

University of Chicago Library

Guide to the Reuben T. Durrett Collection of William and George Croghan Papers circa 1823-1890



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.CROGHAN
Title	Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. William and George Croghan Papers
Date	circa 1823-1890
Size	0.5 linear feet (1 box)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	Reuben Thomas Durrett (1824-1913), lawyer, manuscript and book collector, and Kentucky historian. This collection contains materials associated with soldier, surveyor, and businessman William Croghan (1752-1822) and his uncle, the influential "Indian agent," George Croghan (1720?-1782). The collection consists principally of the business documents and correspondence of William Croghan from 1789 to 1812. There is also a transcript of a journal kept by George Croghan from May to October 1765.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. William and George Croghan Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Acquisition Information

The existence of the Durrett library first came to the attention of the University of Chicago through William E. Dodd, a professor of American history at the University who had consulted the library as a student. Like other faculty members of the Division of the Social Sciences early in the century, Dodd was concerned about the University's lack of extensive research materials for history and related subjects, and since he was aware of Durrett's advanced age, he persuaded A. C. McLaughlin, also of the history department, to accompany him to Louisville in June, 1910, to see the collection and to make discreet inquiries about plans for its disposition. The two found Durrett himself uncertain about his plans, but learned that the Durrett family opposed making a donation of the collection, and that they were in communication with Princeton University and the University of Illinois about selling the library.

Dodd himself was very enthusiastic about the research potential which Durrett's library represented, and won the support of many of his colleagues on the social science faculties in his efforts to persuade President Judson to consider the purchase by the University of the entire library, numbering some 30,000 volumes. Convinced that the collection would be a valuable addition to the University's holdings, but wary of the expense involved, Judson agreed cautiously to investigate the idea. Although Dodd and his colleagues were anxious to conclude the agreement quickly, fearing competition from other would-be purchasers or the dispersal of the collection upon Durrett's apparently imminent death, the task of deciding upon a fair offer was made difficult by the fact that the collection had never been adequately catalogued.

Durrett's own suggestion made in December, 1912 of \$45,000 seemed high, so in February 1913, the University engaged Walter Lichtenstein, a Northwestern University librarian who had previously acted as purchasing agent for the University of Chicago libraries, to assess the value of the Durrett collection. Lichtenstein's report was submitted to President Judson on February 21, 1913, following a trip to Louisville to sample the collection.

The assessment, made on terms of commercial market value rather than scholarly significance, divided Durrett's library into four parts. Some 20,000 bound volumes (including 500 volumes of Kentuckiana) he estimated at \$7,200. Two hundred fifty file folders of pamphlet material had no apparent commercial value. Numerous manuscripts and newspapers were difficult to assess but Lichtenstein thought they could be fairly purchased for \$15,000. A collection of maps was estimated to have a value around \$50. Lichtenstein's estimate, therefore, totaled \$22,000-\$22,500, considerably less than Durrett's own. When the University authorized Lichtenstein to make this offer to the Durrett family, however, they accepted it, apparently favoring Chicago as the repository of their collection. The purchase sum, which was too high to be taken from the University's ordinary budget, was raised among outside donors, and under Lichtenstein's supervision, the library was dismantled and shipped to Chicago by early May. It filled 287 large packing crates. Its arrival provoked considerable comment in the Louisville and Chicago press, and almost immediately the University began to receive research inquiries from scholars and requests from several libraries for copies of some of the Durrett material to add to their own collections.

In his report Lichtenstein had warned President Judson that considerable effort and expense would be required to process the collection once it was at the University. His warning proved to be justified. Aside from the massive undertaking of unpacking, sorting, and cataloguing the collection, much of the material was found to be in poor condition, requiring cleaning, repair, and binding or rebinding. To facilitate the efficient processing of the Durrett acquisition, the entire operation was assigned to Edward A. Henry of the library staff, who, with the help of his assistants, was to devote most of his attention to the Durrett project for some seven years. It was decided that duplicates should be disposed of, that a number of Filson Club possessions in Durrett's library should be returned to the Club, and that most of the non-manuscript material in the collection would be distributed according to subject matter among the University's various departmental libraries. On several occasions between 1913 and 1937, items of an official character were returned to Kentucky upon request, including records of Jefferson County, journals of Kentucky constitutional conventions, and certain manuscripts and photographs of the Filson Club identified by the club's president, R. C. Ballard Thurston. Most of Henry's

time seems to have been devoted to preparing the material for this dispersal. His assignment was expanded in 1914 when the University purchased a collection totaling 436 volumes of Kentucky newspapers and miscellaneous books from Mrs. Joel R. Lyle, sister of Robert C. Boggs of Lexington, Kentucky. It was deemed appropriate to merge the Boggs-Lyle acquisition with the Durrett, and the two were processed together.

By the end of the 1915-16 academic year, about 9,000 of the Durrett and Boggs-Lyle volumes had been processed and distributed to the departmental libraries. It was then that Henry and his staff turned some of their attention to the manuscripts--that is, to the material comprising the Durrett Collection as described in this guide. At that time the Durrett manuscripts were apparently divided into four large groups--the Joel Tanner Hart Papers, the Joshua Lacy Wilson Papers, miscellaneous manuscripts, and miscellaneous separately bound items--either mounted in scrapbooks or bound together. A card catalog was compiled for at least the first three of these groups.

