William H. Conkling Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Library of Congress
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1997

Contact information:
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http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009250

LC Online Catalog record:
http://lccn.loc.gov/mm97062011

Prepared by Bradley E. Gernand
Collection Summary
Title: William H. Conkling Papers
Span Dates: 1864-1976
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1927-1939)
ID No.: MSS62011
Creator: Conkling, William H., 1858-1939
Extent: 275 items ; 1 container plus 1 oversize plus 1 vault (philatelic cover) ; 0.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Municipal government official, civic leader, and postmaster from Springfield, Illinois. Correspondence with Charles A. Lindbergh, speeches and writings, publications, photographs, and memorabilia relating to Lindbergh’s cross-country airmail route which included service to Springfield, Illinois, and his flight of 1927 from New York to Paris. Includes a philatelic cover which Lindbergh carried aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his trans-Atlantic flight and mailed to Conkling from Paris.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Conkling, William H., 1858-1939.

Organizations
Spirit of St. Louis (Airplane)

Subjects
Air mail service.
Covers (Philately)
Postal service--Illinois--Springfield.
Transatlantic flights.

Occupations
Civic leaders.
Postmasters.
Public officials.

Administrative Information
Provenance
The papers of William H. Conkling (1858-1939), municipal government official, civic leader, and postmaster from Springfield, Illinois were given to the Library of Congress in 1986 by his grandson, William J. Bengel.

Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William H. Conkling is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions
The papers of William H. Conkling are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use. The philatelic cover which Lindbergh carried aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his trans-Atlantic flight and mailed to Conkling from Paris is held in vault storage.
Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William H. Conkling Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date | Event
---|---
1858, Sept. 12 | Born, Springfield, Ill.
1878-1897 | Haberdasher and furrier, Springfield, Ill.
1884 | Married Sarah J. Thompson (died 1905)
1897-1901 | City comptroller, Springfield, Ill.
1901-1920 | Assistant postmaster, Springfield, Ill.
1907 | Married Margaret McManus
1917 | Founding member, Springfield Home Guard (local adjunct to Illinois State Council of Defense)
1920-1931 | Postmaster, Springfield, Ill.
1926 | Established first regularly scheduled airmail delivery for Springfield, Ill., with the assistance of Charles A. Lindbergh
1939, Aug. 21 | Died, Springfield, Ill.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William H. Conkling (1858-1939) span the years 1864-1976, with the bulk of the papers dated 1927-1939. Conkling, longtime postal official in Springfield, Illinois, was an early airmail enthusiast who established his city as a stop on one of the first cross-country contract airmail routes. The route was flown by Charles A. Lindbergh until 1927, when he quit to prepare for his historic New York-to-Paris flight. During this flight, Lindbergh carried aboard his aircraft, the *Spirit of St. Louis*, a philatelic cover which he mailed to Conkling from Paris. In addition to this cover, Conkling’s papers contain correspondence with Lindbergh; publications, speeches, and writings concerning Lindbergh’s Paris flight and airmail service to Springfield; and photographs of Lindbergh loading his plane with mail at Springfield’s aerodrome and as its special guest of honor.
## Container List

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<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1864, 1870-1871, 1882, 1907, 1926-1939</td>
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<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Philatelic covers and related information, 1927-1931, 1962-1963, 1972-1976 <a href="#">See also VA1</a> (2 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX VA 1</td>
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Appendix: Artifact List

Badges, Ribbons, and Souvenir Coins

2. Bookmarks printed by the Headquarters Department of the Potomac, Grand Army of the Republic, on the occasion of Memorial Day in Washington, D.C. Dated 1916 (1) and 1923 (2). 3 items.

Philatelic Covers

2. Philatelic cover commemorating the dedication of the Abraham Lincoln tomb in Springfield, Ill., June 17, 1931. Postmarked Springfield, same date. 1 item.