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REGISTER
OF THE
Collis P. Huntington
Papers

Accession Number: 1979/08.0269



Special Collections Department
James E. Morrow Library
Marshall University
Huntington, West Virginia

Scope and Content: Capitalist, railroad magnate. Papers consist of incoming correspondence, letterpress copy books, legal and financial papers, and personal papers. Reel allocations are as follows: incoming correspondence (54 reels), letterpress copy books (35 reels), legal and financial papers (23 reels), and personal papers (3 reels).

Note: This finding aid contains a reel list. Also included in the collection is a guide to the collection, titled, "The Collis P. Huntington Papers, 1856-1901: A Guide to the Microfilm Edition" by the Microfilming Corporation of America, which delves more deeply into the Series contained in the collection and additional background information.

C. P. Huntington



Now, through the microfilm edition of this unique collection, students, scholars and researchers everywhere can explore-in depth-a broad range of topics in the areas of 19th-century business, industry, transportation, labor and politics. Plus, the almost day-to-day business dealings of a premier railroad financier responsible for the completion of the western section of the first transcontinental railroad in the United States-Collis P. Huntington.

THE COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON PAPERS, 1850-1890

More than 65,000 items from railroad officials, (financiers, industrialists, bankers, lawyers, lobbyists and congressmen. Plus, 222 letterpress copy books of outgoing correspondence never before available to researchers!

The Collis P. Huntington Papers from the George Arents Research Library at Syracuse University is recognized as a most significant source for in-depth scholarly research into the career of a leading 19th-century entrepreneur.

Now this comprehensive collection is widely available to researchers and scholars of 19th-century American economics, business, transportation, labor and political history.

The business correspondence and legal and financial files in the *Huntington Papers* offer documentation for a wide range of research possibilities including:

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

... the panic of 1873 ... the growth of California ... the opening of cross-country trade with the completion of the transcontinental railroad ... the development and growth of the mining industry and of the construction camps that became major American cities.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

It was called the most "colossal and daring enterprise in American history"-the construction of the transcontinental railroad ... firsthand accounts of the Central Pacific's race to complete its 1,086 miles of railroad to join with the Union Pacific in 1869 at Promontory, Utah ... the engineering feats ... the day-to-day financing ... the price of labor ... the high cost of political dealing to acquire land grants ... the driving of the Golden Spike and the birth of the industrial republic.

HUNTINGTON AND THE "BIG FOUR"

In addition to Huntington, three of the most influential men of their time were responsible for the Central Pacific's reaching its goal:

Mark Hopkins-Huntington's hardware business partner and later in charge of the day-to-day business of building the railroad.

Leland Stanford-from grocer to governor of California and the Central Pacific's first president.

Charles Crocker-the dry-goods merchant eventually the "construction boss" of the railroad and largely responsible for bringing 8,000 Chinese laborers from Canton to complete the project.

With Huntington managing the railroad affairs on the East Coast and the other three supervising activities in the West, an almost daily correspondence developed, spanning more than 30 years.

This rich correspondence offers insight into popular criticism that the "Big Four" were out for their own interests or, as Chief Engineer Theodore Judas said, "to maximize construction profits even at the cost of sound engineering."

The Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads link the nation, May 10, 1869.

Photograph courtesy of Stanford University Archives.

19TH-CENTURY POLITICS

Correspondence between Huntington and the other members of the "Big Four" often deals with the political matters of the day, particularly the use made of politicians to obtain land grants and bonds necessary to complete the more than 1,000 miles of railway.

Huntington was open about his relationship with Congressmen and Senators.

In November of 1867 he wrote to Hopkins:

"I returned from Washington this morning. While there, I called on all the California members (Congress). Of course Conness, Cole and Higby are all right, but Axtell was all wrong and Johnson, so, so, but I have little fear that I can control them both."

In a letter dated February of the following year Huntington wrote of Axtell . . .

"Axtell is the best man that we have ever had from California. I have employed him as our attorney (confidential). I had a long sitting with him . . . he will (delete) Johnson, I think, without much trouble."

