

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

Collection Summary

Identifier: MA 23

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

Dates: 1932-1991

Extent: 0.42 linear feet (1 document case)

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

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.

Preferred Citation: Title or description of item, date, MA 23, box number, folder number, H. L. Loucks Correspondence with R. F. Pettigrew, South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Brookings, South Dakota.

Abstract

Henry Langford Loucks (1846–1928) and Richard F. Pettigrew (1848–1926) were influential figures in the progressive and populist movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Loucks, a Canadian immigrant and farmer in Dakota Territory, became a leader in agrarian reform, organizing the Territorial Alliance and later presiding over the first national Populist Party convention in 1892. He advocated for cooperative business ventures, government ownership of key industries, and direct democracy, playing a key role in South Dakota's adoption of the initiative and referendum in 1898. Pettigrew, a lawyer and land surveyor, was instrumental in Dakota's political development, serving as a U.S. Delegate and later as South Dakota's first U.S. Senator. Initially a Republican, he later embraced populist ideals, opposing

corporate monopolies, and promoting economic reform. Both men were prolific writers, with Loucks publishing works such as *The New Monetary System* (1893) and Pettigrew using his political influence to advance progressive policies.

The collection consists of correspondence between Loucks and Pettigrew from 1914 to 1916, primarily discussing political issues related to the progressive movement. It also includes photographs, Loucks' published editorials, and his 1917 pamphlet *Will the Farmer be the "Goat" Once More?*, which addresses agricultural and economic concerns. Their letters provide valuable insight into early 20th-century political discourse, reflecting their efforts to challenge corporate power and advocate for reform. As leaders in the populist movement, their exchanges document key strategies and ideological shifts that shaped political activism in the Midwest, highlighting their lasting impact on American political and economic thought.

Biography

H.L. Loucks (1846–1928)

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. The couple had seven children, four of whom—Perry, Anna, Elizabeth, and Daniel—reached adulthood.

Loucks immigrated to the United States, initially running mercantile businesses in Michigan and Missouri before settling on a government homestead in Deuel County, Dakota Territory, near Clear Lake, in 1884. Arriving as the economic boom was fading, he quickly experienced the hardships faced by local farmers. In response, he organized a "farmer's club," which evolved into the Territorial Alliance and later affiliated with the National Farmers' Alliance in 1885. As its leader and president, Loucks championed cooperative business ventures, including fire and hail insurance and merchandising, and founded the *Dakota Ruralist*, a newspaper that promoted his economic views for two decades.

Initially aligned with the Republican Party, Loucks and his associates sought reform within existing political structures. However, in 1890, he was nominated for governor at a joint convention of the Knights of Labor and the state Farmers' Alliance. Though unsuccessful, he helped consolidate support for a new political movement that became the Populist Party. He presided over the first Populist Party national convention in 1892 and was elected president of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union the same year. A strong advocate for direct democracy, he played a key role in securing the adoption of the initiative and referendum in South Dakota in 1898.

Loucks authored several works reflecting his economic and political philosophies, including *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 resided in Watertown, South Dakota, for many years, he passed away in Clear Lake, South Dakota, on December 29, 1928.

Senator Richard F. Pettigrew (1848–1926)

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.

Bibliography

H.L. Loucks

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--United States
- Progressivism (United States politics_
- South Dakota--Politics and government

Names

- Loucks, Henry Langford, 1846-1928
- Pettigrew, Richard F. (Franklin)
- Populist Party (U.S.)

Places

- South Dakota
- United States--Dakota Territory

Genre

- Correspondence
 - Letters
-

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Container List

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Correspondence: H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew	undated
1	2	Correspondence: H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew: November 5; November 9; November 16 [A]; November 16 [B]	1914 November
1	3	Correspondence: H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew: ; January 4; January 18 [A]; January 19 [B]; January 20; January 21; March 10; March 26; April 7; April 19; October 8; October 19; November 12; November 14; November 26; December 23	1915 January-December
1	4	Correspondence: H. L. Loucks to R. F. Pettigrew: January 14; February 10; March 13; March 17; April 6; April 21; May 4; May 15; May 19; May 24; May 26; June 16; June 17; July 24; July 28	1916 January-July
1	5	Correspondence: R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks	undated
1	6	Correspondence: R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks: November 28	1914 November
1	7	Correspondence: R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks: March 13; March 31; April 9; April 22; May 21; June 22; October 14; November 20; November 30	1915 March-November
1	8	Correspondence: R. F. Pettigrew to H. L. Loucks: January 11; February 7; February 28; March 14; May 12; May 16; May 20; May 30	1916 February-May
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