

Guide to the Elisha H. Cooper Papers

MS 1076



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

May 1982

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1076

CREATOR: Cooper, Elisha Hilliard, 1869-1947

TITLE: Elisha Hilliard Cooper papers

DATES: 1888-1892

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.25 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Letters to Elisha Cooper's family in New Britain, Connecticut, during his four years at Yale College. Letters for the first semester of his junior year, September to December, 1890, are missing.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1076>

Requesting Instructions

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

In part, gift of Stanley M. Cooper, 1981.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Elisha Hilliard Cooper Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Elisha Hilliard Cooper is the son of James Wesley Cooper and Mary Ellen (Hilliard) Cooper, who were married August 13, 1868. James Wesley Cooper was born October 6, 1842, in New Haven, Conn. He was descended from John Cooper, one of the original settlers of New Haven, who probably sailed from London on the *Expedition*, November 20, 1635. For two years he was a member of the class of 1865 at Yale and on petition of his class he received the degree of B.A. in 1879 with enrollment in the class of 1865. 1863-1866 he was Assistant Adjutant General of Connecticut; 1866-1868, Andover Theological Seminary; 1868-1871, Pastor Congregational Church, Rockport, Mass.; 1871-1878, Pastor Congregational Church, Lockport, N.Y.; 1878-1903, Pastor South Congregational Church, New Britain, Conn.; 1903-1910, Secretary American Missionary Association, New York, and 1910-1916, retired, Hartford, Conn. He was connected with following organizations: Member of the Yale Corporation, 1885-1916; Trustee of Hampton Normal School, Talladega College, and many other Southern schools. In 1891 he went as delegate to International Council of Churches in London. He was chaplain of the 1st Connecticut Regiment many years. He received the degree of D.D. from Olivet College in 1886. He died March 16, 1916. Mary Ellen (Hilliard) Cooper was born June 1st, 1846, at Manchester, Conn. She was descended from William Hilliard who came to Boston in 1635 on the *Elizabeth and Ann*. She was a graduate of the Hartford Female Seminary. She died at New Britain February 28, 1924. They had one other child, James Earnest Cooper, who graduated from Yale in 1895.

Elisha Hilliard Cooper was born October 2 1869, at Rockport, Mass. He prepared for college at the New Britain High School. He received a second prize in composition in the Sophomore year. He was a member of Zeta Psi and the Elihu Club. He married Margaret Miller on June 4, 1901. Mrs. Cooper was a member of the class of '97, Smith College, but did not graduate. She is an artist and member of the Lyme Art Association. She has exhibited oil paintings at the National Academy, New York; Philadelphia Academy; Copley Society, Boston; Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington; Women Sculptors and Painters, New York; also in Springfield, Mass., Hartford, New Haven, and Lyme, Conn., and elsewhere. They have three children: Stanley Miller Cooper, born May 10, 1902, graduated from the Taft School in 1920, and from Yale College in 1924; Ford Hilliard Cooper, born July 8, 1904, graduated from the Taft School in 1922 and from Yale College in 1926, and Richard Fairchild Cooper, born September 28, 1910, now a student at the Taft School.

Elisha Hilliard Cooper is a Director of the following organizations all located in New Britain, Conn.: The Hart & Cooley Co., Inc., The Stanley Works, The New Britain Trust Company, New Britain Hospital, New Britain Institute, Erwin Home, Shuttle Meadow Club, and also Secretary and Director of The E. E. Hilliard Company of Manchester, Conn. He is a member of the following clubs and societies: New Britain Club, Shuttle Meadow Club, Country Club of Farmington, Old Lyme Golf Club, Fishers Island Club, Graduates Club, New Haven; Yale Club, New York; Dauntless Club, Twentieth Century Club, Yale Engineering Society, Society of Automotive Engineers and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He is a member of the South Congregational Church, New Britain. He is now Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fafnir Bearing Company of New Britain.