Also to be traced through the *Huntington Papers* are the founding and development of the Republican Party of California, the career of Governor Stanford, 19th-century lobbying efforts, and state and national elections for more than 30 years.

ECONOMICS, FINANCES AND LEGAL EMBROILMENTS

Comprehensive legal and financial files provide an unequalled account of 19th-century business and finance as well as an overall picture of the American economy from 1863-1901.

There are also significant materials concerning Huntington's personal and corporate finances and real estate dealings.

Correspondence to and from Huntington presents yet another — more personal — view of business and finances with commentary on the civil suits and governmental hearings in which the "Big Four" were involved. The latter, which center around the alleged misapplication of funds received from Congress, were in Huntington's words, "unproved assaults."

AN AMERICAN PHILANTHROPIST

His international reputation as a multi-millionaire railroad magnate and art connoisseur caused Huntington to receive thousands of letters from individuals, charities and institutions — all seeking funds.

In some instances Huntington responded with financial aid, particularly for the education of black students in the South.

Scholars will now have an opportunity, through this microform collection, to assess Huntington's probable motivations for his contributions as well as the types of charities he selected.

THE MANY DIRECTIONS OF THE RAILROAD MAGNATE'S CAREER

Once the transcontinental railroad was completed Huntington acquired new interests — land companies, steamship lines, the Chesapeake Dry Dock Construction Company and the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Construction Company.

Evaluations in the late 1890's showed that Huntington's real estate holdings in New York City were worth \$3 million; in California, more than \$2 million; and the Old Dominion Land Company, organized to develop Newport News and the surrounding country, at \$2 million.

The Chesapeake and Ohio system railroad, which totaled about 2,592 miles, represented a capital value of about \$168,654,860. The Southern Pacific Company's system, which consisted of 26 distinct corporations, ran about



8,771 miles of rail and 3,565 miles of water lines, totaling about \$621,678,718.

Mexican and Guatemalan rail lines ran about 113 miles and were valued at \$42,410,200; and the Newport News, Va. shipyard and other industrial enterprises in Mexico represented a capital of \$13,565,000.

At his death, Huntington left a personal estate estimated at \$27 million.

Accounts of these acquisitions are included in the microfilm edition of Huntington's legal and financial files.

HUNTINGTON-AN INTERNATIONAL FIGURE

Huntington's dreams to obtain land and build railroads outside of the United States prompted correspondence with many prominent world figures. Included in the microfilm collection are his dealings with Sir William MacKinnon, head of the British Imperial East Africa Company and Francis W. Fox who added to Huntington's enthusiasm for a railway in the Congo. Also included is correspondence related to this interest in Mexican railways.

The microfilm edition of the *CoUis P. Huntington Papers* has been divided into these four series:

- Series I: Incoming Correspondence, 1856-1904
- Series II: Letterpress Copy Books, 1868-1901
- Series III: Legal and Financial Records, 1797-1901
- Series IV: Personal Papers, 1862-1901

SERIES I: INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, 1856-1904

The Incoming Correspondence represents the largest part of the collection with more than 65,000 items-letters, postcards, telegraph tapes and printed notices.

Early correspondence traces the building of the transcontinental railroad after the Central Pacific started construction. There is an almost daily record of cost estimates and time schedules in the race to completion and much discussion on land grant provisions needed to continue construction.

The drive for Goat Island

Also included in the correspondence from the 1860's is the groundwork laid by Huntington to acquire Goat Island in San Francisco Bay as the western terminus for his railroad. This would have opened up an international freight trade for Huntington, but defeat of a congressional bill in 1873 ended his years of planning.

For ten years following the completion of the railroad in 1869, a main topic of correspondence concerns government payments for transportation of mail and troops-with Huntington and his associates continually devising new ways to get more money from the government for their services.

The demands of business fame

Huntington's reputation as a railroad magnate made him the target for requests for railroad passes, donations for institutions and employment in one of his many railroad companies. While Huntington did not honor most of these requests, he did contribute to the cause of educating black Americans and was responsible for continuing the efforts of the Hampton Normal and Agriculture Institute in Virginia. He also assisted one of Hampton's graduates, Booker T. Washington, in establishing the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

Scandals ... dealing with Jay Gould ... legal hassles

Throughout his career, Huntington, his companies and his associates came under fire.



