

ALBANY INSTITUTE
OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the
William Gorham Rice Papers

Collection Summary

Collection Title: William Gorham Rice Papers

Call Number: DP 587

Creator: Albany Institute of History and Art

Inclusive Dates: 1862-1938

Bulk Dates: 1920-1930

Abstract: A collection of materials from Albany resident William Gorham Rice, mostly related to his interest in and publications on the subject of the Carillon Bell.

Quantity: 3 boxes, 15 linear inches; 2 items on oversized shelf

Administrative Information

Custodial History: unknown

Preferred Citation: William Gorham Rice Papers, DP 587. Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

Accession #: unknown

Accession Date: unknown

Processing Information:

Updated processing and finding aid by Daniel Bulger; completed on 10/20/2006.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: none

Restrictions on Use: Permission to publish material must be obtained in writing prior to publication from the Chief Librarian & Archivist, Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

Index Term

Persons

Brate, C.B.; Brees, Anton; Clark, John M.; Clark, Noah T.; Colson, Aidele; Conniston, Ruth M.; Dekker, N.Ch.; Denyn, Jef; Dunn, Loring M.; Hailes, Frederick B.; Hemony, Pieter; Leduc, Octave; Potez, Henri; Read, Major Harmon Pumpelly; Rice, Harriet Langdon Pruyn; Rice, William Gorham; Smith, Alfred E.; Smith, S.H.; Söhne, Franz Schilling; Symons, Prower; Taylor, E.; Van Doorslaer, G.; Van Dyke, Catherine; Van Iseghem, Mario; Van Klaveren, G.;

Organizations

Albany Institute of History and Art; Alumnae Association, Albany Academy for Girls; Beaux-Arts Institute of Design; Beiaardschool; Carillon League; Indianapolis Public Schools; League of Nations Association; Leiden Pilgrim Fathers Society; Marmon automobile; New York State Civil Service Commission; State Museum, University of the State of New York; Taylor Bell Foundry;

Subjects

Carillon Music; Carillonneurs; Carillons; Carillons Belgium; Carillons England; Carillons France; Carillons Germany; Carillons Netherlands; Carillons New York (State); Carillons North America;

Places

Antwerp (Belgium); Amsterdam (Netherlands); Bruges (Belgium); Loughborough (England); Louvain (Belgium); New York (state)—Albany; Mechelen (Belgium); Rotterdam (Netherlands); Tournai (Belgium);

Document Types

Catalogs; correspondence; letters; newspaper clippings; pamphlets; periodicals; photographs; postcards; programs; sketches;

Titles

Bulletin of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, April 1926.

Leduc, Octavio. "Le Befroi et le Carillon de Tournai: leur Signification et leur Histoire."
[Essay, carbon print].

"Marmon: Cars at the Shows." Undated. [Automobile catalogue inscribed to Wm. Gorham Rice].

Prower, Symons. *The Carillon*. "An Address read before the Southern Ohio Chapter of

the American Guild of Organists, at Bethany Home, Glendale, Ohio, May 15, 1933, and published in the June, September, and October numbers of the Bethany Home Chronicle.” [Essay copy].

Rice, William Gorham. “Carillon Music.” *The New Music Review* Vol. 23, No. 274 (September 1924): 419-424.

Rice, William Gorham. “Carillon Music of the Netherlands and America.” *Art and Archaeology* Vol. 20, No. 1 (July 1925): 3-13.

Rice, William Gorham. “Tower Music of Holland.” *Holland and Her Colonies* Vol. 3, No. 4 (July 1923): 3-11 (2 copies).

The Albany Singing Tower: the Book of the Carillon. Ed. William Gorham Rice. Albany, NY: Argus, 1927 (6 copies).

