

Guide to the Wendell W. Mischler Papers

MS 1445



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan and Tony Lavelle

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1445

CREATOR: Mischler, Wendell W., 1870-

TITLE: Wendell W. Mischler papers

DATES: 1894-1930

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.5 linear feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, memorabilia, and photographs which document the personal life of Wendell W. Mischler and his professional activities as William Howard Taft's private secretary. The bulk of the correspondence is between Mischler and his wife and chronicles Taft's engagements, domestic management, office practices, and social affairs, from 1913 to 1921, when Taft lived in New Haven, Connecticut, and taught at the Yale University Law School.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1445>

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.1445>.

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, 1986.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Wendell W. Mischler Papers (MS 1445). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Wendell W. Mischler was born in 1870, in Ripley, Ohio. In 1896 he married Marie Gertrude Moore of Hot Springs, Arkansas. Mischler worked in the offices of the War Department in Washington, D.C. Through his work at the War Department, Mischler became acquainted with William Howard Taft, the secretary of war, who asked him to join his confidential staff as his private secretary.

Mischler remained as Taft's private secretary when Taft became president in 1909 and lived in New Haven, Connecticut, during the years Taft taught in the Yale University Law School, 1913-1921. Mischler accompanied Taft on vacations and speaking tours, taking charge of numerous details involved on these trips. Mischler returned to Washington, D.C. in 1921 when Taft was named chief justice of the United States Supreme Court and served Taft until Taft's death in 1930.

Mischler then served as private secretary to Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes. When Hughes retired from the court in 1940, Mischler also retired. He died in the early 1950s.

Scope and Contents

The Wendell W. Mischler Papers consist of correspondence, memorabilia, and photographs, which document the personal life and professional activities of Wendell W. Mischler during the years he served as William Howard Taft's private secretary. While the papers date from 1894 to 1930, the bulk of the material concerns Mischler's service to Taft from his retirement as president and until his appointment as chief justice of the United States Supreme Court (1913-1921). During this time Taft taught at the Yale University Law School, and Mischler resided in New Haven, Connecticut.

Because Mischler and his wife were separated for long periods of time, during Taft's numerous lecture tours across the country and the Taft family's extended summer vacations in Pointe-au-Pic, Canada, or when Marie Mischler was called to attend family members in Arkansas and Colorado, these papers include extensive files of exchanges between husband and wife. For some periods there are daily letters from Mischler to his wife. Mrs. Mischler's letters are less numerous and many of them remain in the files of undated letters in folders 35-38.

While Mischler seldom discusses politics in these exchanges, the letters constitute a journal of Taft's lecture engagements and provide a view of Taft family business, domestic management, office practices, and social affairs at Yale and in New Haven. Mischler often mentions plays and concerts he attends. The exchanges between husband and wife relate to family business, particularly the health of Mrs. Mischler, who spent some time in a sanitarium in Washington, D.C., family living arrangements and finances, and the activities of Mr. Mischler's niece, Lorena Zeller, who was pursuing a musical career in New York.

The papers include only a few items autographed by Taft and his wife. These are in folders 41 and 42. The papers also include photographs of Taft and his family as well as invitations to Taft family weddings.

The papers also include items of family memorabilia, such as programs from Lorena Zeller's concerts, writings by Marie Mischler, and travel brochures. Box four contains numerous family photographs.

Yale University Library acquired the Mischler Papers in 1986. A niece of Marie Mischler, who received the papers after her aunt's death, had previously held the papers. Included in the papers are a few items related to Taft, which are addressed to Emory Moore, father of the previous owner and brother of Mrs. Mischler.

Collection Contents

Correspondence		
b. 1, f. 1	Family	1894-1898
b. 1, f. 2	Family	1903-1908
b. 1, f. 3	Family	1909-1912
b. 1, f. 4 - 5	Family	1913
b. 1, f. 6 - 7	Family	1914
b. 1, f. 8 - 9	Family	1915
b. 1, f. 10 - 11	Family	1916
b. 1, f. 12 - 16	Family	1917 January- November
b. 2, f. 17	Family	1917 December [1917?]
b. 2, f. 18	Family	1918
b. 2, f. 19 - 20	Family	1919
b. 2, f. 21 - 26	Family	1920
b. 2, f. 27 - 29	Family	1921 January- March
b. 3, f. 30	Family	1921 April- December
b. 3, f. 31	Family	1922-1924
b. 3, f. 32	Family	1925
b. 3, f. 33 - 34	Family	1926-1928
b. 3, f. 35 - 38	Family	undated
Public		
b. 3, f. 39	A-R	1912-1930, undated
b. 3, f. 40	S-Z, unidentified	1913-1930, undated
b. 3, f. 41	Taft, Helen Herron	undated
b. 3, f. 42	Taft, William Howard	1912-1929
b. 3, f. 43	Memorabilia	1896-1920, undated

Photographs

b. 4, f. 44 - 46	Mischler, Marie Moore	1898-1903, undated
b. 4, f. 47 - 48	Mischler, Wendell	1907-1922, undated
b. 4, f. 49	Mischler, Marie and Wendell	undated
b. 4, f. 50	Taft, W.H. and family	1912-1927
b. 4, f. 51	Zeller, Ada and Loren	1913-1915, undated
b. 4, f. 52	Miscellaneous	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

Domestic relations
Presidents -- United States

Geographic Names

New Haven (Conn.)

Occupations

Private secretaries

Names

Mischler, Wendell W., 1870-
Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930