

# The Southwest Collection at "Texas Tech"

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PERHAPS the proper perspective for viewing the Southwest Collection is in terms of youth—a relatively new country; a young, vigorous, and ambitious college; and a still younger archives—all caught up in a "Texas size" period of growth.

The entire Southwest is short on both rainfall and Anglo-American history. Utah achieved statehood in 1896, Oklahoma in 1907, and Arizona and New Mexico in 1912—a hundred years after Louisiana. Western Texas, comprising 44 percent of the State's area, shares with these other new States both aridity and late development by Anglo-Americans. A thumbnail history of Anglo-American culture in West Texas would include these post-Civil War topics: settlement of the Indian problem, the buffalo slaughter, cattle ranches, nesters (stock farmers), railroads, cotton farming, mechanized and irrigated farming, and more recently the oil and other industries.

The city of Lubbock is at the center of the most mechanized farming section of the world—an area that is aided and indeed made viable by thousands of irrigation wells and an area where a great variety of agrarian commodities, such as cotton and milo maize, flourish phenomenally. Lubbock's population in 1909, the year of its incorporation, was 2,000. Today the population of this modern college town is about 150,000.

Lubbock is the home of Texas Technological College. Although the college name indicates a technological institution, its School of Arts and Sciences has traditionally been the largest of its six schools. The Southwest Collection was established in 1955 as a separate department of the college to provide a permanent repository for nongovernmental records of historical value to the area, including the archives of the college. To support the graduate program the

\*The author, Director of the Southwest Collection and associate professor of sociology at Texas Technological College, read this paper on Oct. 9, 1964, at a session on manuscript collections in the Southwest at the 28th annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, in Austin, Tex. Chester V. Kielman, Archivist, University of Texas Library, was session chairman.

staff is expected to collect research materials—in all forms—relating to the American Southwest in the humanities and the social sciences. Although such materials are of especial value to historians, ample resources are sought to support research also in government, sociology, economics, and English literature.<sup>1</sup>

Since the spring of 1963 the Southwest Collection has been housed in the Social Science Building. The quarters comprise approximately 14,000 square feet and include individual study carrels, paneled reading rooms, spacious work areas, and four levels of stacks. Total shelving measures over 3½ miles and provides about 16,000 cubic feet of storage space. The following files are maintained: map, newspaper, periodical, microfilm, tape recording, photograph, book, and manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Although all these files are

<sup>1</sup>Through the years good use has been made of materials by the students and faculty in the English department. Of especial use in the future will be the growing file of authors' manuscripts. Among the score or more of authors who have donated manuscripts are Walter P. Webb, Ramon Adams, S. Omar Barker, and Allan Bosworth. "Materials of this sort are especially valuable to students," said Everett A. Gillis, head of the English department, "because they demonstrate so well the creative processes." A new course, "Sociological Uses of Historical Materials," will be offered next year by the Director of the Southwest Collection. Obviously, one goal of this graduate seminar will be to increase the use of historical sources on the campus.

<sup>2</sup>Maps of the Southwest have been judged an outstanding collection. Because of space limitations and their availability on microfilm, no attempt has been made to collect newspapers, but originals of the Lubbock and college newspapers, historical editions, and small runs of area newspapers not available on film will be preserved.

At present the periodical file contains about 75 titles, including the standard historical journals. Because of the proliferation of titles, including house organs, and the increased amount of information printed that in the past was contained in newspapers, this file will increase tremendously in size and research value through the years.

The microfilm file contains business and personal information not available to us in its original form. Also, a continuing interest in the Spanish Southwest and U.S.-Mexico relations has led to our acquiring microfilm of the Bexar and Laredo Archives and of U.S. consular letters, consular dispatches, and diplomatic notes.

A fine collection of oral history is being compiled on magnetic tape. Already this file has served as the basis for a detailed study, *A History of Lubbock* (West Texas Museum Association, 1962). One unique body of 30 tapes contains testimony before the [Texas] Crime Investigating Committee, 1950-53.

Most of our historical photographs are filed as parts of manuscript collections or by subject, with cross-references in the photograph file. For example, most of the 22,000 pictures and negatives received from Brown Studio were kept together as a collection and only exceptionally important photographs were filed by subject. A notable exception to our general rule was the handling of about 5,000 photographs received from an area publisher. These items had been grouped according to subject by the publisher and hence could be placed very conveniently in the photograph file.

We have a small but splendid collection of cataloged books dealing with the history and the institutions of the Southwest.

The basic, or master, file is called the reference file. It is housed in 50 legal-size file drawers and contains miscellaneous data pertaining to persons, places, and

valuable and vital to our operation, the indispensable one—the one that distinguishes the Southwest Collection from the college's library and from its museum and that distinguishes the Southwest Collection from all the other collections of Southwestern materials—is the collection of original historical manuscripts.