Biography of William Gorham Rice

William Gorham Rice is considered by many to be the father of the carillon bell in North America. His seminal publications on and tireless promotion of the art, architecture, and musicianship of the carillon bell earned him worldwide renown as a leading “singing tower” proponent. Contributions such as the first major work on the subject of carillons and spearheading efforts to erect America’s first municipal bell, in his home city of Albany, NY, ensure his legacy and the continued enjoyment of the carillon bell today.

Born on December 23, 1856, William Gorham Rice was raised in Albany, NY, graduating from the Albany Academy in 1875. Shortly thereafter he was appointed assistant paymaster general of the New York State National Guard (earning the title by which he is often addressed, Colonel Rice). Later, he served two Governors (Cleveland and Hill) as Secretary, and became a New York State Civil Service and a United States Civil Service Commissioner. Rice was active in politics as well, both as a newspaper pundit and on the public front, where he ran for mayor of Albany in 1903 and Lieutenant Governor in 1914 (losing both bids).

Rice married Harriet Langdon Pruyn, daughter of John V.L. Pruyn, Sr., in 1892; the couple had their first and only child—a son, William, Jr.— in December of that year. His marriage to Harriet precipitated his first encounter with the subject toward which he would devote much of his life, the carillon bell.

Harriet’s passion for genealogy led the couple abroad, to the wellspring of Pruyn blood, Holland and Belgium. She suggested that he take up an interest in the ancient carillon tradition while in country (an anecdote told by Rice himself), and from then forward his interest and collection of carillon materials grew, culminating in his published works and several bell-related projects.

St. Rumbold’s Cathedral in Mechelen, Belgium seemed to hold special significance for Rice: its image appears at the outset of two major works, *Carillons of Belgium and Holland* and *Carillon Music and Singing Towers*; and he partnered with its famous and enterprising carillonneur, Jef Denyn, to open the Free Carillon School of

Instruction (Beiaardschool) in Mechelen. The project was also fostered with support from several prominent American benefactors including John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and with aid from the Commission of Relief in Belgium Act under President Herbert Hoover.

Another important project began in 1918, in Rice's native Albany. To that point, the carillon bell in America had been mostly limited to church and private university interests. In a letter to the Mayor and Common Council, however, Rice and supporters called for a "Community Bell," a carillon to be dedicated as a soldier's memorial—and a project, they felt, of civic interest. The powers-that-be were not so impressed. But the plan was re-proposed several times until 1926, when two local newspapers, *The Knickerbocker Press* and *The Albany Evening News*, lent their support, and a campaign was launched to fund the project. Sixty days later, sufficient funds were raised on a subscription basis (over \$45,000 poured in from individuals, societies, groups, and churches) and the city acquiesced. The John Taylor Company of Loughborough, England, a bell foundry, was awarded the contract, and the carillon was installed by September 1927. To mark the inauguration, Rice invited Jef Denyn to give the first recital, and Jef van Hoof, a Belgian carillon composer, wrote a prelude. In 1986, marking the tricentennial of the City of Albany, the City Hall Carillon was restored, and a plaque installed bearing an inscription to honor Rice's efforts.

Among Rice's distinctions are the first known publication on the subject of the carillon and the first, and only, Honorary President of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America (GCNA). Of other interest, the Albany Institute of History and Art (then simply the Institute of Art) was to mount a carillon poster exhibition in conjunction with the tower's inauguration, though at this finding aid's completion date, no records were found. Also, the current location of the Albany Institute of History and Art includes 135 Washington Ave., the longtime residence of William and Harriet Rice. William Gorham Rice died on September 10, 1945.

Scope and Contents of the Papers

The papers are predominantly related to Colonel Rice's lifelong passion, the Carillon Bell, and include information and materials pertinent to bells in Europe and North America; carillonneurs/carillonning; copies of and materials related to Rice's publications; and other miscellaneous collected material.

Primary formats are photographs, postal cards, programs, newspaper clippings, periodicals, and correspondence.

