



Aldrich (Nelson W.) papers

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Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue
Sleepy Hollow 10591

archive@rockarch.org

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator - aut:	Aldrich, Nelson W. (Nelson Wilmarth)
Title:	Nelson W. Aldrich papers
ID:	FA068
Date [inclusive]:	1777-1930, bulk 1879-1915
Date [bulk]:	bulk
Physical Description:	1 Cubic Feet Actual extent is unknown.
Language of the Material:	English

Preferred Citation

Information regarding the Rockefeller Archive Center's preferred elements and forms of citation can be found at <http://www.rockarch.org/research/citations.php>

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Biographical/Historical note

1841, November 6: Born in Foster, Rhode Island

1862: Served with 10th Rhode Island Volunteers

1865: Became junior partner in Rhode Island wholesale grocery firm

1866: Married Abby Chapman

1869-1875: Member of Providence Common Council; president, 1872-1873

1875-1877: Member of State House of Representatives; Speaker of the House, 1876-1877

1876: Delegate to Republican National Convention

1879-1881: Member of U.S. House of Representatives

1881-1911: Member of U.S. Senate

1908-1912: Chairman of National Monetary Commission

1915, April 16: Died in New York, New York

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Scope and Contents note

The papers of Nelson W. Aldrich (1841-1915), statesman, financier, and businessman, span the years 1777 to 1930, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the years 1879 to 1915. The collection is composed primarily of correspondence, printed matter, and material relating to tariff legislation and the National Monetary Commission, supplemented by diaries, notebooks, speeches, research notes, serials, financial papers, and miscellaneous items.

The collection focuses on Aldrich's 30 years of service as a U.S. Senator from Rhode Island, 1881 to 1911. During this lengthy career, Aldrich rose from the relatively obscure position of junior Senator from a small state to become one of the most influential members of the Senate by the close of the nineteenth century. His elevation to the chairmanship of the powerful Senate Finance Committee in 1899 underscored his national prominence, a fact recognized by successive Presidents until his voluntary retirement in 1911. Aldrich's primary concern as a senator centered on national economic and fiscal policy, particularly tariff and monetary policy. By personal business experience, ideological considerations, and the realities of Rhode Island politics, Aldrich normally exerted his influence on behalf of the protective tariff rates and conservative monetary policies favored by powerful northeastern business interests.

The Aldrich papers reflect the Senator's deep involvement with national economic policy. Tariff legislation is a recurring theme throughout the correspondence series, particularly during the years of major tariff revision in 1890, 1897, and 1909. The correspondence, mainly incoming mail from businessmen representing a wide range of economic interests, reveals the depth of feeling generated by the prospect of tariff revision and the importance of the issue during these years. The letters also provide an insight into American business practices and the economic views of a large segment of the American business community during this era of rapid industrial expansion. Aldrich's personal attention to the details of rate revision is clearly revealed in the tariff file, while his speeches help document his general attitude toward tariff duties as a source of protection for American industry from foreign competition.

Aldrich gave considerable attention during his last years in office to the problems of U.S. monetary policy. Following the Panic of 1907, with its accompanying rash of bank failures, he cosponsored the Aldrich-Vreeland Act of 1908, providing for the establishment of a National Monetary Commission to study banking and currency operations at home and abroad and to suggest changes in American practices.

The National Monetary Commission's correspondence for the years 1908-1912 thoroughly documents its activities and Aldrich's role as chairman. Much of the Commission's correspondence was with bankers,

public officials, financial experts, and academicians employed to prepare special studies, translate documents, and collect statistics on financial operations and monetary systems in foreign nations as well as in the United States. Aldrich and other members of the Commission visited England, France, and Germany to consult with experts and collect data, and specialists representing the Commission made similar visits to other nations and reported their findings. Hearings were held in selected American cities to solicit opinions from bankers and other interested parties, while numerous individuals sent unsolicited opinions and plans directly to the Commission. Most of the letters were sent and received by Abram Piatt Andrew, special assistant to the Commission, Arthur B. Shelton, secretary to the Commission, and staff members Charles E. Alden, J. Williar Sheetz, and William A. Slade.

Aldrich's personal views are reflected in occasional correspondence, speeches delivered to promote monetary reform, and in the final report of the Commission--soon labeled the "Aldrich Plan." The Commission's correspondence is also a rich source of information for students of American financial institutions of the early twentieth century and expounds the views of a small but influential segment of the financial community at this time. The National Monetary Commission file contains most of its publications as well as a sampling of the collected data and related material.

