

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



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

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm97062011>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009250>

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Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2009

## 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

**Extent:** 1 container plus 1 oversize plus 1 vault (philatelic cover)

**Extent:** 0.6 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm97062011>

**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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Conkling, William H., 1858-1939.

Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus), 1902-1974.

### Organizations

Spirit of St. Louis (Airplane)

### Subjects

Air mail service.

Covers (Philately)

Postal service--Illinois--Springfield.

Transatlantic flights.

### Occupations

Civic leaders.

Postmasters.

Public officials.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William H. Conkling is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Badges, ribbons, and souvenir coins, 1916, 1923-1927
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1864, 1870-1871, 1882, 1907, 1926-1939
BOX 1	Philatelic covers and related information, 1927-1931, 1962-1963, 1972-1976 <i>See also VAL</i> (2 folders)
BOX 1	Photographs, 1927-1931, undated <i>See also Oversize</i> (2 folders)
BOX 1	Publications, 1927-1935, 1971, undated
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Photographs, 1927-1931, undated (Container 1)
BOX VA 1	Artifacts
BOX VA 1	Philatelic cover, 1927 (Container 1)

## Appendix: Artifact List

### Badges, Ribbons, and Souvenir Coins

1. Souvenir coins, "First Non-Stop Flight New York-Paris" [obverse]; "Lucky Lindbergh Coin" [reverse]. Dated 1927. 2 items.
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.
3. Button, "Welcome Home...Capt. Charles Lindbergh" attached to ribbon, "Lindbergh Reception Committee, Springfield, Ill., August 15, 1927." 2 items.
4. Silk ribbon, "Charles A. Lindbergh—First Non-Stop Airplane Flight—New York to Paris—May 20-21, 1927." 1 item.
5. Silk ribbon, "Welcome Home—Charles A. Lindbergh—St. Louis Committee—June 17, 18, 19, 1927." 1 item.

### Philatelic Covers

1. Philatelic cover carried aboard the "Spirit of St. Louis" airplane by Charles Lindbergh on his flight from New York to Paris, addressed to William H. Conkling, postmaster, Springfield, Illinois, signed and verified by Charles Lindbergh. Mailed in an outer envelope on which is imprinted "Embassy of the United States of America" and postmarked May 28, 1927, Paris. 2 items.
2. Philatelic cover commemorating the dedication of the Abraham Lincoln tomb in Springfield, Ill., June 17, 1931. Postmarked Springfield, same date. 1 item.