Special to the papers are materials on Albany's own "singing tower" which graces City Hall. Completed in 1927 under the direction of Colonel Rice, it was America's first municipal carillon tower. A wealth of material is devoted entirely to St. Rumbold's cathedral in Mechelen, Belgium as well. Many of the images found in the papers are reproduced in Rice's books and are hand-sketched with dimensions for a printer's uses.

In addition to Rice's interest in carillons, the papers include newspaper clippings from Rice's political articles and editorials.

Organization of the Papers

The papers are organized into five series over three boxes.

The first series, **Carillon bells—Europe**, consists of images, essays, and pamphlets related to European bells. There is also an artist's rendering of several European Cathedrals and an image collection from Antwerp, Belgium. Three folders in this series are devoted to the cathedral and carillon school in Mechelen, Belgium.

The second series, **Carillon bells—North America**, consists of images, clippings, and pamphlets related to North American bells. Two folders specifically pertain to the Albany carillon.

The third series, **Carillonneurs/Carillonning**, is a single folder consisting of images (some autographed) of carillon players and the carillon keyboard.

The fourth series, **William Gorham Rice—Published Work**, consists of publication copies of Rice's carillon articles, miscellaneous correspondence about publications, image proofs, and newspaper clippings of Rice's political writings.

The fifth series, **Miscellany**, consists of financial correspondence and notes, and other general correspondence. An undated catalog from Marmon automobile is included as well.

Related Material

Other Collections:

Harriet Langdon Pruyn Rice Papers—**AN 162**

Parker, Pruyn, and Rice Family Papers—**MG 43**

Pruyn Family Papers—**JQ 84-08**

Biography File:

Rice, Mrs. William Gorham [includes obituary for William Jr.]

Vertical File:

Washington Ave. (Albany, NY) [clipping about Rice mansion]

General Book Collection:

Bulletin of the Guild of Guild of Carillonneurs in North America. Vol. 27. Wilmington, DE: Minute Man Press, 1978. Call # 789.5 GUI BUL 1978.

Articles of Interest: "Meneely Bells: An American Heritage" by William DeTurk [a Troy bell foundry] and "Voices from the Carillon's Past" by Martin A. Gilman.

Bulletin of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America. Ed. George Gregory. Vol. 39.

San Antonio, TX: First Impressions, 1990. Call # 789.5 GUI BUL 1990.

Articles of Interest: "The 1989 GCNA Congress in Albany, New York" by John Ellis and "William Gorham Rice and the North American Carillon Movement" by William De Turk.

Peery, Paul D. *Chimes and Electric Carillons: Modern Tower Bells*. New York: The John Day Company, 1948. Call # 789.5 PEE CHI 1948.

Price, Frank Percival. *The Carillon*. London: Oxford University Press, 1933. Call # 789.5 PRI CAR 1933.

Rice, Harriet Langdon Pruyn. *In the Carillon Country: Journals of Belgium and the Netherlands*. Ithaca, NY: Cayuga Press, 1933. Call # 789.5 RIC IN 1933.

Rice, William Gorham. *Carillons of Belgium and Holland*. London: John Head, 1914. Call # 789.5 RIC CAR 1914.

Rice, William Gorham. *The Carillon in Literature*. New York: John Lane, 1916. Call # 789.5 RIC CAR 1916 (2 copies).

The Albany Singing Tower: the Book of the Carillon. Ed. William Gorham Rice. Albany, NY: Argus, 1927. Call # 789.5 ALB 1927 (4 copies).

Special Collection:

Congress and Exhibition of Carillon Art. *Beiaardkunst: Handelingen*. Mechelen: L. Godenne, 1922?. Call # SpC 789.5 CON BEI 1922.

Congress and Exhibition of Carillon Art. *Beiaardkunst: Handelingen van het Tweede Congress*. Hertogenbosch: J.J. Arkesteijn and Zoon, 1925?. Call # SpC 789.5 CON BEI 1925.

Joosen, Constant. *Toren en Beiaard te Mechelen: Le Tour et le Carillon à Malines*. Brussels: W. Godenne, c1930. Call # SpC 789.5 JOO TOR 1930.

