaneous (1 folder)

J. M. Hanson, Cadet Certificate, June 7, 1897

Mrs. J. R. Hanson, Insurance Policy, November 10, 1873

Statement of Expenditures made by G. B. Greenleaf, “Trustee” on
“Burrow Co.” Lodes to December 13, 1876

Certificate, Transfer of Stock, Dakota Central Railroad

Box No. Description

Box 2, cont.

PHOTOGRAPHS (1 folder)

Hanson, J. M.

“In St. Louis Office, Otis Elevator Co.” May, 1903

4 postcards, ca. 1916

Mills, A. G. (?), “Your Affectionate Brother,” Rome, 1872

Unidentified (3 photographs)

List of photographs for unidentified publication

PRINTED MATERIAL

Karolevitz, Bob. “Prospect Place: Home of Aristocratic Hanson Family Almost Century Ago.” Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan, [1960's] (?).

EPHEMERA (1 folder)

Booklet, “Compendium of Information Relating to South Dakota,”
1904

Card describing Pageant of Yankton

Notebook, pocket sized, “Hope fire Ins. Co., NY, NY, 1866”

Tickets, South Dakota State Fair, Yankton, 1897