Cooper gives the following interesting account of his business activities since graduation: 1892-1910, The E. E. Hilliard Company, Manchester, Conn.; most of the time Secretary and Director. 1910-1929, The Fafnir Bearing Company, New Britain, successively, Secretary and Treasurer, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, and 1919-1925, President the New Britain General Hospital.

He went to Europe in 1895 and 1912.

Cooper writes as follows:

"Immediately after graduation, started in business with the E. E. Hilliard Company, Manchester, Conn., afterwards becoming Secretary and a Director of the Company. Took a bicycling tour through England in 1895, the pleasant memories of which still linger. Youth is the time to enjoy travel.

"Married, in 1901, Margaret Miller, in New York City, and lived for ten years in Hartford, where my three sons were born.

"In 1911 became interested in the experimental manufacture of Ball Bearings by the Hart & Cooley Company of New Britain and became Manager of a small department in their factory. In March of the same year the Ball Bearing business was separately incorporated as The Fafnir Bearing Company and I was elected Secretary and Treasurer of the new Company, moving my family to New Britain. Starting with a total working force of six men, the Company was successful in producing in this country a high-grade ball bearing, comparable to foreign bearings, which at that time were imported to supply the American market. I took a trip to Germany in 1912 to study the subject. We were fairly started in production in 1914 when the War broke out, suddenly stopping all German importations of ball bearings and threw the burden of supplying the domestic market upon American manufacturers. From that time the growth of the company has been rapid and the importer has never succeeded in recapturing the domestic market either on a basis of quality or price. Today the company employs about 1,500 men and has a rather good record of business success.

"Soon after the War I became President of the New Britain General Hospital and during my term of office a building fund was raised by local subscription and new hospital buildings were erected under my general supervision at a cost of nearly \$1,000,000.

"Three years ago I was tired out with over thirty years of pretty continuous work and worry and retired from the active Presidency of the Company to become Chairman of the Board. I spent one winter in Florida and Nassau and another in California. I bought an old farm at the mouth of the Connecticut with nearly one and one-half miles of water front and have spent a good deal of time there with more golf and sailing than farming. As a cure, it has been a success and now I am again back at work as healthy as ever and with a firm resolve, but a feeble will, to take life more easily.

"I have held no political office. I have taken no degrees. I have written no books. I have made no speeches. I have only done each job as it came along as well as I knew how. I have a wonderful wife, who has been a constant help and inspiration, and who, by the way, is an exhibiting artist. I have two fine boys who have gone through Yale and another on his way at Taft. I have a very small and cheerful grandson and many, many friends. The world has been very kind to me. And as I look back over the years, I am more than ever convinced that a business success is made up not only of a certain degree of intelligence and hard work, but must include a very necessary element of good luck."

(Taken from the Thirty-five Year Record of the Class of 1892, Yale College)

Scope and Contents

Letters to Elisha Cooper's family in New Britain, Connecticut, during his four years at Yale College. Letters for the first semester of his junior year, September to December, 1890, are missing.

Collection Contents

Letters to his family and friends

b. 1, f. 1	1888 Sep 20-Dec 16
b. 1, f. 2	1889 Jan 13-Jun 16
b. 1, f. 3	1889 Sep 20-Dec 15
b. 1, f. 4	1890 Jan 17-Jul 3
b. 1, f. 5	1891 Jan 6-Jun 14
b. 1, f. 6	1891 Sep 30-Nov 24
b. 1, f. 7	1892 Jan 10-Jun 7
b. 1, f. 8	n.d.
b. 1, f. 9	Cooper, Stanley M., <i>A Man for all Seasons</i> . Life and letters of Elisha Hilliard Cooper 1869-1947. New London, Conn., privately printed, 1980. 181 pp. illus.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Names

Cooper, Elisha Hilliard, 1869-1947

Corporate Bodies

Yale College (1887-). Class of 1892

Yale University -- Students