

H. L. Loucks Correspondence with R. F. Pettigrew

Collection Summary

Identifier: MA 23

Title: H. Loucks Correspondence with R. F. Pettigrew

Dates: 1914-1916

Extent: 0.42 linear feet (1 document case)

Creator:

Language: English

Repository: South Dakota State University Archives & Special Collections, University Station, Box 2115, 1300 North Campus Drive, Brookings, South Dakota, 57007

Access Note: Open. Materials must be used in-house and do not circulate.

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Abstract

Henry Langford Loucks (1846–1928) and Richard F. Pettigrew (1848–1926) were prominent figures in the agrarian, populist, and progressive movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Loucks, a farmer, organizer, publisher, and political reformer, played a central role in the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist Party, advocating cooperative economics, direct democracy, and farmer-led reform in South Dakota and nationally. Pettigrew, a lawyer, territorial legislator, and U.S. Senator from South Dakota, was instrumental in securing statehood and later emerged as a leading critic of corporate power and political conservatism within the Republican Party. The collection documents correspondence between Loucks and Pettigrew from 1914 to 1916, along with related writings and photographs, illuminating their shared commitment to progressive reform and

offering valuable insight into early twentieth-century political discourse surrounding agriculture, economic justice, and democratic governance.

Biography

H. L. Loucks

Henry Langford Loucks was born on May 24, 1846, in Hull, Ontario, Canada, to William J. and Anna (York) Loucks. Educated in Canadian common schools, he married Florence Isabel McCraney on May 22, 1878, in Oakville, Ontario. They had seven children, four of whom—Perry, Anna, Elizabeth, and Daniel—survived to adulthood.

Loucks immigrated to the United States, operating mercantile businesses in Michigan and Missouri before settling on a government homestead near Clear Lake in Deuel County, Dakota Territory, in 1884. Arriving as the regional economic boom declined, he experienced firsthand the challenges facing farmers. In response, he organized a “farmer’s club,” which evolved into the Territorial Alliance and affiliated with the National Farmers’ Alliance in 1885. As its president, Loucks promoted cooperative ventures such as insurance and merchandising enterprises and founded *The Dakota Ruralist*, a newspaper that advanced his reform ideas for two decades.

Initially active in the Republican Party, Loucks and his associates sought to achieve reform from within. In 1890, he was nominated for governor at a joint convention of the Knights of Labor and the state Farmers’ Alliance. Although he lost the election, his efforts helped consolidate support for a new political movement—the Populist Party. He presided over its first national convention in 1892 and that same year became president of the National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union. A strong proponent of direct democracy, Loucks was instrumental in securing adoption of the initiative and referendum process in South Dakota in 1898.

Loucks wrote extensively on political and economic reform. His publications include *The New Monetary System* (1893), *Government Ownership of Railroads and Telegraphs* (1894), and *The Great Conspiracy of the House of Morgan and How to Defeat It* (1916). Though he lived for many years in Watertown, South Dakota, he died in Clear Lake on December 29, 1928.

R. F. Pettigrew

Richard Franklin Pettigrew was a U.S. Delegate from the Dakota Territory and later a U.S. Senator from South Dakota. Born in Ludlow, Windsor County, Vermont, on July 23, 1848, he

moved with his family to Wisconsin in 1854. He attended public schools and Evansville Academy before enrolling at Beloit College in 1864. After a year of teaching and studying law in Iowa, he entered the law department of the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1867.

In 1869, Pettigrew moved to Dakota Territory as part of a U.S. deputy surveyor team. He settled in Sioux Falls, where he was admitted to the bar around 1871 and practiced law while engaging in surveying and real estate. His political career began with service in the Dakota Territorial House of Representatives in 1872, followed by terms in the Territorial Council in 1877 and 1879.

Pettigrew was elected as a Republican Delegate to the Forty-seventh Congress (1881–1883) but was unsuccessful in his bid for reelection in 1882. He returned to the Territorial Council in 1885, continuing his involvement in legislative affairs. Pettigrew later played a crucial role in securing statehood for South Dakota and went on to serve as one of its first U.S. Senators.

A strong advocate for progressive and populist policies, Pettigrew eventually broke with the Republican Party, aligning himself with the Populist movement and advocating for economic reform and government regulation of monopolies. His political career and writings reflected his commitment to challenging corporate power and advancing policies to benefit the working class and farmers.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of correspondence between Henry Langford Loucks and Richard F. Pettigrew from 1914 to 1916, primarily discussing political issues related to the progressive movement in early 20th-century America. Loucks' letters to Pettigrew span from November 1914 through July 1916, while Pettigrew's responses cover a similar period. In addition to the correspondence, the collection includes undated photographs, editorials authored by Loucks, and a 1917 pamphlet titled *Will the Farmer be the "Goat" Once More?*, which addresses agricultural and economic concerns. The materials provide insight into the political discourse and reform efforts of the time.

Related Materials

H.L. Loucks Bibliography

Addresses

[Watertown?, S.D.: s.n., between 1910 and 1930].

Call number: SD Collection: S561.5 .L68

Government Ownership of Railroads and Telegraph, as Advocated by the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union

Huron, S.D.: s.n., 1893.

Call number: Books/Upper Level: HE1081.L6

The Great Conspiracy of the House of Morgan and How to Defeat It

[Watertown, S.D.: H. L. Loucks], c1916.

Call number: Books/Upper Level: HG2481.L6g

The Great Conspiracy of the House of Morgan Exposed and How to Defeat It

[Watertown, S.D.: The Author], c1916.

Call number: Books/Upper Level: HG2481.L6g2

How to Restore and Maintain Our Government Bonds at Par

[Watertown, S.D.: The Author], c1921.

Call number: Books/Upper Level: HJ8117.L84

The Mythical Gold Base: Or Standard of the Federal Reserve System Compared with Our Farmers' Land Loan and Sub-Treasury Plan

[Watertown, S.D.: American Honest Money League, 1922].

Call number: SD Collection: HG2565.L6

The New Monetary System as Advocated by the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union

Aberdeen, S.D.: Ruralist Quarterly, 1895.

Call number: Books/Upper Level: HG529.L6 1895

"Our Daily Bread" Must Be Freed from the Greed of Private Monopoly

[Watertown, S.D.: The Author], c1919.

Call number: Books/Upper Level: HD9036.L7

Richard F. Pettigrew

Triumphant Plutocracy: The Story of American Public Life from 1870 to 1920
Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1922.
Call number: E661.P4t

The Course of Empire: An Official Record
New York: Boni & Liveright, 1920.
Call number: E661.P4c

Imperial Washington: The Story of American Public Life from 1870 to 1920
Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1922.
Call number: E661.P53

Access Points

Subjects

- Monopolies
- Politics and government
- Progressivism (United States politics)

Names

- Loucks, Henry L. (Henry Langford) 1846-1928
- Pettigrew, Richard F. (Richard Franklin) 1848-1926

Places

- South Dakota
 - United States--Dakota Territory
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Container List

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew	undated
1	2	H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew	1914
1	3	H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew	1915
1	4	H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew	1916
1	5	R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks	undated
1	6	R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks	1914
1	7	R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks	1915
1	8	R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks	1916
1	9	Photographs	undated
1	10	Pamphlet written by Loucks: Will the Farmer be the "Goat" Once More?	1917
1	11	Editorials by Loucks	undated