

Collection #
SC 3017

AYRES FAMILY LETTERS, 1894 AND 1919

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Processed by

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May 2014

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1894 and 1919

PROVENANCE: Elise "Cotton" Ayres Hanley, Indianapolis

RESTRICTIONS: None

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REPRODUCTION
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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS: Lyman S. Ayres Papers. Manuscript Collection: SC 2407; L.S.
Ayres Co. Records. Manuscript Collection: M 616

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 2007.0281

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The son of farmers, Lyman S. Ayres was born in Tioga, New York in 1824. As a young man he worked as a traveling peddler, eventually buying a general store in Chardon, Ohio. He moved to Geneva, New York in 1864, where he co-owned Ayres and Thomas, a local merchandising firm. His connections to Indianapolis began in 1872 when he bought controlling interest in the Trade Palace, a store located on West Washington Street in downtown Indianapolis. In 1874 he obtained full ownership and renamed the store "L. S. Ayres & Co." A year later Ayres moved to the city, where he remained until his death in 1896. Ayres married Helen Murray in 1862 and had three children: Frederic M. Ayres, Emma Ayres Wheelock, and Katherine Ayres Williams Smitheram.

Frederic M. Ayres was born in 1872 in Geneva, New York. He assumed the role of company president upon his father's death, and oversaw several expansions of the downtown store. Ayres and his wife Alma Hoegh Ayres were involved in the Indianapolis chapter of the American Red Cross throughout their lives, and during the First World War he traveled to Paris to support Red Cross operations in Europe. He died in 1940. The Ayreses had three children: Lyman S. Ayres (Jr.), Frederic M. Ayres (Jr.), and Anne Ayres Taylor.

Lyman S. Ayres, Jr. was born Lyman Hoegh Ayres in Indianapolis in 1908, but due to the difficult pronunciation of his middle name, he changed it to S at the age of 21. He attended Yale University and entered the family business upon his graduation in 1930. After his father's death in 1940 he was elected vice president of L. S. Ayres & Co. A year later, he built the historic Twin Oaks home. He died in 1996. Ayres married Isabel Ferguson in 1934, and had several children, including Elise "Cotton" Ayres Hanley.

Sources:

Chomel, Marie Cecile. *A Red Cross Chapter at Work*. Hollenbeck Press, 1920.

Turchi, Kenneth L. *L. S. Ayres and Company: The Store at the Crossroads of America*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2012.

Lyman S. Ayres Papers Collection Guide. Manuscript Collection, SC 2407

"Theodore B. Griffith Named L. S. Ayres & Co. President; Lyman S. Ayres, F. M. Ayres Jr., Named Vice-Presidents." *Indianapolis Star* 15 June 1940.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This short collection consists of one manuscript folder containing two letters. Lyman S. Ayres (1824-1896) wrote the first letter to his son Frederic M. Ayres on November 22, 1894. It mentions Frederic's arrival in New York and the recent financial successes of the family business. Frederic M. Ayres (1872-1940) wrote the second letter on Red Cross stationery to his son Lyman H. Ayres (later Lyman S. Ayres) on July 22, 1919. It describes Frederic's leisure activities in Paris and greetings for various family members back in the United States.

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CONTAINER

Folder 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 3017).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.