Although we have not as yet entered into any sort of management of the college's records, we have been receiving noncurrent files from the various departments at their convenience. Besides these we have several collections of personal papers related in some way to the history of the college. For example, Royston Campbell Crane, a local historian and lawyer, was in the thick of the agitation, 1916–23, for the creation of the college. From him we received pertinent articles, scrapbooks, and correspondence. Amon G. Carter, “Mr. Fort Worth”—oilman, newspaper publisher, and Texas entrepreneur—worked long and hard for the establishment of Texas Technological College. Nine days after the college was founded he was appointed to serve on its board, and at the initial meeting of the board, on March 2, 1923, he was elected chairman, a position he held until his resignation from the board in 1927. His “Texas Tech files” (5,336 pieces) are in the Southwest Collection. Bradford Knapp was the second president of the college. We have drafts of his speeches, his correspondence, materials pertaining to his personal business, and some of the papers of his father, Seaman A. Knapp, who had a distinguished career as publisher of *Western Stock Journal and Farmer*, professor of practical and experimental agriculture, college president, and promoter of improved farm methods. Seaman Knapp came to Texas in 1903 and established a community demonstration center that was the beginning of the home demonstration movement in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He also instituted the 4-H Club movement.

The materials we have described for *The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* total 280,698 leaves and represent enough of our collection to warrant analysis. Such an analysis shows that 47 percent are business records. Analysis of the subject matter reveals that 29 percent relate primarily to persons or families; 24 percent relate primarily to associations or institutions; 20 percent relate primarily to land use, including ranching, farming,

things. Although included in the 3,000 entries are some cross-references, this file does not serve as an index per se but rather as a guide. The reference file contains some small uncataloged collections. Small cataloged collections are filed separately. All large collections are boxed and shelved in the stacks. Filed by number, they are keyed to a locator file.

and land companies; 10 percent relate primarily to pioneering and frontier life; 10 percent relate to particular businesses; and the remaining 7 percent relate to other subjects—places, things, or isolated events.

No one would expect us to have papers of an abolitionist. But we have some papers of Elijah Parish Lovejoy and his family, 1804–91. They were donated by a Texan who likes the college. They were useful to one of our history professors who was studying the abolition movement and whose biography of Lovejoy was published by the University of Illinois in 1961.

Here are the names of some of the persons and firms whose papers reflect the history of West Texas: J. Wright Mooar, buffalo hunter; Isaac L. Ellwood, West Texas landowner and developer of barbed wire; Sam Hill, pioneer Angus cattle breeder; Clent Breedlove, aviation pioneer of the southern plains; the Espuela Land and Cattle Co.; the Lubbock–Crosby County Medical Society; Louis Hamilton Hill, cattle and land agent of Albany, Tex.; the C. W. Post Colonization Projects and Double U Ranch; Paris Cox, the first colonizer of the high plains of Texas; Don Hampton Biggers, journalist and politician, who dug one of the first irrigation wells in Lubbock County; and the Baker Mercantile Co., established in Lockney, Tex., in 1894, whose files of correspondence significantly reveal business conditions during the economic depression and dust bowl days of the 1930's.

Daniel I. J. Thornton, rancher, political figure, and a former student at Texas Technological College, gave us his personal papers, 1924–56. Included are materials relating to his election as the 29th Governor of Colorado.

Our first distinguished professor was Carl Coke Rister, a native Texan who before his appointment in 1951 had spent 21 years as a teacher and prolific writer at the University of Oklahoma. His specialty was the history of the Southwest, and at the time of his death in 1955 the college purchased his library and his papers. Most of his books and manuscript materials are in the Southwest Collection. Numbering about 87,000 leaves, the manuscripts contain valuable data on the oil industry and the frontier. Included are drafts of his books and articles, correspondence, and historical photographs. Incidentally, the Southwest Collection relies heavily on private donations of materials and since 1955 has spent only about \$300 for manuscripts.

One of our large collections goes by the name Yellow House Land Co. This company, a trust estate, was organized in 1923

to purchase from the heirs of George W. Littlefield approximately 300,000 acres of land in Lamb and Hockley Counties and to resell it in small plots to farmers. Records were rounded up from both the field office in the town of Littlefield and from the home office in Austin. Included are some of the papers of the predecessor "Littlefield Lands," dating from 1913.

By far the largest collection, and perhaps one of the strongest we shall ever receive, is the records of the Matador Land and Cattle Co., Ltd., 1882-1951. This company, organized by a group of businessmen in Scotland to purchase a Texas ranch for cattle raising, was one of many foreign companies formed during the U.S. cattle boom of the last century; and it was the only company to survive to the mid-20th century.

