

Charles Follen McKim Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79032243>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010074>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010
Revised 2023 June

Collection Summary

Title: Charles Follen McKim Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1838-1929

Bulk Dates: 1890-1910

ID No.: MSS32243

Creator: McKim, Charles Follen, 1847-1909

Extent: 4,200 items

Extent: 14 containers

Extent: 5.6 linear feet

Extent: 14 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79032243>

Summary: Architect. Correspondence, letterbooks, memoranda, diary, notes, legal and financial records, sketches, drawings, photographs, and other papers relating chiefly to the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, & White, New York, N.Y.

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

French, Daniel Chester, 1850-1931--Correspondence.
Garrison, Francis Jackson, 1848-1916--Correspondence.
Garrison, Francis Jackson, 1848-1916.
Garrison, Wendell Phillips, 1840-1907--Correspondence.
Garrison, Wendell Phillips, 1840-1907.
Garrison, William Lloyd, 1805-1879--Correspondence.
La Farge, John, 1835-1910--Correspondence.
M'Kim, J. Miller (James Miller), 1810-1874--Correspondence.
McKim family--Correspondence.
McKim, Charles Follen, 1847-1909.
McKim, Margaret--Correspondence.
Millet, Francis Davis, 1846-1912--Correspondence.
Moore, Charles, 1855-1942--Correspondence.
Mowbray, H. Siddons (Harry Siddons), 1858-1928--Correspondence.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1822-1903--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Academy in Rome.
American Institute of Architects.
Boston Public Library.
Century Club (New York, N.Y.)
Columbia University.
Grant Memorial Commission.
McKim, Mead, & White.
Rhode Island State House (Providence, R.I.)
Symphony Hall (Boston, Mass.)
United States. Congress. Senate. Commission for the Improvement of the District of Columbia.
University Club (New York, N.Y.)
White House (Washington, D.C.)
World's Columbian Exposition (1893 : Chicago, Ill.)

Subjects

African Americans--History--19th century.
Architectural firms--New York (State)--New York.
Architecture--Conservation and restoration--Washington (D.C.)
Architecture--Massachusetts--Boston.
Architecture--New York (State)--New York.
Architecture--Societies, etc.
Architecture--Study and teaching--Italy--Rome.
Architecture--United States.
Architecture--Washington (D.C.)
Clubs--New York (State)--New York.
Exhibitions--Illinois--Chicago.
Freedmen.
Libraries--Massachusetts--Boston.
Music-halls--Massachusetts--Boston.
Parks--Washington (D.C.)
Public buildings--Washington (D.C.)
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)
Universities and colleges--New York (State)--New York.

Places

Gettysburg (Pa.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
Mall, The (Washington, D.C.)
Pennsylvania--Description and travel.
Rhode Island--Capital and capitol.

Occupations

Architects.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Charles Follen McKim, architect, were given to the Library of Congress by Charles Moore between 1931 and 1937.

Processing History

The papers of Charles Follen McKim were arranged and described in 1985. The finding aid was revised in 2009. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Charles Follen McKim is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Charles Follen McKim 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.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of these papers is available on fourteen reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Charles Follen McKim Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1847, Aug. 24	Born, Chester County, Pa.
1866-1867	Student, Lawrence Scientific School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1867-1870	Student, École des Beaux Arts, Paris, France
1872	Began practice as an architect
1877	Joined in partnership by William R. Mead
1879	Partnership joined by Stanford White, creating McKim, Mead & White
1897-1909	President, American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy
1903	Awarded gold medal, Royal Institute of British Architects
1907	President, American Institute of Architects
1909, Sept. 14	Died, St. James, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909) span the years 1838-1929, with the bulk concentrated in the period 1866-1909. The collection was assembled from various sources by his biographer, Charles Moore, and is organized in five series: [Diary](#), [Letterbooks](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), and [Miscellany](#).

The McKim Papers document the professional and personal life of one of the preeminent American architects of his time and, in a series of [Letterbooks](#), illustrate the development of American architecture through the letters and reports written under his signature as a partner in the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White. Two volumes of letterbooks in this series contain McKim's letters in support of the American Academy in Rome, an institution founded in 1897 by McKim and administered by him until his death in 1909. The academy's purpose was to promote the advancement of the fine arts in America by enabling promising American students to study in Europe amid classic works of arts, and its operations are further documented in the [Subject File](#). The [General Correspondence](#) series contains mostly transcripts, although some original letters are also included, as well as letters exchanged by McKim with family members. Photographs and printed matter are contained in the [Miscellany](#) series, as is a partial calendar of McKim's correspondence, compiled by Moore.

