



The Historical  
Society of  
Pennsylvania

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

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### 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 Watsonstown, 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 Watsonstown and finally to Irvona, and their attempts to build tannery businesses in each town.

## Separation report

None.

## Related materials

None.

## Bibliography

Family Search. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (accessed 18 October 2006).

Tice, Joyce M. "Alumni of Mansfield State Normal School." *Tri-Counties Genealogy & History*. 2 Oct. 2002, 1 Nov. 2006. [www.rootsweb.com/~srgp/souvenir/msns/alum1872.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~srgp/souvenir/msns/alum1872.htm).

## Subjects

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

### **Acquisition information**

Purchased, 2005.

Accession number 2005.014c.

### **Alternative format**

None.

### **Preferred Citation**

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### **Processing note**

Processed by Tory Kline, 2006 and completed by Rachel Moskowitz, 2007.

## Box and folder listing

<b>Folder title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Personal Correspondence	1872-1877	28 items	1	1
Personal Correspondence	1878-1887	33 items	1	2
Personal Correspondence (fragments and envelopes)	1881, n.d.	11 items	1	3