The Matador was big and successful. Through the years the Matador ran cattle not only in Texas, but also in South Dakota and Wyoming and in Saskatchewan, Canada. Its cattle herds always numbered more than 45,000 head, and the average herd was considerably larger. Altogether the Matador branded more than a million calves. It was big business from the beginning, when its 1½-million-acre range spread over most of one Texas county and parts of three others. And the Matador was big business when it went into liquidation for about \$19 million. From beginning to end, the Scots exercised tight control of the company. With responsibility for the management of an area in Texas about twice the size of Rhode Island and containing, just for example, 500 miles of fence—alone worth \$156,000—no one would think of their becoming idle or complacent. Separated as they were from their investment by thousands of miles of land and sea, they were constantly interested in all phases of ranch business. These included branding cattle; the classes of cattle; land and titles; currency; reports and accounts; sales and proceeds; markets; shipping cattle; the condition of ranges, water, cattle, and weather; grass on the ranges; losses on the ranges; leases; the average price of cattle; taxes; courts; and remittances. Yes, from Dundee, Scotland, the Scots managed the ranch operation as a business, and they managed it completely. And in so doing they created an excellent, detailed, and gigantic body of business records that will interest and benefit scholars of many disciplines for years to come.

The collecting, handling, and use of the Matador records at Texas Technological College are closely interwoven with the origin, development, and success of the Southwest Collection. We received the files—about half a million leaves—from Dundee, the home

office; from Denver, the American office; and from the two Texas divisions, the Matador and the Alamositas. The first accession was in 1928, the second in 1931, another in 1956, and the final one in 1957. Credit for the total accession must be divided among members of the history faculty, the museum staff, the museum association, the library, the college administration, the Southwest Collection, and certainly the far-thinking Scots, who knew that the papers—diaries, letters, minutes, ledgers, tally books, photographs, maps, reports, and legal documents—would always be “at home” on the plains.

Wherever there is growth there is optimism; so I can hardly view the story of the Southwest Collection as anything but a success story. This success would not have been possible without the support of many persons, both private citizens and the faculty and staff of Texas Technological College. Many people have caught the vision of building a great regional repository to preserve the past for the enrichment of the future. This was obvious during the past fiscal year (September 1963–August 1964), our first full year in the new quarters. From 250 donors—more than twice as many as in any previous year—we received manuscript collections of more than 250,652 leaves and 5,175 other items for our various other files.

About half of the manuscripts donated in the year came from departments and organizations at the college. These include early maps of the college from the School of Civil Engineering; minutes of the Council of Deans; institutional self-study papers; files from the public information department containing many photographs; assorted printed items from the college press; graduate seminar papers from the history department; minutes of the faculty women's club; minutes of the tenure and privilege committee; and early files of the Agriculture School.

Very briefly, here are some of the manuscripts received during the year from off-campus sources. Additions were made to the R. Wright Armstrong and the Clifford B. Jones collections. Both men have been prominent in the affairs of West Texas and more particularly in the affairs of the college. Mr. Armstrong, a retired railroad official, is currently chairman of the board of the college. Dr. Jones, banker, businessman, and formerly manager of the Spur Ranch Properties, has been connected with the college since the days when it was merely a dream. He served on the first Board of Directors and later was president of the college. He is now,

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and has been for many years, a staunch supporter of the Southwest Collection.

Additions were made to the Soash papers. W. P. Soash of Waterloo, Iowa, self-styled "empire builder," purchased 300,000 acres of fertile grazing land from Col. C. C. Slaughter, the great landowner and cattleman of West Texas. Supposedly every foot of this soil was suitable for diversified farming. In 1909 Soash ran special trains loaded with land buyers from the Midwest. As might be expected, the Soash papers contain promotional materials, family papers, abstracts of title, and records of land sales.

Arthur B. Duncan arrived in Floyd County in 1884. After serving 20 years as county judge he opened an abstract office. From his daughter we received a fine collection—about 70,000 pieces—pertaining to the settlement and development of the south plains of Texas. Particularly noteworthy are the correspondence files, many of which concern land sales. Also specifically related to land matters are the promotional leaflets and broadsides published by scores of ambitious west Texas towns.

Another sizable donation came from the Lubbock League of Women Voters and from its president. Of primary interest are the records of the organization, but the real importance of this donation is that it fits into a block of materials we had received previously from other women's organizations, such as the Church Women's Federation, the American Association of University Women, the Junior Garden Club, the Texas Home Economics Association, and the Texas Music Teachers Association.

In the future we shall continue to collect noncurrent business records, many on film. Business history is a field in which we should participate. As Joe B. Frantz wrote in 1957:

On the whole, Texas and the Southwest have lagged behind the remainder of the nation in having their business histories told. Undoubtedly one reason for this lag has been the comparative newness of Texas business houses. Many of them are still in the first generation of ownership and, consequently, have had neither time nor urge to be reflective. . . . Perhaps the most notable academic study of a Texas business institution is the account of the business activities of the Matador Ranch.<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion reached by Dr. Frantz in 1957 was that business history in Texas was stirring. If it was stirring then, it is stirring now, and some of this stirring is part of the success story of the Southwest Collection, where 2 million leaves of material have been collected and processed in what seems an incredibly short time.

<sup>3</sup> Joe B. Frantz, "Business History," in *Texas Business Review*, vol. 31, no. 4 (Apr., 1957).