Charles McKim was the son of James Miller McKim, a prominent Philadelphia abolitionist who was an active participant in the Underground Railroad and secretary of the American Freedman's Union Commission. The [General Correspondence](#) series contains transcripts of letters written by James McKim to his son while Charles was attending Harvard University and L'École des Beaux Arts in Paris that detail the efforts of former abolitionists to provide aid for newly freed enslaved persons in the years immediately following the Civil War. Copies of letters from other family members, including McKim's mother, sister, and brother, are also located in the [General Correspondence](#) and provide personal glimpses into the family life and domestic affairs of the McKim family.

James McKim was a confederate of William Lloyd Garrison, and Charles forged lifelong friendships with Garrison's sons, Francis Jackson Garrison and Wendell Phillips Garrison. A transcript of a diary kept by McKim recalls a walking tour taken

by him, along with the Garrison sons, in 1863 through eastern Pennsylvania and the Gettysburg battlefield. Correspondence with the Garrisons can also be found in the [General Correspondence](#) and [Letterbooks](#).

The series of [Letterbooks](#) contains the most fully developed source material in the collection relating to McKim's architectural career. They are his personal letterbooks and include not only letters written by McKim in his capacity as representative of his firm but also those written by him of a more personal nature, especially those to his daughter, Margaret. The alphabetical indexes of correspondents, which are located at the beginning of each volume, reveal an impressive number of names of notable figures of the day, both those who consulted with McKim as clients and colleagues and those with whom he worked, including many important artists and architects. The [Letterbooks](#) reflect McKim's role as supervisory architect and his involvement in the development of his firm's architectural contracts, from structural conceptions and engineering details to the design elements of both interior and exterior decorations. Included among the works of his firm that are represented in these books are McKim's designs for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, the Morningside Heights campus at Columbia University, the University Club, and the restoration of the White House. Extensive material documents McKim's participation with the Senate Commission on the Improvement of the District of Columbia (in which capacity he advised Congress on the location and treatment of the public buildings and grounds along the Mall), including his membership on the Grant Memorial Commission. The [General Correspondence](#) series supplements the letterbooks, providing added detail to several of McKim's major architectural works mentioned above, as well as to other projects such as the Rhode Island State House at Providence, Boston Symphony Hall, and the Boston Public Library. A separate file containing correspondence, reports, and financial records relating to the design and construction of the Boston Public Library is also included in the [Subject File](#).

McKim became an important supporter of professional and educational societies and social clubs, including active membership in the American Institute of Architects, the Century Club, and the University Club. References to McKim's participation in other public and private organizations can also be found in the [Letterbooks](#).

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- [Diary, 1863-1867](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1891-1910](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1838-1928](#)
- [Subject File, 1888-1918](#)
- [Miscellany, 1848-1929](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1 REEL 1	<u>Diary, 1863-1867</u> Transcripts of a diary account of a walking trip and a memorandum book. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1-7 REEL 1-10	<u>Letterbooks, 1891-1910</u> Copies of outgoing correspondence. Also includes two volumes at the end of the series concerning the American Academy in Rome. Arranged by volume number and basically chronologically therein.
BOX 7-9 REEL 10-11	<u>General Correspondence, 1838-1928</u> Mainly letters received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 9-13 REEL 11-14	<u>Subject File, 1888-1918</u> Files concerning the American Academy in Rome and the Boston Public Library. Arranged by subject and chronologically within. The file on the American Academy in Rome has a small miscellany following the chronology.
BOX 14 REEL 14	<u>Miscellany, 1848-1929</u> Includes an index to and notes on the general correspondence, genealogical material, photographs, printed matter, sketches, and other material. Arranged by type of material.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 19.621

