

Western Historical Manuscript Collection
Kansas City

KC263 – Katharine Wright Haskell (1874 – 1929) Papers, 1922-1928 (55 folders)

Provenance:

These letters were received as accession number 610kc from Mrs. Henry C. Haskell, the widow of Henry C. Haskell, stepson of Katharine Wright Haskell. Mrs. Henry C. Haskell loaned this material to Western Historical Manuscript Collection for microfilming on 20 October 1990.

Biography:

Katharine Wright was born in Dayton, Ohio on August 19, 1874, the last child and only daughter of Bishop and Mrs. Milton Wright of the United Brethren Church. Her four older brothers included Wilbur and Orville Wright, the first men to accomplish powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17, 1903. Katharine graduated from Oberlin College of Ohio in 1898 and after, taught Latin at Steele high school in Dayton and helped her brothers raise money for their famous project. Giving speeches and writing letters on behalf of the airplane experiment, Katharine was known to have been as necessary to the success of the flight at Kitty Hawk as were her brothers. Always maintaining close ties with her alma mater, she was elected to the Board of Trustees of Oberlin College. Katharine had met and become friends with Henry Haskell and with Isabel Cummings while the three were students at Oberlin College. Henry and Isabel were married in 1901. The couple were frequent guests at the Wright home in Dayton over the years, and when Isabel died in 1923, Henry resumed a correspondence with Katharine. In time, a romance developed.

Wilbur, Orville and Katharine, each unmarried, lived together in Dayton. Eventually Orville had become dependent upon his sister's running of their home, especially after Wilbur's death in 1912. Katharine was well aware that her brother depended upon her in many ways and that her romantic relationship with Henry Haskell would greatly distress Orville. She kept the true nature of the involvement a secret from Orville and from most of their friends for some time. However, when Henry and Katharine finally informed Orville of their plans, he was very opposed to the marriage and did not attend or acknowledge the ceremony. On November 20, 1926, at Oberlin College, Katharine Wright married Henry J. Haskell of Kansas City, Missouri, an editor for the Kansas City Star. The couple lived in Kansas City where Katharine died in March 1929 of complications of pneumonia. It has been reported that Orville, whom she had not seen from the time of her marriage, visited her at her deathbed. She is buried in Dayton. Mr. Haskell donated a fountain to Oberlin College in her honor.

Description of the Papers:

The material consists mainly of correspondence from Katharine Wright to Henry J. Haskell. In the beginning, the correspondence was infrequent, but as the friendship grew into a romance, Katharine Wright wrote daily and sometimes three and four letters per day.

Consequently, the later folders will include many letters. Also included are letters to Mr. Haskell from other friends, correspondence between Henry C. Haskell and a researcher in the 1970's, articles, clippings and photographs.

There are six folders of letters (f. 41-46) which were undated by Miss Wright. Attempts were made to date these letters and when possible, tentatively dates have been marked at the top, and they have been placed in the appropriate folder. However, all dates are not verified and can be used only as reference by the researcher. The rest of the undated letters have been left in the order in which they were received from the Haskell family and have been numbered in sequence. It can be noted that most of the undated letters seem to have been written after the bulk of the dated correspondence, and therefore have been placed behind them in the folder order. The numbering system at the top of the dated letters is as follows: Date of letter; sequential number of letter written on that date; page number; side of page. Example: 3 September 1924 1/2B . . . The second side of the second page of the first letter written on September 3, 1925.