Soon after the death of Senator Henry B. Anthony in 1884, Aldrich assumed Anthony's former position as the most powerful figure in Rhode Island politics. Letters from numerous state political figures, particularly Henry B. Gardner and Charles R. Brayton, kept the busy Senator abreast of local affairs and at the same time reveal his influence in state political circles. The numerous requests for favors, advice, and patronage further attest to his influence.

Aldrich's personal affairs and family relations form a relatively small portion of the collection. A short series of letters written to his future wife in 1865-1866 offers a glimpse into his personal relations and plans at this time. Another small group of letters written to Mrs. Aldrich during his first trip abroad in 1872-1873 adds to our knowledge of his family relations and reveals his initial impressions of European society and culture. Scattered letters in the correspondence series and the financial papers allow a brief insight into his extensive financial ventures, particularly his investments in the rubber industry.

Aldrich's principal correspondents include William B. Allison, Henry B. Anthony, Jonathan Bourne, Jr., Charles R. Brayton, Jonathan Chace, William E. Chandler, Charles A. Conant, Henry P. Davison, Eugene Hale, Philander C. Knox, Charles Warren Lippitt, Stephen B. Luce, Orville H. Platt, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Henry M. Teller, Paul M. Warburg, and George Peabody Wetmore.

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Arrangement note

The Nelson W. Aldrich papers are arranged in 10 series:

Series 1 - Diaries and Notebooks

Series 2 - General Correspondence

Series 3 - Tariff

Series 4 - National Monetary Commission

Series 5 - Biographer's Papers

Series 6 - Financial Papers

Series 7 - Speech File

Series 8 - Serials

Series 9 - Printed Matter

Series 10 - Miscellany

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue

Sleepy Hollow 10591

archive@rockarch.org

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

Revision Description

Migrated from Re:discovery to Archivists' Toolkit by Becky Robbins 6 November 2009

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

The Rockefeller Archive Center purchased a microfilm copy of a large portion of the Nelson W. Aldrich papers, the originals of which are in the custody of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

The papers of Nelson Wilmarth Aldrich were presented to the Library of Congress in four installments. The first installment was received in 1944 from Aldrich's children, Winthrop W. Aldrich and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller; and Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., made two additions to the collection in 1955 and 1956 from the papers of his late wife, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. The last installment was presented to the Library in 1970 by the Seminary of Our Lady of Providence, Rhode Island.

Conditions Governing Access

Open for scholarly research without restriction.

Conditions Governing Use

RAC users must abide by all applicable provisions of U.S. copyright law. Reproduction/duplication of archival items is routinely provided in accordance with "fair use." If the RAC does not hold copyright for an archival collection, or items within a collection, it is the user's responsibility to contact the copyright holder, or make a fair effort to do so, prior to publication.

Existence and Location of Originals

The original records are held by the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and are not available at the RAC. User copies of the microfilm are available for scholarly access.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Economics
- Epidemics
- Taxation -- Law and legislation -- United States
- Economic policy
- United States. Congress. Senate -- History -- 20th century
- United States. Congress. Senate -- History -- 19th century
- Aldrich, Nelson W. (Nelson Wilmarth)
- United States. Congress. Senate
- United States. National Monetary Commission

Collection Inventory

Diaries and Notebooks, 1863-1927, n.d.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains diaries and social engagement books of Abby C. Aldrich, bound and unbound shorthand letters and notes of Nelson W. Aldrich, a Civil War company roll book, a fraternal lodge address book, minutes of the Senate Finance Committee for Dec. 1863 to June 1864, and a journal relating to the Hepburn Act of 1906.

Title/Description	Instances

Diaries and Notebooks

reel 1

Related Materials:**Related Materials**

Container 1, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Scope and Contents

Abby C. Aldrich diaries (2), Jan. 1904 and Jan.-May 1912
Abby C. Aldrich engagement books (5), 1905-10 Hepburn
Act journal, no author, 1927 Civil War roll book, 1863
Fraternal lodge address book, no date Senate Finance
Committee minutes, Dec. 1863-June 1864 Bound shorthand
letters, ca. Dec. 1882-Jan. 1884 Bound shorthand notes, no
date Unbound shorthand letters, ca. 1882-1909 and undated

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)**General Correspondence, 1777-1915, n.d.****Arrangement note**

This series is arranged chronologically by day.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains letters received and occasional letters sent by Nelson W. Aldrich, and letters sent and received by staff members of the National Monetary Commission.

