

S0440 Matthews-Chambers Papers, 1811-1974 29 Folders

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PROVENANCE

Mary Chambers Wiese, daughter of Lucy Matthews Chambers and William Lionel Chambers, donated the Matthews-Chambers papers to the State Historical Society of Missouri (Formerly Western Historical Manuscript Collection) in December 1983.

HISTORY

Mary Chambers Wiese, daughter of Lucy Matthews Chambers and William Lionel Chambers, donated the Matthews-Chambers papers to the State Historical Society of Missouri in December 1983.

The Matthews-Chambers papers document the daily lives of two families. In 1911, William Lionel Chambers married Lucy Matthews (1875-1965), the daughter of a prominent St. Louis family.

While serving as a British Army officer in India in the 1860s, William Eubank Chambers (1841- ?) and his wife, Mary Jane Baker Chambers (1843-1920), had two children, William Lionel Chambers (1865-1927) and Robert Stuart Chambers (c.1866). In 1877, Mary Chambers and the boys returned to England.

In 1879, the couple sent William Lionel Chambers to work on a farm in Allen, Michigan. Chambers disliked farm work and tried other occupations. He went to New Mexico to be a cowboy, sold jewelry in Indiana, and served as an army major in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. Meanwhile, he read enough law to pass the bar exams and become a lawyer in St. Louis. Chambers served as Pardon Attorney in Jefferson City for Governor Herbert Hadley from 1908-1913. William Lionel Chambers and Lucy Matthews had two children, Mary Levering (Mrs. William Wiese) born in 1914 and William Nisbet (c.1916).

From 1915-1922, Chambers worked for the Mercantile Trust Co. in Joplin, Missouri. In 1922, the family moved to Rolla where Chambers opened his own law firm. After his death in 1927, Lucy Chambers and the children returned to St. Louis.

Lucy Matthews Chambers' father, Leonard Matthews (1828-1931), first came to Missouri in 1841. During the 1849 Gold Rush, he went to California. With his \$2,500 stake from the gold field, Matthews started a successful business in California. In 1851, Matthews came to St. Louis where he founded a wholesale drug company. He sold the business to the Meyer Bros. Drug Company in 1865. Later he opened the Matthews and Company brokerage firm.

In 1861, Leonard Matthews married Mary Spottswood Nisbet Matthews (1839-1918). They had eight children: Mary Nisbet (b. 1862), Isabel (b. 1864), Nina (b. 1867), William Nisbet

(b. 1869), Edmund Orville (b. 1871), Leonard (b. 1873), Lucy (b. 1875), and Claude Levering (b. 1880). Nina's son, L. Matthews Werner, founded the Sebago Club in St. Louis in 1923 (see collection S0206).

Lucy Matthews attended Mary Institute and the old St. Louis Art School. Later, she studied art in New York, under William Merritt Chase, and Europe. She became a member of the Artists' Guild and remained active in art groups until her death in 1965.

SCOPE & CONTENT

The Matthews-Chambers papers document the work, social activities, and travels of the Chambers family from 1811-1974. The collection also reflects social and political conditions in St. Louis, England, and India during the 19th century and early 20th century.

Correspondence (1877-1884) among members of the Chambers family reveals inter-familial tensions over child rearing, education and finances. These letters also describe military duties, social activities, living conditions, and attitudes toward natives among British Army officers and British planters living in India during the late 19th century.

The collection contains copies of the original papers which were returned to the donor.

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PREFERRED CITATION

From the collection S0440 Chambers Family Papers at the State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1: CORRESPONDENCE, 1852-1921, 16 FOLDERS

Grouped by author and arranged chronologically. Principal authors include: William Eubank Chambers (51 letters), Mary Jane Baker Chambers (42 letters), Robert Stuart Chambers (5 letters), and Ethel Wilkinson (3 letters). Topics include: Mary Chambers' nursing course; educational plans for Lionel and Stuart Chambers, family finances; Lionel's various occupations in America; Colonel Chambers' health, living conditions, and duties in India; military action against the native tribes in India; and attitudes toward the natives by British tea planters and the military.

SERIES 2 - FAMILY HISTORY, 1811-1974, 16 FOLDERS

Arranged chronologically. '

FOLDER LIST

1. Commander Tarleton to Baker Family, April 16, 1852
2. William E. Chambers to Mary Jane Baker Chamber, 13 letters, October 1877 - April 1878
3. William E. Chambers to Mary Jane Baker Chambers, 16 letters, April 1878 - May 1881
4. William E. Chambers to William Lionel Chambers, 9 letters, March 1877 - January 1881
5. William E. Chambers to William Lionel Chambers, 13 letters, March 1882 - December 1884
6. Mary Jane Baker Chambers to William Lionel Chambers, 19 letters, December 1879 - June 1880
7. Mary Chambers to William Lionel Chambers, 23 letters, July 1880 - December 1884
8. Robert Stuart Chambers to William Lionel Chambers, 5 letters, August 1880- May 1881
9. Letter of recommendation for William Lionel Chambers from Thomas R. Reynolds, Sept. 9, 1880
10. Fred Baker to William Lionel Chambers, Sept. 2, 1880
11. A friend (HVY) to William Lionel Chambers, August 1881
12. Sarah Endle to William E. Chambers, Sept. 1, 1895
- Eden Hospital, Calcutta, India, to William E. Chambers, October 9, 1895
13. C.W. Winchester to William Lionel Chambers, May 27, 1882 Hamilton Cummings to William E. Chambers, November 22, 1920 Isabel Skinker to William E. Chambers, December 30, 1920
14. Ethel C. Wilkinson to Mary J. Chambers, July 15, 1920 Waldmar ? (nephew) to Mary Chambers, November 9, 1920
15. Ethel C. Wilkinson to William Lionel Chambers, 2 letters, 1920-1921
16. Envelopes and Cards, 1881-1920

SERIES 2

17. Chambers Family History, 1811-1974
18. Notes on Family History, 1877-1974

19. Poem, 1903
20. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, 1875-1899
21. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, 1899
22. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, pp. 1-30, 1901
23. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, pp. 31-65, 1901-1903
24. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, pp. 66-99, 1903-1906
25. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, pp. 100-134, 1906-1908
26. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, pp. 135-182, 1909-1914
27. Lucy Matthews Chambers, autobiography, pp. 183-218, 1914-1918
28. Certificates of Safe Passage, 1861, 1903
29. Article, re: Lucy M. Chambers, 1965

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