Container	Contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	Diary, 1863-1867 Transcripts of a diary account of a walking trip and a memorandum book. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1 REEL 1	Diary transcript, 1863, July 28-Aug. 18
BOX 1 REEL 1	Memorandum book, 1866, Aug. 23-1867, May 15
BOX 1-7 REEL 1-10	Letterbooks, 1891-1910 Copies of outgoing correspondence. Also includes two volumes at the end of the series concerning the American Academy in Rome. Arranged by volume number and basically chronologically therein.
BOX 1 REEL 1-2	Vol.1, 1891, Sept. 30-1893, Mar. 14
BOX 1 REEL 1-2	Vol. 2, 1893, Mar. 14-1894, Mar. 24
BOX 1 REEL 1-2	Vol. 3, 1894, Mar. 27-1895, Jan. 26
BOX 2 REEL 2-3	Vol. 4, 1895, Jan. 26-1896, Apr. 2
BOX 2 REEL 2-3	Vol. 5, 1896, Apr. 27-1897, Apr. 26
BOX 2 REEL 2-3	Vol. 6, 1897, Apr. 28-1898, Mar. 19
BOX 3 REEL 4-5	Vol. 7, 1898, Mar. 20-1899, Mar. 20
BOX 3 REEL 4-5	Vol. 8, 1899, Mar. 27-1900, Apr. 21
BOX 3 REEL 4-5	Vol. 9, 1900, Apr. 21-1901, Apr. 10
BOX 4 REEL 5-6	Vol. 10, 1901, Apr. 11-1902, Apr. 12
BOX 4 REEL 5-6	Vol. 11, 1902, Apr.14-1903, July 17
BOX 4 REEL 5-6	Vol. 12, 1903, July 17-1904, Apr. 25
BOX 5 REEL 7-8	Vol. 13, 1904, Apr. 25-Dec. 23
BOX 5 REEL 7-8	Vol. 14, 1904, Dec. 24-1906, Feb. 5
BOX 5 REEL 7-8	Vol. 15, 1906, Feb. 9, 1907, June 13
BOX 6 REEL 8-9	Vol. 16, 1901, Aug. 26-1907, Dec. 9
BOX 6 REEL 8-9	Vol. 17, 1907, June 14-1910, July 16
BOX 6 REEL 8-9	American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy
BOX 6 REEL 8-9	1902, Jan. 10-1906, Feb. 10
BOX 7 REEL 10	1905, Feb. 20-1910, Apr. 20
BOX 7-9 REEL 10-11	General Correspondence, 1838-1928 Mainly letters received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7 REEL 10	1838-1870 (8 folders)
BOX 8 REEL 10-11	1880-1902 (8 folders)

General Correspondence, 1838-1928

Container	Contents
BOX 9 REEL 11	1903-1928, undated (7 folders)
BOX 9-13 REEL 11-14	Subject File, 1888-1918 Files concerning the American Academy in Rome and the Boston Public Library. Arranged by subject and chronologically within. The file on the American Academy in Rome has a small miscellany following the chronology.
BOX 9 REEL 11	American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy
BOX 9 REEL 11	1894-1896 (2 folders)
BOX 9 REEL 11	1897
BOX 9 REEL 11	Jan.-June
BOX 10 REEL 11-12	July-Dec.
BOX 10 REEL 11-12	1898-1902 (8 folders)
BOX 11 REEL 12-13	1903-1907 (9 folders)
BOX 12 REEL 13	1908-1912 (5 folders)
BOX 12 REEL 13	Miscellany
BOX 12 REEL 13	Addresses
BOX 12 REEL 13	Correspondence
BOX 12 REEL 13	Diagrams
BOX 12 REEL 13	General
BOX 13 REEL 13-14	Plans, Italian villa
BOX 13 REEL 13-14	Photographs
BOX 13 REEL 13-14	Printed matter
BOX 13 REEL 13-14	Cancelled checks, 1905-1911
BOX 13 REEL 13-14	Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass., 1888-1889 (5 folders)
BOX 14 REEL 14	Miscellany, 1848-1929 Includes an index to and notes on the general correspondence, genealogical material, photographs, printed matter, sketches, and other material. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 14 REEL 14	Genealogy, undated
BOX 14 REEL 14	General correspondence, partial calendar and notes, 1848-1927
BOX 14 REEL 14	Memorandum book, 1866-1867
BOX 14 REEL 14	Photographs, undated
BOX 14 REEL 14	Plan of tables for dinner of the trustees of the American Academy in Rome, University Club, New York, N.Y., 1905, Mar. 25
BOX 14 REEL 14	Seals, undated
BOX 14 REEL 14	Sketches, undated
BOX 14 REEL 14	Printed matter, 1859-1929
BOX 14 REEL 14	Clippings, 1888-1928