

# Guide to the Lester Bradner Papers

MS 951



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

October 1982

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 951

**CREATOR:** Bradner, Lester, 1867-1929

**TITLE:** Lester Bradner papers

**DATES:** 1881-1893

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.5 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers consist of approximately 500 letters written by Lester Bradner to his future wife Edith Mitchell Murray of Flushing, New York. During their courtship Bradner spent two years (1891-1893) studying at the University of Berlin, after taking a Ph.D. at Yale University in 1889. His letters describe his life both in New York and Berlin, as well as his summer travels in Europe and the United States. He also discusses his religious beliefs and the ministry.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0951>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0951>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Leicester Bradner, 1964.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

Lester Bradner Papers (MS 951). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Lester Bradner was born at Chicago, Illinois, March 9, 1867. His father, Lester Bradner, '57 (son of Lester Bradner and Fanny Hammond), was born November 1, 1836, at Dansville, New York; removing to Chicago, he became general freight agent of the Illinois Central Railroad. Later, as partner in Bradner, Charnley & Company, he became interested in the lumber business. He died December 26, 1907, at Dansville, New York. His first American ancestor was John Bradner, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, who came to America in 1714. June 7, 1865, he married Lucy Atwater Charnley of Philadelphia, who was born August 14, 1841, and died in Carlsbad, Austria, April 1, 1912. Besides his father, Bradner had three uncles and two cousins who were Yale men.

Bradner prepared for college at the Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven. In Freshman year he won the Hurlbut prize and a first grade Berkeley premium. He won a number of prizes for running the half mile and was a member of the University Track Teams of 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1889. He took philosophical oration stand both at Junior Exhibition and Commencement and therefore became a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

He spent the first two years after graduation in New Haven, taking a postgraduate course in Semitic languages under Professor Harper, receiving therefor [ sic ] a Ph.D. degree in June, 1891. He went abroad in the autumn of 1891 and studied at the University of Berlin for two years. Returning in 1893, he took Senior year at the General Theological Seminary in New York City and received the degree of B.D. in the spring of 1894. Then for seven years he was assistant minister of the Church of the Ascension in that city. In January 1902, he became rector of St. John's Church of Providence, Rhode Island; he resigned December 31, 1912, and traveled in Palestine, Italy and Germany. On his return he took a position with the General Board of Religious Education of the Episcopal Church, a new organization devoted to the advancement of educational standards in religious teaching. Here he was in control of the national Episcopal system of teaching-training and conducted a Correspondence School. He was also producing new textbooks for Church Schools, and writing articles for current periodicals on religious education.

When the General Board of Religious Education was merged in 1919-20, into the National Council of the Episcopal Church, he continued in the same work, becoming one of the secretaries in the Department of Religious Education, which position he still holds, although a year's illness has prevented active work in 1923. He published a small study in school-grading entitled "Organizing the Smaller Sunday School." He was for some years Departmental Editor for Religious Education of the Anglican Theological Quarterly. In 1922 the University of the South, at Sewanee, Tenn., gave him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He remained in the General Board of Religious Education till his death.

During the first year of the War, he gave half of his time in the office of the Church War Commission.

October 15, 1895, he married at Flushing, New York, Edith Mitchell Murray, daughter of William K. Murray and Annie C. Mitchell. She died February 14, 1919. They had three sons: Leicester Bradner, born January 14, 1899; William Burray Bradner, born December 26, 1900; John Bradner, born at Providence, August 13, 1904; and one daughter, Edith Bradner, born at Providence, June 23, 1906.

Leicester graduated at Yale in 1920, took his M.A. there in 1922, and then studied there, preparing for an instructorship in English Literature. William graduated in Yale 1922. Both Leicester and William were in the S.A.T.C. John is in Yale, 1925.

Bradner died on September 21, 1929.

(Taken from *Thirty-fifth Reunion Book of the Class of 1889*).

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of approximately five hundred letters written by Lester Bradner to his future wife, Edith Mitchell Murray, of Flushing, New York. The correspondence commences shortly after their first meeting in 1888 while Bradner was a Yale College student, and continues through the remainder of his Yale career (he received his Ph.D. in 1889) and the two years which he spent at the University of Berlin (1891-1893) studying Biblical history and exegesis, and Hebrew, Assyrian, and Arabic.

Through the letters the growth of their friendship and later engagement can be observed, although unfortunately none of Edith Murray's letters have been preserved. Bradner's letters describe his academic and social life in New Haven, Dansville (New York), and Berlin, as well as his summer travels in America and Europe. He dwells in some detail on his religious beliefs and his view of theology and the ministry.

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## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1 - 24	Letters to Edith M. Murray	1888 February 22-1893 December 19
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## **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.

### **Subjects**

Clergy  
Courtship  
Students  
Women

### **Geographic Names**

Europe  
Germany

### **Names**

Bradner, Edith Mitchell Murray, d. 1919  
Bradner, Lester, 1867-1929

### **Corporate Body**

Yale University -- Students