

HENRY L. GOODWIN COLLECTION, 1855-1899

Henry Leavitt Goodwin, a native of Litchfield, was born on Nov. 25, 1821. His father, Oliver Goodwin, was a member of the firm of Hudson and Goodwin, at one time owners and publishers of the Hartford Courant.

Henry started in business life as a bookkeeper for his uncle in Brooklyn, New York. Soon after the discovery of gold in California, he was one of the pioneers who left for the region in 1849. He was not interested in the mining aspect of gold, but the business opportunities that would present themselves in such a climate. For a while he was engaged in carrying letters from one camp to another, but was stopped from profiting by this business by the government. The Penny Post Co., as he called his enterprise, was formed in protest to the manner in which the mail was handled at the San Francisco post office. From the years 1854 to approximately 1859, Goodwin became involved in a publicized campaign against the post master of the San Francisco post office. After the post office dispute, Goodwin met with success in a system of water supply for the miners.

In 1862, Goodwin came to East Hartford. He married Susan Goodwin, the sister of George Goodwin in 1873. She died in less than a year, leaving no children.

While residing in East Hartford, Goodwin did not engage in any business, but continued his actions as a public-spirited citizen, becoming involved in the affairs of the town. He was never slow in pointing out any action which he considered dishonest. His interest in the affairs of the bridge commission, the postal system and the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, led to reforms and disclosures of illegal practices.

The following records consist mainly of newspaper clipping and handwritten accounts of personal and court action in the San Francisco post office dispute, and newspaper clippings and legislative action dealing with the N.Y., N.H. & H. Railroad. Total footage: 1 ft. 3 inches.

List of Records

1. 3 notebooks of printed correspondence Box 1
 - A. Correspondence of H.L. Goodwin with the Post Office Department, 1855-1858, also Report of the Proceedings of the U.S. Senate de Postmaster at San Francisco, 1857 & 1858.
 - B. H.L. Goodwin application to the Post Office Department for information in regard to the action of the Postmaster of San Francisco, 1857-1858.
 - C. Correspondence of the Postmaster of San Francisco with the Post Office Department in relation to the Penny Post Co., 1855-1858. 2 inches.
2. Scrapbook of newspaper clipping from San Francisco concerning postal service situation, with partial index, 1855-1859. Box 1 1 inch.
3. Notebook containing 3 handwritten notebooks labeled "The San Francisco Post Office and Charles L. Weller, Post Master", 1855-1870. Box 1 2 inches.
4. Notebook containing handwritten court proceedings from the case in the Superior Court of San Francisco, The Penny Post Co. vs. Charles L. Weller. Includes notes. 1856-1859. Box 2 2 inches.
5. Notebook containing handwritten accounts of English court cases concerning post office operations, partial index inside front cover, 1761-1771. Box 2 1 inch.
6. "A Suppressed Public Document", handwritten account of the matter between Goodwin and the Postmaster General, 1856-1858. Box 2 1 inch.

7. Scrapbook of newspaper clipping, Hartford papers, concerning extension of postal free delivery service to smaller cities and towns, 1882-1898. 1" Box 2
8. Scrapbook titled "In Regard to the False Returns of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co.", consists of newspaper clippings, 1872-1898. 2 inches, Box 3
9. Scrapbook of newspaper clippings of House action concerning the railroad, 1872. ½ inch. Box 3
10. Journal of the Senate of the State of Conn., 1875, with pasted newspaper clippings in the first half, concerned with the railroads, especially the stockholders meetings, 1871-1898. 2 inches.
11. Report of the Treasurer to His Excellency the Governor, 1891, plus notes and clippings. ½ inch.

Related materials

- Goodwin, H.L., "Argument...in favor of House Bill 494." (336.2c G633)
- Goodwin, H.L., Memorial of H.L. Goodwin of East Hartford asking for investigation of the official conduct of the railroad commissioners. (D R13lgm)
- Goodwin, H.L., Memorial of the Penny Post Co. of California. (383 P385)
- Goodwin, H.L., "The Railroad Commissioners of Conn. " (385.19 N426 v.60 pt.2)
- Goodwin, H.L., "Remonstrance of H.L. Goodwin against the acceptance of the report upon his memorial". (385.19 N426 v.60 pt.2)
- General Assembly, "Report of the Railroad Committee." (D R13lg)
- Goodwin, H.L., "The Returns of the N.Y., N.H. & H. Railroad Co., 1881. (385.19 N426 v.60 pt.2)