Information Sheet

R Tlapek, John, 1846-1937.
37 Correspondence, 1897-1902, 1909-1935.
     Eight folders.

MICROFILM

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This is business correspondence addressed to John Tlapek as general manager of Louis Houck’s Chester, Perryville, Ste. Genevieve and Farmington Railroad, 1897-1902. Tlapek also was a partner in the Southeast Missouri Telephone Company, 1909-1911.

John Tlapek was born in Bohemia, Austria, in 1846. He was educated in Prague and, after emigrating to the United States, at De Soto, Missouri. In 1865 he moved to St. Marys in Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri. Tlapek was involved in many business and financial enterprises in southeastern Missouri. He was associated with Frederick Bartels in the lumber trade at St. Marys, was a partner in sawmills near Perryville with Charles Kiefner, and did business with C. H. Huttig’s Sash and Door Company of St. Louis. He was president and general manager at the turn of the century of Louis Houck’s Cape Girardeau, Perryville, Ste. Genevieve and Farmington Railroad. The railroad began operations in 1895, was extended from St. Marys to Ste. Genevieve in 1897, and was taken over by the Frisco lines in 1902. Tlapek also helped finance the construction of the Crystal City and Uvalde Railroad in Texas. Tlapek and A. R. Ponder, president of the Texas railroad, were partners also in the Southeast Missouri Telephone Company of Ste. Genevieve and Cape Girardeau. Their telephone interests in Southeast Missouri later became part of the Bell System. Tlapek managed his affairs from his home in St. Marys until his death in 1937.

Tlapek’s incoming business correspondence is arranged chronologically in two sections. Researchers should consult the shelf list and register of correspondents in the Information Folder. The first section, 1897-1902, includes letters from Charles Kiefner and C. H. Huttig regarding the lumber trade, and from railroad entrepreneur Louis Houck regarding construction and finance of the Chester, Perryville, Ste. Genevieve and Farmington Railroad, the collection of subscriptions from towns along its right-of-way, and its extension into Farmington and the mining areas of St. Francois County. Tlapek also corresponded with M. R. Smith, a Farmington attorney and booster of the St. Francois County extension; and with Charles M. Foreman, receiver of the Centralia and Chesterfield Railroad in Illinois. The correspondence concerns railroad development and the Houck lines in southeastern Missouri, and connections with other lines.

The second group of papers, 1909-1935, concerns Tlapek’s association with A. R. Ponder in the Southeast Missouri Telephone Company, and the Crystal City and Uvalde Railroad in Texas. Tlapek helped finance both projects through the Southeast Missouri Trust Company. Ponder’s letters refer to equipment and fixtures purchased for the telephone company, and to progress on the Texas railway.

8 October 1980 Charles Tlapek Loaned for microfilming

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