Huntington in his office in the mid-1890's.

Huntington details construction problems and costs, labor conflicts and the political skill involved in paving the way for the railroad through government land grants.

Firsthand accounts of the race to Promontory

No historical account of the building of the transcontinental railroad can equal witnessing the race against the Union Pacific as told by Huntington to his associates. In his drive to have his railroad reach Promontory, Utah by 1869, and to acquire rich coal deposits along the route, Huntington urged Crocker to "go in for quantity instead of quality."

Additional correspondence on business

The microfilm edition of the outgoing correspondence also includes a wealth of primal resource information on the business dealings of the Contract and Building Company, the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company and the Elizabethtown, Lexington and Big Sandy Railroad Company.

SERIES III: LEGAL AND FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1797-1901

This series includes material primarily from the years 1863-1901, and is divided into two sub-series,;

- A. Corporate. 1869-1900-financial and business records arranged alphabetically by company name.
- B. Personal, 1797-1901
 - 1. Account Books, 1871-1898-Huntington's financial dealings.
 - 2. Civil Suits. 1879-1897 — of particular importance are the 24 printed volumes of daily transcripts in the suit brought against the Central Pacific by Mrs. David Colton-Colton v. Stanford .

The information contained in these volumes allows researchers of legal history to observe court procedures and testimony in a civil suit filed against a major corporation in 1882.

Mrs. Colton believed that Central Pacific had swindled her out of company securities owned by her late husband. Although she lost her case, she gave ammunition to Huntington's adversaries by reading into the court record personal letters from Huntington to Colton.

Also included is the court record and supporting defense material in the case of Luybridge v. Stanford, a civil suit over a patent design for photographic equipment.

- C. Investment Ledgers, 1876-1899
- D. Bills and Receipts, 1863-1900
- E. Real Estate Records, 1797-1912 — Huntington's personal property records include materials dealing with the purchase and furnishing of the Nob Hill home of D.D. Colton, as well as documents relating to the design, construction, decoration, furnishing and maintenance of Huntington's mansion on West 57th Street in New York City.
- The collection also contains information on the remodeling of Huntington's Throgs Neck home, and the drawings and construction of a chapel in Harwington, Connecticut in memory of Huntington's mother.
- F. Statements of Accounts, 1869-1900-Huntington's business enterprises and his accounts with his major business partners.
- G. Miscellaneous, 1872-1898 — includes Huntington's will.

SERIES IV: PERSONAL PAPERS, 1862-1901

Printed materials include transcriptions of Congressional and Railway Commission hear-

ings. There is an open letter on the Texas Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads and two pamphlets containing copies of the Huntington-Colton correspondence and an article prepared by one of Huntington's lobbyists on railroad land grants.

Of primary importance are the four printed volumes of Huntington's personal correspondence with Hopkins, Stanford, Crocker and Colton included in this series. These volumes, which have been unavailable to researchers, cover correspondence for the years 1867-1879, and provide additional insight into Huntington's business affairs.

Photographs, biographical information, memorabilia, news clippings, and printed material on Huntington's business and philanthropic interests are also included in this series.

ACCESS TO THE MICROFILM EDITION

Maximum access to the collection is provided through a printed *Guide*. *The Collis P. Huntington Papers, 1856-1901: A Guide to the Microfilm Edition*, (Sanford, N.C.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1979) ISBN 0-667-00570-6.

The *Guide* is provided free with the purchase of the collection and includes a biographical sketch, a description of the arrangement and contents of the collection, a complete reel list and an index of important correspondence.

Access to the *Letterpress Copy Books* in Series I is provided by an index at the beginning of most of the 259 volumes.

PRICE:

The Collis P. Huntington Papers, 1856-1901 is available on 114 reels of 35mm silver halide microfilm, together with the printed *Guide* for the special pre-publication price of \$2,900 until October 31, 1979. Thereafter,

the price is \$3,500. *Guides* may be purchased separately for \$50.

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