

**Acadian Archives / Archives acadiennes
Finding Aid**

MCC-00192

“John Millage Stadig Collection”

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How to Use This Guide

This collection consists of copies of a variety of different kinds of primary documents detailing the criminal career of Valley resident John M. Stadig. The documents were gathered by Archives staff in the course of assisting researchers (principally Darrell McBreairty) with independent Stadig research projects.

Given the “hodge-podge” nature of this collection, you may wish to begin by reading the Summary on this page, which gives an overview of the collection. Next, a study of the Biographical Note on John M. Stadig (beginning on page x) would probably be helpful.

Once you’re grounded with an overview of Mr. Stadig’s life and the provenance of this collection (additional information on provenance appears in the Provenance Note on page 5), the Folder Inventories should be a guide to specific items of interest. These Folder Inventories contain Item-level inventories of the documents which comprise this collection; they begin on page x.

The Acadian Archives / Archives acadiennes holds two other collections of Stadig-related materials. MCC-00190 consists of copies of Stadig’s “Comprehensive Inmate Case File” held at the National Archives and Records Administration facility for the Pacific Region at San Bruno CA. This contains all sorts of Federal records on Stadig, his criminal career, his parole, his prison history, and his suicide. A second and related collection, MCC-00191, consists of materials gathered and consulted by Darrell McBreairty in preparing his book *Alcatraz Eel: the John Stadig Files* (Allagash: McBreairty, 2005), including original tape-recorded oral history interviews of Valley residents and extensive newspaper clippings.

Collection Summary

This finding aid provides information about 79 leaves of both original and photocopied documents relating to the life and career of John Millage Stadig of St. Francis ME. The most notable series contains materials from the Nevada State Prison at Carson City NV; this includes information on his arrest and imprisonment, his application for parole, and his Federal Bureau of Investigation “rap” sheet. Also included are: Stadig’s sheet from the “Pages of the Warden’s Notebook” file at NARA San Bruno; a rare news article on Stadig’s imprisonment at Edmunston NB for counterfeiting U.S. currency; a 4-page excerpt from Warden James A. Johnston’s book on his career at Alcatraz Island penitentiary with what appear (from internal circumstantial evidence) to be two letters from John M. Stadig; folders on two San Francisco court cases involving Stadig; and

selected items from the comprehensive inmate file on Jack Allen (a prisoner mentioned in one of the possible Stadig letters published by Johnston).

The collection also includes some Freedom of Information Act correspondence and a note on a telephone interview with personnel at Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana.

Acadian Archives / Archives acadiennes Finding Aid

John M. Stadig Collection

Provenance: Collected by Acadian Archives staff

Accession No.: MCC-00192

Collection Title: John M. Stadig Collection

Shelflist Nos.: UM-0192

Physical Characteristics / Condition: Photocopies / Excellent

Quantity: 79 leaves

Date Range: 1930 - 2000

Introduction. This collection consists of a miscellany of documents relating to the criminal career of John Millage Stadig of Saint Francis ME gathered by Acadian Archives staff while assisting a variety of independent researchers conducting research projects on Stadig. The most notable item is a file of documents obtained from Nevada State Prison relating to his brief imprisonment (as a Federal prisoner) at Nevada State Prison at Carson City NV. Also notable is Stadig's sheet from the "Pages of the Warden's Notebook" file and two San Francisco District Court cases involving Stadig from the National Archives and Records Administration "Pacific Region" facility at San Bruno CA. Of lesser interest are: 4 pages excerpted from a memoir by Alcatraz warden James A. Johnston which quote two letters from an anonymous prisoner whose circumstances are similar, if not identical, to Stadig's; excerpts from the "comprehensive inmate case file" of Jack Allen, a prisoner mentioned in one of the letters; notes on a telephone conversation with personnel at Tri-State University, Angola IN, regarding Stadig's claim of graduation from that institution; etc.

Access: There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

Biographical Note. John Millage Stadig, the son of Nelson Lawrence Stadig and Caroline Alice "Carry" Jones, was born 16 December 1908 at Jemtland ME, an unincorporated community in the township of New Sweden ME. At some point, the family relocated to the Saint Francis ME / Connors NB area, where Lawrence Stadig died in 1909 or 1910. John Stadig was arrested for a number of minor crimes in Boston MA in June 1927; he was arrested in Saint Louis MO on more serious charges in November and December 1929. In June 1930 he was arrested in Connors NB for manufacture and possession of plates for making counterfeit U.S. treasury bills. He appears to have served two months of a six-month sentence at Edmundston NB. In November 1931, he was arrested on counterfeiting charges in Las Vegas NV and sentenced to 18 months at Nevada

State Prison (as a Federal prisoner). He was paroled in December 1932.

Stadig served his parole at Saint Francis ME. Since there was no parole officer serving that area, Stadig was required to file written monthly reports. Although the reports are initially in Stadig's handwriting, someone else appears to have begun filing the reports for Stadig in April 1933. In October 1933, while still apparently filing parole reports from Saint Francis, Stadig was arrested on counterfeiting charges in Chicago IL. Eleven days later, he escaped from the custody of U.S. marshals while being transported to court. In December 1933, he was arrested in San Francisco CA, again on counterfeiting charges, and on 19 March 1934 he was sentenced to six years at the Federal penitentiary at McNeil Island WA.

