Collection 3084

Ranie Dayton McKean Papers
1872-1887
1 box (3 folders), 0.2 lin. feet

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Processed by: Tory Kline and Rachel Moskowitz
Processing Completed: April 2007
Restrictions: None
Abstract
Urania “Ranie” (Dayton) McKean was born in 1856 to Frederick and Sophronia (Stone) Dayton of Fairdale, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. Ranie attended Mansfield State Normal School in Mansfield, Tioga County, Pennsylvania. On December 7, 1876, Ranie married lumber merchant and tanner Charles B. McKean. The collection includes Ranie's correspondence with members of her family during both her years at school and her marriage to Charles McKean.

Background note
Urania “Ranie” (Dayton) McKean was born in 1856 to Frederick and Sophronia (Stone) Dayton. Her mother, Sophronia, was born on August 23, 1827, to Judson and Polly (Turrell) Stone in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. Her father, Frederick, was born in 1823 and raised in Connecticut. Frederick and Sophronia were married on September 22, 1845, and had four children who reached adulthood: Canfield, Ranie, Clark, and Zaidee.

During Ranie's adolescence, her parents decided to send her to Mansfield State Normal School in Mansfield, Pennsylvania, to study music education. Though she entered school with the intention of becoming a music teacher, Ranie preferred the social aspects of school and frequently struggled academically. Despite this, Ranie graduated from Mansfield in 1873. Ranie met her future husband, lumber merchant and tanner Charles B. McKean (b. 1851), while at school, and in 1876 the two were married.

Upon their marriage, Ranie moved from her parents' home in Susquehanna County, to Charles’s family-owned tannery in Beech Creek, Clinton County, Pennsylvania. When their first son, Dayton, was born in 1877, Ranie transformed from young socialite to doting wife and mother. She also helped Charles manage his tanning business.

In 1878, Ranie’s sister, Zaidee (b. 1860), moved into their Beech Creek home while attending nearby Lock Haven Normal School. After Zaidee married Milton E. Birchard in 1879 and the McKean family sold the Beech Creek Tannery, Ranie and Charles moved to Watsontown, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. There Charles opened
another tannery, McKean Brothers. After several years in Watsontown, Ranie and Charles moved once more, to Irvona, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania.

Scope & content
This small collection contains miscellaneous correspondence between Ranie Dayton McKean and her family spanning the years 1872-1887. Many of the letters are accompanied by the original envelopes. The letters largely fall into two periods of Ranie’s life: her time spent as a music student at Mansfield State Normal School and her marriage to tanner Charles B. McKean. The majority of the letters were written to or by Ranie’s mother, Sophronia, or sister, Zaidee.

Ranie’s early letters document the life of a nineteenth-century student. They offer a sense of the difficulties faced settling into a new environment, living away from home and family, and financial troubles. Though Ranie asked her parents for money for a variety of reasons, the most pressing request was for help making a school payment so she could continue attending classes.

Ranie also wrote to her parents about the many social gatherings she attended and the academic setbacks they often caused. Though her parents wished she would take her studies more seriously, Ranie was more interested in the social aspects of school. Ranie may have been introduced to Charles McKean at one of these gatherings. Eventually the two were married.

The majority of the letters are from after Ranie married to Charles. Shortly after their wedding, Ranie wrote a series of letters to her mother and sister describing her new home and Charles's family. She described the beautiful valley in which she lived, recent births and deaths in the McKean family, and the sale of the family tannery.

After a few financial setbacks early in her marriage, the rest of Ranie’s letters speak almost exclusively of the joys of being both a wife and mother. In every letter Ranie updated her parents and siblings on the daily activities of her growing family. The last few letters discuss their move from Beech Creek to Watsontown and finally to Irvona, and their attempts to build tannery businesses in each town.
Separation report
None.

Related materials
None.

Bibliography


Subjects
Clearfield County (Pa.) – History – 19th Century
Clinton County (Pa.) – History – 19th Century
Mansfield State Normal School
Mansfield (Pa.) – History – 19th Century
Marriage – Partnership
Marriage – Pennsylvania – History – 19th century
Susquehanna County (Pa.) – History – 19th Century
Watsontown (Pa.) – History – 19th Century
Women – Education – Pennsylvania – History – 19th Century
Women – Pennsylvania – History

Birchard, Milton E.
Dayton, Frederick, b. 1823
Dayton, Sophronia (Stone), b. 1827
Dayton, Zaidee, b. 1860
McKean, Charles B., b. 1851
McKean, Dayton, b. 1877
McKean, Urania (Ranie) Dayton, b. 1856
Stone, Judson
Stone, Polly (Turrell)
Administrative Information

Restrictions
None.

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None.

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Processing note
Processed by Tory Kline, 2006 and completed by Rachel Moskowitz, 2007.
### Box and folder listing

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