



Mayme Hanrahan Ousley Papers (R0173)

Collection Number: R0173

Collection Title: Mayme Hanrahan Ousley Papers

Dates: 1889-1967

Creator: Ousley, Mayme Hanrahan, 1887-1970

Abstract: The Mayme Hanrahan Ousley Papers consists of correspondence and miscellaneous papers of a civic leader and mayor of St. James in Phelps County, Missouri. She was the first woman to be elected to the mayoralty of a city in Missouri. The papers include material regarding city business, her position on the board of Missouri State Training Schools, and her activities with the Rebekah Lodge (I.O.O.F.).

Collection Size: 0.75 cubic foot
(42 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Mayme Hanrahan Ousley Papers* (R0173); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Earl Strebeck on July 12, 1983 (Accession No. RA0187).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Mayme Hanrahan Ousley Papers can be found in the following collections:

Frisco Travelers Collection (R0456)

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, June 1, 1993. Revised by Kathleen Seale, February 10, 2021.

Biographical Note:

Mayme Hanrahan Ousley was born on January 2, 1887, at Edgar Springs in Phelps County, Missouri. She grew up in Rolla, and in 1905 she married Edward William Ousley, also a native of Phelps County and a 1906 graduate of Washington University's dental school. Following graduation, Dr. Ousley set up a practice in St. James, and he and his wife made that city their home for their entire adult lives. They were prominent public figures in St. James, being active in the Chamber of Commerce, the St. James Charity Board, and the Episcopal Church. Both died and are buried in St. James.

The Ousleys were involved in many fraternal, social, and business clubs, and were particularly active in the Masonic and Odd Fellow lodges. Mayme Ousley was an officer of the Order of the Eastern Star and the Rebekah Lodge, and was for many years a trustee of the Odd Fellow retirement home in Liberty, Missouri. She was also a member and officer of the National Good Roads Association and the Ozark Trails Association, both groups promoting an interstate highway system in the 1920s.

Mayme Ousley was also quite active in local Missouri Republican politics and was one of the first women in the state to run for public office. She was defeated in bids for state representative and state senator, but she served four terms as mayor of St. James, elected in 1921, 1939, 1941, and 1955. She was the first woman in Missouri to serve as a municipal chief executive. In 1946, she was appointed to the board of the Missouri State Training Schools, which was charged with the responsibility of overseeing the schools at Boonville and Chillicothe.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following four series:

Personal Correspondence
Biographical and Genealogical Information
Official Papers
Lodge Papers

Scope and Content Note:

Personal Correspondence

This series contains the personal correspondence of Mayme Hanrahan Ousley from 1905 to 1967. Her personal correspondence generally concerns family and friends, but some items mention political or lodge affairs. The papers reflect a wide variety of acquaintances throughout the state. This series is arranged chronologically.

Biographical and Genealogical Information

This series consists of biographical and genealogical materials relating to the Hanrahan and Ousley families from 1889 to 1958. The materials include the estate papers of James S. Ousley and biographical material for Mayme H. Ousley. This series is arranged by subject.

Official Papers

This series contains papers relating to Mayme Hanrahan Ousley's political career including St. James city business and papers pertaining to the Missouri State Training Schools. Her mayoral papers include information on several facets of city business, especially the establishment of a municipal utilities plant and the creation of a park by the James Foundation of New York at the site of the iron works at Maramec Spring. Information concerning the board of Missouri State Training Schools begins with Ousley's appointment to the newly created board by Governor Phil M. Donnelly in 1946. The original members of the board served only two years before being removed by executive order, an action by the governor which spawned controversy and litigation. The collection includes minutes of meetings, legal papers, and correspondence with board members Fred Naeter, Thomas T. Neill, and Mrs. Tom Stark, and with director of schools Louis J. Sharp. This series is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

Lodge Papers

This series contains correspondence and printed materials from Mayme H. Ousley's involvement with the Order of the Eastern Star and Rebekah Lodge. Most of the papers pertain to the Rebekah Lodge, with only one folder of miscellaneous material concerning Ousley's long association with the Order of the Eastern Star. The Rebekah Lodge papers deal with her duties connected with various offices of the organization, local and statewide, including a post on the board of trustees of the Odd Fellow Home of Missouri at Liberty. This series is arranged by lodge and then chronologically.

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f. 23	Mayme H. Ousley biographical material, circa 1925-1955
f. 24	Miscellaneous materials, no date
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