Loosjes, Adriaan. *De Torenmuziek in de Nederlanden*. Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema, 1916. Call # SpC OV 789.5 LOO TOR 1916.

Nunes, Abraham Vas. *Experimenteel Onderzoek van Klokken van F. Hemony*. Amsterdam: Erven Kramer, 1909. Call # SpC 789.5 NUM EXP 1909.

Rice, Harriet Langdon Pruyn. *In the Carillon Country: Journals of Belgium and the Netherlands*. Ithaca, NY: Cayuga Press, 1933. Call # SpC 789.5 RIC IN 1933 (2 copies).

Rice, William Gorham. *Carillons of Belgium and Holland*. London: John Head, 1914. Call # 789.5 RIC CAR 1914.

Rice, William Gorham. *Carillon Music and Singing Towers of the Old World and the New* [microform]. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1930. Call # SpC 789.5 RIC CAR 1925 (5 copies).

Rice, William Gorham. *Carillon Music and Singing Towers of the Old World and the New*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1925. Call # SpC 789.5 RIC CAR 1925 c.1 (2 copies).

Rice, William Gorham. *Carillon Music and Singing Towers of the Old World and the New*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1926. Call # SpC 789.5 RIC CAR 1926.

Rice, William Gorham. *Beiaarden in de Nederlanden: Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis en de Kennis van Klokkenspellen en Klokketorens in Noord-Frankrijk, België en Nederland*. Amsterdam: De Spieghel, 1927. Call # SpC OV 789.5 RIC BEI 1927.

Photograph Albums:

Rice, William Gorham family home, 135 Washington Avenue—**PA 82**

Separated Materials:

On oversized shelf:

Woman's Home Companion Magazine, Dec. 1930.

1928 photo of bell made for an Indianapolis Cathedral.

Note: The above items are listed on a previous finding aid, but at completion date of this finding aid, were not located.

A previous finding aid noted that the papers consisted of seven boxes. Only three were found at completion date of this finding aid.

A printing plate probably from *Carillon Music and Singing Towers of the Old World and the New* was transferred to the curatorial department (see Control File).

Other Finding Aids

An earlier finding aid is available in the Control Files and in box 1, folder 1.

Detailed Description of the Records/Papers/Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series # I. Series Title: Carillons—Europe

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
1	1	Finding aid (old and new)
1	2	Carillon bell and tower images
1	3	1. Essay by Octavio Leduc 2. Essay by Prower Symons
1	4	“Antwerpia” image collection
1	5	Cathedral sketches by N.Ch. Dekker
1	6	Dutch and German soft cover pamphlets
1	7	French soft cover pamphlets

1	8	Programs from Louvain University
1	9	Materials concerning the Taylor Bell Foundry
1	10	Mechelen: images and autographed program
1	11	Mechelen: soft cover pamphlets
1	12	Mechelen: Beiaardschool pamphlets

Series # II. Series Title: Carillons—North America

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
2	1	Carillon bell and tower images
2	2	Newspaper clippings
2	3	1. Pamphlet “The Carillon” from the Indianapolis Public Schools 2. Bulletin from the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design
2	4	Albany carillon: miscellany
2	5	Albany carillon: copies of “The Book of the Carillon”

Series # III. Series Title: Carillonneurs/Carillonning

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
2	6	Images (some autographed)

Series # IV. Series Title: William Gorham Rice—Published Work

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
3	1	Carillon articles
3	2	Miscellaneous publisher correspondence and advertisements
3	3	Image proofs
3	4	Loose leafs probably from <i>Carillon Music and Singing Towers of the Old World and the New</i>
3	5	Bound copy of <i>Art and Archaeology</i>
3	6	Newspaper articles/opinion pieces on politics

Series # V. Series Title: Miscellany

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
3	7	General correspondence
3	8	Invitations and financial notes and correspondence
3	9	Marmon automobile catalog