

Guide to the Henry Cornelius Robinson Papers

MS 1060



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

July 1983

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1060

CREATOR: Robinson, Henry Cornelius, 1832-1900

TITLE: Henry Cornelius Robinson papers

DATES: 1849-1866

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.25 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of letters written to Henry C. Robinson and members of his family. The largest group is made up of over sixty letters written to him by his mother, Anne Seymour Robinson, while he was at Yale College (1850-1853) and which reflect on events and activities at the college. Other correspondents are Mary Caroline Robinson Shipman and Lewis Ledyard Weld.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1060>

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.1060>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to 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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased in 1957.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Henry Cornelius Robinson Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Henry Cornelius Robinson, son of David Franklin and Anne (Seymour) Robinson, was born in Hartford, Connecticut, August 28, 1832.

After graduation he studied law in the office of his brother Lucius F. Robinson (Yale 1843), and after three years of practice alone, became his partner. After the death of his brother in 1861, Mr. Robinson continued the practice alone until, in 1888, he admitted his eldest son, Lucius F. Robinson (Yale 1885) to partnership, and later his son John T. Robinson (Yale 1893). The firm gained a preeminent position in the State, having charge of many corporation interests in addition to a large general practice. Mr. Robinson was leading counsel for the Republican party in the *quo warrantoproceedings* growing out of the contest for the Connecticut governorship of 1891-93, and was a member of the board of arbitration appointed by the State in the litigation between Yale College and the Storrs Agricultural School, involving the disposal of the government agricultural funds. He was also one of the leading counsel and a director of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad Company, the presidency of which he declined a few years ago. He was a republican from the formation of the party and held many important offices. As fish commissioner in 1866 he did much to develop that industry. He was elected Mayor of Hartford in 1872, overcoming a large democratic majority, and gave the city an administration notable for its efficiency. He was three times nominated for Governor of the State. In 1879 he was elected to the General Assembly, of which he became the leader. As chairman of the judiciary committee he secured legislation which effected important reforms in judicial procedure. In 1880 he was a member of the National Republican Convention which nominated Garfield and Arthur, and drafted a considerable part of its platform. In 1887 he was the commissioner from Connecticut to the Constitutional centennial celebration at Philadelphia. He was offered the appointment of Minister to Spain by President Harrison, but declined.

He was closely identified with the business, philanthropic and educational interests of his city. He was a director of important insurance and banking companies and was a charter member and for several years President of the Hartford City Missionary Society, a director of the Hartford Hospital, and a trustee of the Wadsworth Atheneum. He was Vice-President of the Bar Association of Connecticut and of that of Hartford County, also a founder of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. For over fifty years he was a member of the South Congregational Church, and one of the strong laymen of the denomination. He was in great demand on public occasions and among his many eloquent addresses were his orations at the dedication of the Putnam equestrian statue at Brooklyn, Connecticut, those on the death of President Garfield and General Grant, his addresses at the semi-centennial observances of the Hartford Public High School, at the first banquet of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, upon the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, and many Memorial Day addresses.

He frequently contributed to the *New Englander* and the *Yale Law Journal*, and had recently written a "Constitutional History of Connecticut." He was always active in promoting Yale interests by work and counsel and was the third President of the Hartford Yale Alumni Association. He was for years a lecturer in the Law School, on the ethics of the legal profession. He received the degree of LL.D. from Yale in 1888.

He married on his birthday, August 28, 1862, Miss Eliza Niles Trumbull, daughter of John F. Trumbull of Stonington, Connecticut.

For several months before his death Mr. Robinson suffered from rheumatism, which later became complicated with symptoms of gout. He died at his home in Hartford, on February 14, 1900, at the age of 67 years. His widow, three sons and two daughters survive him. He leaves also two sisters, one the widow of J. Hammond Trumbull (Yale 1842), and the other the wife of Judge Nathaniel Shipman (Yale 1848).

(Taken from *Yale University Obituary Record*, 1890-1900, pages 692-94.)

Scope and Contents

This small collection consists entirely of letters to Henry Cornelius Robinson and members of his family. Over sixty of the letters were written by Robinson's mother, Anne (Seymour) Robinson (1801-1892), to her son during his study at Yale College; seven other letters from her are written to Robinson's wife, Eliza Niles (Trumbull) Robinson (1833-1916). Also in the papers are three letters from Robinson to his wife, two from Robinson's sister, Mary Caroline (Robinson) Shipman (1834-1904), to him; one from a college friend, Lewis Ledyard Weld (1833-1865), to him; and one letter from "Cousin Molly" to an otherwise unidentified "Lutey." All of these letters contain routine family news, comments on current events, and descriptions of social events. The letters from Robinson's mother refer frequently to his college life, reacting to events and activities his letters have mentioned, and offering advice on his behavior at school.

These papers were purchased from Whitlock's in 1957.

Collection Contents

Robinson, Anne (Seymour)		
b. 1, f. 1	7 ALS to Eliza (Trumbull) Robinson	undated
b. 1, f. 2	Letters and notes to Henry C. Robinson	[ca. 1850-53]
b. 1, f. 3	Robinson, Henry Cornelius: 3 ALS to Eliza (Trumbull) Robinson	1866, undated
b. 1, f. 4	Shipman, Mary Caroline (Robinson): 2 ALS to Henry C. Robinson	1849, undated
b. 1, f. 5	Weld, Lewis Ledyard: ALS to Henry C. Robinson	undated
b. 1, f. 6	"Cousin Molly": ALS to "Lutey" English	undated

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

Families
Mothers and sons

Names

Robinson, Anne Seymour, 1801-1892
Robinson, Henry Cornelius, 1832-1900
Shipman, Mary Caroline Robinson, 1834-1904
Weld, Lewis Ledyard, 1833-1865

Corporate Bodies

Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1853
Yale University -- Students