Title/Description	Instances
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1777, 1846-November 1879	reel 2
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Related Materials:**Related Materials**

Container 2, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

December 1879 - January 1881

reel 3

Related Materials:**Related Materials**

Containers 3-4, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

February-December 1881 and [1881]

reel 4

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 5 available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

January-March 1882

reel 5

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 6 available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

April-June 1882

reel 6

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 7 available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

April-June 1882 - December 15, 1882-January 19, 1883

reel 7

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 7-9 available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

December 15, 1882-January 19, 1883 - March-August 1883

reel 8

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 9-11, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

March-August 1883 - September 1-December 26, 1883

reel 9

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 11-12, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

September 1-December 26, 1883 - December 27, 1883-February
29, 1884

reel 10

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 12-13, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

March 1-April 25, 1884 - April 26-June 30, 1884

reel 11

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 14-15, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

April 26-June 30, 1884 - July-October 1884

reel 12

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 15-16, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

November 1, 1884-January 21, 1885 - January 22-February 28,
1885

reel 13

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 17-18, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

January 22-February 28, 1885 - March-July 1885

reel 14

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 18-19, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

March-July 1885 - January-February 1886

reel 15

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 19-21, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

January-February 1886 - March-April 1886

reel 16

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 21-22, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

March-April 1886 - May-June 1886

reel 17

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 22-23, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

May-June 1886 - 1887-1888

reel 18

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 23-25, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

1887-1888 - May-September 1889

reel 19

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 25-27, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

May-September 1889 - October 1889-December 1890 and [1890]

reel 20

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 27-28, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

January 1891-July 1892 - August 1892-June 1897

reel 21

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 29-30, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

July 1897-May 1899

reel 22

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 31, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

June 1899-September 1900 - May 1902-June 1903

reel 23

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 32-34, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

July 1903-September 1905 - October 1905-December 1906 and
[1906]

reel 24

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 35-36, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

January 1907-January 1908

reel 25

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 37, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

February-April 1908

reel 26

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 38, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

May-August 1908

reel 27

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 39, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

September-December 1908 and [1908]

reel 28

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 40, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

January 1-February 8, 1909

reel 29

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 41, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

February 9-March 13, 1909 - March 14-31, 1909

reel 30

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 42-43, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

April 1-19, 1909

reel 31

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 44, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

April 20-May 12, 1909

reel 32

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 45, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

May 13-June 11, 1909

reel 33

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 46, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

June 12-July 10, 1909

reel 34

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 47, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

July 11-August 8, 1909

reel 35

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 48, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

August 9-September 22, 1909

reel 36

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 49, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

September 23-November 15, 1909

reel 37

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 50, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

November 16-December 23, 1909

reel 38

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 51, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

December 24, 1909-January 31, 1910

reel 39

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 52, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

February 1-March 17, 1910

reel 40

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 53, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

March 18-April 30, 1910

reel 41

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 54, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

May-June 1910 - July-September 1910

reel 42

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 55-56, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

October 1-December 15, 1910

reel 43

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 57, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

December 16, 1910-February 24, 1911

reel 44

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 58, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

February 25-May 31, 1911 - June-September 1911

reel 45

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 59-60, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

October 1-December 13, 1911

reel 46

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Container 61, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

December 14, 1911-April 30, 1912 - May 1912-February 1914 reel 47

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 62-63, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

March-December 1914 and [1914] - January-June 1915 and
Undated reel 48

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 64-65, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

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Tariff, ca. 1880-1915

Arrangement note

This series is grouped by type of material where possible but otherwise unarranged.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains bills, amendments, schedules, petitions, resolutions, reports, statements, and miscellaneous items relating to tariff rates and tariff legislation.

Title/Description	Instances
Bills, Amendments, Schedules	reel 49
<u>Related Materials:</u> Related Materials Containers 66-70, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540	
Bills, Amendments, Schedules	reel 50
<u>Related Materials:</u> Related Materials Containers 66-70, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540	
Bills, Amendments, Schedules	reel 51
<u>Related Materials:</u>	

Related Materials

Containers 66-70, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Bills, Amendments, Schedules

reel 52

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 66-70, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Miscellaneous Schedules, Petitions, Statements, Statistics,
Reports, Memoranda, Resolutions, and Fragments Relating to the
Tariff

reel 53

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 71-74, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Miscellaneous Schedules, Petitions, Statements, Statistics,
Reports, Memoranda, Resolutions, and Fragments Relating to the
Tariff

reel 54

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 71-74, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

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National Monetary Commission, 1908-1912

Arrangement note

This series is unarranged.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains publications of the National Monetary Commission and miscellaneous draft reports, proceedings, statements, statistics, and papers relating to the National Monetary Commission.

