

Finding Aid to the Charles F. Amidon Papers

Amidon, Charles F., 1856-1937

Charles F. Amidon Papers, 1892-1939

.2 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 1

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Dr. Kenneth Smemo, History Department, Moorhead State University, 1973 (Acc. 1909).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Charles F. Amidon Papers, MS 1, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Related resources: Smemo, Kenneth. *Progressive Judge: the Public Career of Charles Fremont Amidon*. I. Kenneth Smemo, 1967.

BIOGRAPHY

Charles Fremont Amidon was born at Clymer, New York on August 17, 1856, the son of Reverend John and Charlotte Ann (Curtis) Amidon. He attended high school at Corry, Pennsylvania and after two years teaching he entered, in 1878, Hamilton College at Clinton, New York from where he graduated in 1882. That summer he went to Fargo, Dakota Territory, where he was principal of the high school for one year.

Mr. Amidon then entered the law office of Thomas & Benton as a student and in 1886 was admitted to the bar. Until 1896 he was a member of a Fargo law firm, and also served as city attorney and appointed a member of a commission to revise the state codes and statutes. On November 15, 1892 he married Beulah R. McHenry of Fargo. They had five children: Beulah Elizabeth, Charles Curtis, John McHenry, Oak McHenry, and Eleanor Frances.

On August 31, 1896 Mr. Amidon was appointed, by President Grover Cleveland, United States District Judge for North Dakota. He held this post until June 2, 1928. Sitting on the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals for the 8th District, he wrote nearly 150 opinions between the years 1904 and 1921, many of them influential as precedents. Judge Amidon was one of the leading progressive judges of his generation. He was noted for his realism in handling requests for labor injunctions and his insistence that legal technicalities should not be permitted to hamper justice. Mr. Amidon retired in 1928 living in both Connecticut and Arizona. Judge Amidon died December 26, 1937 at Tucson and was buried in Fargo. Mrs. Amidon died in 1950 in New York City.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Judge Amidon collection consists of copies of correspondence, and various subject files collected by Professor Kenneth Smemo of Moorhead State University while writing a paper on Judge Amidon. Much of the material comes from the Amidon collection of the Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, University of North Dakota.

The **Correspondence Series** includes letters from E. F. Ladd, Judge L. Hand, Felix Frankfurter, Rev. R. A. Beard, Theodore Roosevelt, and Zeachariah Chaffee, Jr.; and letters to Oswald Villard, Theodore Roosevelt, Zeachariah Chaffee, Jr., Felix Frankfurter, James A. Frear, M. D. Purdy, and Robert M. La Follette. The later correspondence is between Mrs. Beulah Amidon Ratliff, and Dr. Elwyn Robinson, and of Dr. Smemo.

The **Subject Files Series** include a copy of Dr. Smemo's paper, various newspaper clippings, a list of opinions by Judge Amidon in the 8th Court of Appeals, and articles by Eleanor and Beulah concerning their father's college days.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Biographical material and Finding aid
	Correspondence Series
1/2	1907-1919
1/3	1920-1939

1/4 1965-1969

Subject Files Series

- 1/5 *Judge Charles Amidon's influence on Theodore Roosevelt's presidential campaign of 1912;* by Kenneth Smemo
- 1/6 Newspaper clippings
- 1/7 Opinions by Judge Amidon in the Eighth Court of Appeals
- 1/8 *Sophomore*, by Eleanor Amidon Clark
- 1/9 *A Student of the Eighties*, by Beulah Amidon Ratliff