Thomas Winthrop Streeter collection

Title: Thomas Winthrop Streeter collection
Collection No: MSS.149
Extent: 0.02 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1811-1832

Abstract: The collection comprises miscellaneous documents related to Texas, Alabama, Kentucky, South Carolina and Arkansas originally belonging to the Streeter collection.

Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: Thomas Winthrop Streeter collection, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: October 2014
Biographical information

Thomas Winthrop Streeter, businessman, collector of Texana, and author, son of Frank Sherwin and Lilian (Carpenter) Streeter, was born on July 20, 1883, in Concord, New Hampshire. After graduation from St. Paul's School, Concord, in 1900, he received a B.L. degree from Dartmouth College in 1904 and an LL.B. degree from Harvard Law School in 1907. He practiced law in Boston, eventually as a member of the firm Streeter and Holmes. On June 23, 1917, he married Ruth Cheney, and they had four children. In 1917 Streeter moved to New York and began a career of business and finance. He was treasurer and then vice president of the American International Corporation, served as a dollar-a-year man in Washington for the United States government during World War I, and then continued in various business enterprises in New York until 1939, when he retired from active business and devoted himself to his Americana collection for the next twenty-five years at his home in Morristown, New Jersey. Always interested in early American history, Streeter began collecting as a young man, and in 1952 he published a bibliography of selected items from his Americana collection, *Americana- Beginnings*. While serving as chairman of the board (1923–1930) of Simms Petroleum Corporation, a Texas firm, his business trips to the state gave him the opportunity to locate and acquire books, pamphlets, broadsides, and maps relating to Texas history during the period 1795–1845. Rare items from this collection were exhibited in 1936 at the Texas Centennial in Dallas and at the formal opening in 1939 of the San Jacinto Monument and Museum. In 1944 he gave to the archives of the University of Texas the Beauregard Bryan Papers, the last large collection of almost 2,000 documents relating to the early history of the Moses Austin family. In 1949 he wrote the foreword to Ernest W. Winkler's *Check List of Texas Imprints*, 1846–1860.

Streeter assembled the largest private Texana collection ever compiled. From these and other materials that had been printed not only in Texas, but in Mexico, the United States, and Europe, he compiled and published the authoritative three-part (five-volume) work *Bibliography of Texas*, 1795–1845 1955-1960). For this definitive work and other scholarly accomplishments he received the honorary Litt.D. degree from Dartmouth College. Upon completion of the *Bibliography* he sold his Texas collection of nearly 2,000 imprints to Yale University for its Western Americana Collection, and it was placed with that university's Wagner and Coe collections. Streeter died in Morristown, New Jersey, on June 12, 1965, and was buried in Peterborough, New Hampshire. In accordance with his wishes, Streeter's remaining Americana collection, composed of some 5,000 volumes ranging from discovery and exploration to first books in each of the American states, was sold in a series of seven auctions at Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York City from 1966 through 1969. Many of his books were famous ones and the last copies then available for purchase. He had wanted to give other collectors a chance to enjoy owning them as much as he had. The sales caused great interest and brought in gross receipts of $3,100,000.

Scope and contents

The collection comprises six miscellaneous documents related to Texas, Alabama, Kentucky South Carolina and Arkansas purchased from the Streeter collection. Included is a copy of the 1811 resolution by the Kentucky General Assembly approving the amendment to the United States’ constitution submitted by Congress forbidding the acceptance by citizens of titles of nobility or honor from foreign rulers or governments. There is a certificate of ownership of a share in the Ross Concession lands in Texas granted to William Arnold in 1832 on the expectation of obtaining confirmation of the grant from the Mexican government, and an 1824 proposal to establish a religious and literary paper, to be known as the Western Luminary, in Lexington, Kentucky. Three broadsides are also included: one being an 1832 report by the commissioners of the Tennessee River canal in Alabama; the second being an 1832 proclamation by president Andrew Jackson denouncing the nullification ordinance passed by South Carolina as treason and expressing his determination to enforce the laws of the United States; and the third a summary of the laws related to landowning for non-residents in Arkansas in 1824 issued by the editor of the Arkansas Gazette.

Provenance

The Jackson proclamation was purchased from Sanders in May 1975. The provenance of the other items is unknown.

Related materials

Thomas W. Streeter collection of Texas manuscripts, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Subject terms

Arkansas Territory.
Arnold, William.
Breckinridge, John.
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845.
Tennessee. General Assembly.
Tennessee River--Navigation--History.
Western luminary (Lexington, Ky.)
Woodruff, William Edward, 1795-1885.
Inventory

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1. Resolution before Kentucky General Assembly, 1811 January 29: Approves proposed amendment to the United States’ constitution submitted by Congress forbidding the acceptance by citizens of titles of nobility or honor from foreign rulers or governments. Approved by Governor Charles Scott, 1811 January 31. Also printed cover letter to Congress from governor and signed by Scott, 1811 February 9.

2. “Ross Concession”. Certificate of ownership of 1/400 share (No. 215) of land in the concession held by William Arnold, 1832 October 13. Includes resolution dated 1832 September 22 by members of the Ross Company, Nashville, Tennessee, authorizing General William Arnold to proceed to Mexico to secure confirmation of the grant originally made to Rueben Ross in the Mexican province of Texas or whatever property he can secure in exchange for it. Arnold is entitled to half of the property he can obtain. [Note: It may be the same William Arnold who received a land grant of 1 league (4428 acres) in Austin's Colony in Brazoria County, Texas, recorded April 15, 1833, but died later that year.]


4. “Proposals for publishing a religious & literary paper in the town of Lexington, Ky.” Proposal to establish a weekly paper called the “Western Luminary” to include religious and literary topics as well as the history of politics, Lexington, Kentucky, 1824 January. Written on the pamphlet is a letter: John Breckinridge, Lexington, Ky., to Rev. Martin Rooter, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1824 February 10, re: the need for such a publication, and a request for subscription and for Rooter to be the paper’s agent in his area.

5. Broadside: “To non-resident owners of land in the Territory of Arkansas”, William E. Woodruff, Little Rock, Arkansas Territory, 1824 May. Woodruff, the editor of the Arkansas Gazette, in answer to many inquiries, is publishing a summary of the laws of the territory relating to acknowledgement of deeds, recording deeds, paying taxes, and redeeming lands sold for non-payment of taxes, and offers himself as an agent to pay taxes for non-residents. Written on the broadside is a letter: W. E. Woodruff, Military Land Agency Office, Little Rock, Ark., to Thomas I. Holton, Salisbury, NC, 1825 July 28. Suggests Holton’s land in Phillips County is probably good land, informs him of amount of taxes and Woodruff’s commission.

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