Related Archival Materials note:

Related Archival Materials note

This series is not available at the Rockefeller Archive Center. It has been microfilmed and may be available to researchers through a local public or university library, or through the Library of Congress's Manuscripts Division.

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Biographer's Papers, ca. 1860-1930, n.d.**Arrangement note**

This series is arranged by type of material and chronologically therein.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains research notes collected by Jeannette P. Nichols and Nathaniel W. Stephenson for the latter's biography, "Nelson W. Aldrich, a Leader in American Politics" (1930), supplemented by one folder of related correspondence and a few miscellaneous items.

Title/Description	Instances
Biographer's Papers	reel 58
<u>Related Materials:</u> Related Materials Container 85, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540	
Scope and Contents Correspondence, 1924-30 and undated General outline Interviews, memoranda, miscellaneous Notes, ca. 1860-86	
Notes, 1887-1893 - Notes, 1884-1901	reel 59
<u>Related Materials:</u> Related Materials Containers 86-87, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540	
Notes, 1884-1901 - Notes, 1902-1905	reel 60
<u>Related Materials:</u> Related Materials Containers 87-89, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540	
Notes, 1906-1915	reel 60
<u>Related Materials:</u>	

Related Materials

Containers 90-91, available from the Manuscripts Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

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Financial Papers, ca. 1880-1915

Arrangement note

This series is grouped by type of material where possible but otherwise unarranged.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains checkbooks, checks, statements, bills, receipts, vouchers, occasional correspondence, and miscellaneous items relating to both Nelson W. Aldrich's personal financial affairs and the financial transactions of the National Monetary Commission.

Related Archival Materials note:

Related Archival Materials note

This series was not microfilmed. Consult Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 for further information.

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Speech File, 1881-1913, n.d.

Arrangement note

This series is arranged chronologically and by type of material.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains holograph, typed, and printed speeches by Nelson W. Aldrich, including drafts and related research material.

Title/Description

Instances

1881-1990 - 1891-November 1909

reel 62

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 101-102, available from the Manuscripts
Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

November 1909-October 1911 - November 1911-October 1913;
Notes for Tariff Speeches

reel 63

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 103-104, available from the Manuscripts
Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

November 1911-October 1913; Notes for Tarrif Speeches; Notes reel 64
for Monetary Speeches; Undated and Fragments

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 104-106, available from the Manuscripts
Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

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Serials, ca. 1885-1915

Scope and Contents note

This series contains scattered issues of five serial publications, grouped by title and arranged chronologically therein, and miscellaneous journals, unarranged.

Related Archival Materials note:

Related Archival Materials note

This series is not available at the Rockefeller Archive Center. It has been microfilmed and may be available to researchers through a local public or university library, or through the Library of Congress's Manuscripts Division.

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Printed Matter, ca. 1880-1915

Arrangement note

This series is grouped by type of material but is otherwise unarranged.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains government documents and bound and unbound printed matter.

Related Archival Materials note:

Related Archival Materials note

This series is not available at the Rockefeller Archive Center. It has been microfilmed and may be available to researchers through a local public or university library, or through the Library of Congress's Manuscripts Division.

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Miscellany, ca. 1862-1915

Arrangement note

This series is grouped by type of material.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains bound facsimile letters, biographical information, material relating to Aldrich's rubber investments, speeches, articles, memoranda, proceedings, briefs, cases, contracts, reports, requests for supplies, cards, tickets, three scrapbooks of clippings relating primarily to tariff and banking matters, acknowledgments, invitations, loose clippings, photographs, and miscellaneous items.

Related Archival Materials note:

Related Archival Materials note

Reels 70-73 of this series are not available at the Rockefeller Archive Center. Researchers should consult a local public or university library for this portion of the microfilm edition, or the Library of Congress's Manuscripts Division.

Title/Description	Instances
Miscellany	reel 68

Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 130-131, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Scope and Contents

Briefs; cases

Miscellany	reel 69
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Related Materials:

Related Materials

Containers 131-133, available from the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540

Scope and Contents

Speeches and articles, 1891-1915 and undated Memoranda
Proceedings Briefs; cases Contracts Reports Requests for supplies Cards; tickets Scrapbook of clippings, 1884-1886, re tariff (mainly)

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