Inventory:

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| Folder 1. | Biographical articles, clippings. |
| Folder 2. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: January 6, 1922 – August 21, 1922. |
| Folder 3. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: May 24, 1923 – December 26, 1923. |
| Folder 4. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: January 3, 1924 – February 25, 1924. |
| Folder 5. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: April 3, 1924 – May 28, 1924. |
| Folder 6. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: July 15, 1924 – September 25, 1924. |
| Folder 7. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: October 10, 1924 – November 25, 1924.
Included in this folder is a letter in which Miss Wright discusses her views on women's suffrage. |
| Folder 8. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: December 2, 1924 – December 31, 1924. |
| Folder 9. | Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: January 5, 1925 – February 27, 1925. |

- Folder 10. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: March 5, 1925 – May 14, 1925.
- Folder 11. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: May 18, 1925 – May 31, 1925.
- Folder 12. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: June 1, 1925 – June 15, 1925.
- Folder 13. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: June 19, 1925 - June 29, 1925.
- Folder 14. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: July 1, 1925 – July 15, 1925.
- Folder 15. *(not listed in finding aid)*
- Folder 16. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: August 18, 1925 – August 31, 1925.
- Folder 17. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: September 1, 1925 – September 13, 1925.
- Folder 18. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: September 16, 1925 – September 29, 1925.
- Folder 19. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: October 1, 1925 – October 15, 1925.
- Folder 20. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: October 16, 1925 – October 25, 1925.
- Folder 21. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: November 2, 1925 – November 14, 1925.
- Folder 22. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: November 16, 1925 – November 30, 1925.
- Folder 23. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: December 12, 1925 – December 21, 1925.
- Folder 24. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: January 12, 1926 – January 16, 1926.
- Folder 25. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: January 17, 1926 – January 31, 1926.

- Folder 26. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: February 1, 1926 – February 10, 1926.
- Folder 27. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: February 11, 1926 – February 18, 1926.
- Folder 28. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: February 19, 1926 – February 28, 1926.
- Folder 29. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: March 1, 1926 – March 7, 1926.
- Folder 30. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: March 8, 1926 – March 14, 1926.
- Folder 31. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: March 15, 1926 – March 31, 1926.
- Folder 32. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: April 1, 1926 – April 8, 1926.
- Folder 33. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: April 9, 1926 – April 13, 1926.
- Folder 34. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: April 14, 1926 – April 20, 1926.
- Folder 35. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: April 22, 1926 – April 30, 1926.
- Folder 36. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: May 1, 1926 – May 7, 1926.
- Folder 37. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: May 8, 1926 – May 19, 1926. Included in this folder is a letter in which Miss Wright discussed Orville's objections to the marriage of Katharine and Henry.
- Folder 38. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: June 8, 1926 – June 14, 1926.
- Folder 39. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: July 2, 1926 – July 28, 1926.
- Folder 40. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: September 19, 1926 – November 13, 1926. Included in this folder are five letters which were previously undated. The letters have been given dates based on research but are not verified. Two of the letters discuss Orville's reaction to the wedding plans.

- Folder 41. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: Undated.
The undated correspondence was left in the order in which it had been placed by the Haskell family.
- Folder 42. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: Undated.
- Folder 43. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: Undated.
- Folder 44. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: Undated.
- Folder 45. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: Undated.
- Folder 46. Correspondence. K. Wright to H.J. Haskell: Undated.
- Folder 47. Telegraph message and transcript.
This handwritten message is most probably from Henry J. Haskell to Katharine Wright.
- Folder 48. Correspondence. R.H.S. [Stetson?] to H.J. Haskell.
These letters are partially written in a form of speed writing.
- Folder 49. Correspondence. Louis [Lord?] to Harry [H.J.Haskell]
- Folder 50. Correspondence. K. Wright Haskell to Henry C. Haskell.
- Folder 51. Correspondence. Henry C. Haskell and John B. Crane – 1977.
- Folder 52. Telegrams, wires.
- Folder 53. Correspondence. Copeland & Thompson, Inc. to Mrs. Henry J. Haskell.
- Folder 54. Clippings.
- Folder 55. Photographs.

TRACINGS:

Haskell, Henry C. 1902-1981
Haskell, Henry J. 1874 – 1952
Kansas City Star
Oberlin College
Women's rights
Wright, Katharine.
Wright, Orville. 1871 - 1948