He escaped from the penitentiary at McNeil Island in April 1934, but he was unable to get off the island and was recaptured after two days. He received an additional two years on his sentence in June 1934. That year the new "maximum security" Federal penitentiary at Alcatraz Island came into being. The plan was to house "problem inmates" from throughout the Federal prison system at Alcatraz, and so in mid-1934 the wardens at the various Federal institutions were invited to send their difficult custodial cases to the new prison. Stadig was transferred to Alcatraz in August 1934 as part of the initial contingent of prisoners sent to what came to be called "The Rock".

Stadig petitioned to appeal his conviction for the McNeil Island escape. This was a tactical error: the U.S. attorney for the District of Portland OR, where the appeal was to be heard, pressed for conviction on additional counterfeiting charges, and the court increased Stadig's sentence to 15 years. Facing such a lengthy sentence, Stadig escaped from the custody of U.S. marshals while en route back to Alcatraz. He dove through a train window and eluded capture for a week.

Returned to Alcatraz, Stadig continued to be a disciplinary problem. He made repeated efforts at suicide. He eventually was determined to be a risk to himself and was transferred to Leavenworth KS to be incarcerated at the penal hospital at Springfield KS. While at Leavenworth, Stadig made a final, successful attempt at suicide, slashing his jugular vein with a piece of glass broken from his spectacles. He died 24 September 1936.

Scope and Contents Note: The papers in this collection were gathered at different times and at a number of different sites in the years immediately prior to 2000. Some were photocopied at the National Archives and Records Administration "Pacific Region" facility at San Bruno CA.

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were photocopied at the Pacific Region office of the National Archives and Records Administration by the Archives' Assistant Director at San Bruno, California, in 2000. They represent all materials held at NARA San Bruno on John M. Stadig, except for one page from a separate collection of "Warden's Notebook Pages" which can be found in our related collection, MCC-00192 "John Millage Stadig Collection".

Materials in this collection include prison records, commitment and court records, identification and health records (including psychiatric reports), correspondence about Stadig from the Bureau of Prisons, the parole board, Federal and private attorneys, reports on Stadig's suicide, etc. They also include documents written by Stadig describing his life, work, and criminal experiences for consideration by the parole board in 1932.

This collection will be of interest to historians, penologists, and others.

Provenance Note. The papers in this collection were created by a variety of Federal offices and by private citizens. They were gathered by a number of Federal agencies, then brought into one single collection by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. They form part of the National Archives and Record Administration's Record Group 129: "Records of the Bureau of Prisons".

The photocopies which comprise this collection were made by AA/AA staff at the NARA facility at San Bruno (Pacific Region) in 2000. The NARA order and foldering was maintained.

Related Archival Collections and Publications. There are two other collections of documents on John Millage Stadig in the Archives:

MCC-00191 Darrell McBreairty: John M. Stadig Collection

A collection of materials gathered by Darrell McBreairty in preparing his book *Alcatraz Eel: the John Stadig files* (Allagash ME: McBreairty, 2005)

The collection includes tape-recorded interviews (with transcriptions) and other materials.

MCC-00192 John Millage Stadig Collection

This collection was gathered by AA/AA staff while assisting a variety of researchers (including, and primarily, Darrell McBreairty) interested in the Stadig story. It includes Stadig's Nevada State Prison records, a page from NARA's RG 129 "Warden's Notebook Pages" file, court filings for two criminal cases involving Stadig, an excerpt from Warden Johnston's book on his work at Alcatraz, etc.

There are two publications in the Archives' reference library which relate to John Stadig:

HV6248
.S83 M118 McBreairty, Darrell. *Alcatraz Eel: the John Stadig files*. Allagash ME: Darrell McBreairty, 2005.
This contains interview transcriptions, genealogies, newspaper clippings, and other materials relating to John Millage Stadig.

HV9475
.C3 U556 Odier, Pierre. *The Rock: a history of Alcatraz*. Eagle Rock CA: L'Image Odier, 1982.
This contains photographs of a letter smuggled off Alcatraz and printed in the *San Francisco News* describing suicidal inmates. John Stadig's name appears on the photograph on page 133.

Arrangement Note. The documents in this collection represent the “comprehensive inmate case file” as it was presented at the National Archives and Records Administration in San Bruno CA. The documents were copied in the order in which they were presented, and were foldered in the same foldering. Although NARA staff were asked about original order and provenance, they had no information to offer.

The materials in this collection were presented in seven folders. While there is no clear sense of what sub-groupings each fold represents, there does appear to be some organizational coherence in some folders. The folders may represent separate collections created by separate agencies on Mr. Stadig and his activities. This is suggested by a comment made by the NARA processor for Record Group 129 (to which the comprehensive inmate files belong): “It must be remembered that these inmate files represent an artificial group of BOP [Bureau of Prisons] files from many different sites. The complexity of locating and assembling all the files involved records clerks at Federal prisons across the country.”

For item-level inventories of each folder, see the Folder Indexes on pages 9 through 19.

For a Personal Name Index, see pages 7 and 8.