

ARTHUR A. MCKAIN PAPERS, 1907-1938

Collection #
M 0068

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 small manuscript box
COLLECTION DATES:	inclusive 1907-1938; bulk 1907-1908
PROVENANCE:	William Tangman, Indianapolis IN, 22 February 1994
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	None
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1994.0499

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arthur Albert McKain (born 1851 or 1854) was born in Troy, Ohio, the son of James McKain and Elvira Smith. He

had an older sister named Ellen. His education was in local schools and then in an academy at Euphemia, Ohio, which he attended for one year.

McKain's first employment was in the nursery business, first as an agent, then in 1873 as an owner. In 1871 he married Mary McClure, daughter of a farmer. In 1877 McKain moved into the marble and monument business, first in North Manchester, Indiana, and then in Chicago, where he set up a marble yard for Redfield Proctor of Vermont. In 1881 he moved to Indianapolis, where he specialized in producing large monuments costing from \$2,000 to \$25,000. The most impressive of these was a soldiers' monument in Winchester, Indiana.

McKain then became interested in farm machinery, particularly in the work of an inventor named James Buchanan. In 1891 he organized and became president of Indiana Manufacturing Company, which made a straw stacker to be attached to harvesting machines. In 1895 he organized and headed American Buncher Manufacturing Company, which produced machines for bunching clover.

During the Spanish-American War in 1898, McKain recruited men for the 161st Indiana Volunteer Regiment. Through his various ventures, McKain became quite wealthy. His home was at 1724 North Alabama Street in Indianapolis, and he owned a substantial farm near Monticello, Indiana.

In 1907 McKain was succeeded as president of Indiana Manufacturing Company by Joseph K. Sharpe, Jr., also an inventor. When during the recession of that year the company's dividends became episodic, McKain joined with Theophilus King of Boston and Indianapolis banker Medford B. Wilson in a suit against the company's management.

Sources: Materials in collection

Men of Progress, pp. 517-519

Encyclopedia of Biography of Indiana, vol. ii pp. 260-262

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling one small manuscript box, consists mainly of correspondence, along with a few bills and literary fragments, dated 1907-1938. It is arranged chronologically.

Most of the 1907-1908 correspondence is addressed to Arthur A. McKain from two sources. The major part comes from two men who managed his farm at Monticello, A. W. Doyle and Van A. Douglass. Doyle writes almost weekly about such diverse matters as taking a dairy-farming course at Purdue, buying a milk wagon, and travelling to New York State to buy and bring back some cows. The farm seems to have specialized in dairying, but pigs, sheep, and chickens are also mentioned.

A separate group of letters from the same period, mainly in January 1908, concern McKain's interests in his manufacturing companies.

Written on the back of some of the letters, and on other paper, are fragments of typed and handwritten literary efforts. There is some evidence that these were the work of Josephine Duke Motley, who lived at 1724 North Alabama Street during the 1930s; a note on one page indicates that it was submitted to *Harlequin* magazine in 1933.

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](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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