The Durrett Collection remained in this state until the mid-1950s. By then it had been incorporated within the holdings of the Department of Special Collections (1951), and it became clear that reorganization of the manuscripts was necessary. Paul Angle, a member of the staff of the Chicago Historical Society, who had surveyed the University of Chicago's manuscript collection as a consultant in 1944, had pointed out that the Durrett miscellaneous bound manuscripts in particular were of little use to scholars as they were then arranged and described. Moreover, the Special Collections staff had observed that the mountings and bindings done by Henry's staff were detrimental to the lives of the manuscripts, and that the existing catalog and descriptions provided inadequate access to the documents. The manuscripts, therefore, were removed from their bindings and divided into smaller and more coherent sub-collections.

In the 1970s, an effort was undertaken to edit the 1956 guide, to enhance the descriptions of the Durrett codices for greater detail and accuracy, and to differentiate between transcripts and original manuscript material bound together in the codices. Manuscript material also received conservation treatment. In 1983, another attempt was made to write a comprehensive guide to the entire collection. This guide remained in use until 2015. The current guide was completed in 2016.

Biographical Note

William Croghan Sr. (1752-1822) emigrated from Ireland in 1754 with support from his uncle, George Croghan. William initially served with the British army but sold his commission and joined the Virginia Regiment with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. He served in many of the major engagements of the war and rose to the rank of Major at the conclusion of the winter at Valley Forge. After the war, William and his close associate, George Rogers Clark, received their surveying commissions from the College of William and Mary. In 1784 they were engaged to oversee the surveying, mapping and recording of all deeds relating to the Virginia state line bounty lands. William relocated to Louisville the same year and came to own large tracts of land as remuneration for his surveying work. In July 1789, William married Lucy Clark, sister to George Rogers Clark. William Croghan died at Locust Grove in 1822.

George Croghan Sr. (1720?-1782) emigrated from Ireland in 1741 and facilitated the subsequent emigration of his nephew, William Croghan, in 1754. After arriving in Pennsylvania, George rose to prominence as a fur trader and became well known for his success trading with Native Americans. He was later appointed as an "Indian agent" and made responsible for negotiating with and managing relationships between Native American groups and British interests. George went on to play an influential role in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) supplying British forces and negotiating with Native American groups on behalf of British colonists. In 1777, following the revolutionary war, George Croghan fell under suspicion of being involved in a recently uncovered loyalist conspiracy and charged with treason. He was cleared of all charges at a trial the following year. George Croghan died in 1782 in Pennsylvania and was buried in Philadelphia.

Scope Note

The collection is organized chronologically and contains materials related to George and William Croghan. The bulk of the collection comes in the form of William Croghan's business documents and correspondence. This includes three ledgers that belonged to William Croghan. Additionally, there is a transcript of George Croghan's journal from May 15, 1765 to October 8, 1765.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/>

Researchers interested in topics represented in the Durrett Collection should check the author, title, or subject headings relevant to their interests in the Library catalog for potentially useful books and pamphlets from the Durrett Library, which were dispersed among the existing departmental libraries at the time of acquisition. Some of these items have since been transferred to the Rare Books collection and to the Reuben T. Durrett Collection of Broad-sides, Pamphlets, and Leaflets, in the Special Collections Research Center.

The Durrett rare book collections include works of literature, travel and description, early histories of Kentucky such as Mann Butler's, biographies, legislative acts, and other legal documents.

Examples include Henry McMurtrie's *Sketches of Louisville and Its Environs* (1819); a collection of humorous verses, *The Kentucky Miscellany*, by Thomas Johnson, Jr. (1821), one of two known copies of the fourth edition, the first known to survive; and *The Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp ...* (1826).

Among the newspapers are 135 titles published in Kentucky, beginning in 1788 with the Kentucky Gazette, the first newspaper established in the state. Other important titles include the Mirror, the Palladium, the Guardian of Freedom, the Farmer's Library or Ohio Intelligencer, and numerous campaign newspapers such as The Patriot and The Spirit of '76 from 1826.

Included in the American Paper Currency Collection in the Special Collections Research Center is Durrett's collection of confederate currency, among which are many examples of notes issued by the Bank of Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Correspondence, reports, and clippings concerning the acquisition of the Reuben T. Durrett Collection for the University of Chicago are found in the University of Chicago Library Records Addenda.

In addition, the following collections contain material related in subject matter to various portions of the Durrett Collection:

Codex MS 798 Lettres de Mr. Cahusac, Américain, juge de paix à Fleurance, 1806-1836

Church History Documents Collection

Codex MS 790, Letters to Virgil David, 1828-1838

Douglas, Stephan A. Papers

English, William H. Papers

Ethno-History Collection

Lafayette Manuscripts

Lafayette-Bonaventure. Collection

Lane, Ebenezer, Family. Papers

Lewis, Fielding. Papers

Robertson, Wyndham. Papers

All Durrett sub-collections are as follows:

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Boggs Family. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Boone Family. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Broadsides, Broadsheets, Pamphlets, and Leaflets

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Christopher Columbus Graham. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. George and William Croghan. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. George Nicholas. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. George Rogers Clark. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Government Records

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Edmund Lyne Estate. Records

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. James Wilkinson. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Joel Tanner Hart. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Joshua Lacey Wilson. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Lewis Family. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Louisville, Kentucky Board of Trustees. Records

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Mann Butler. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Michael Walsh Cluskey. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Miscellaneous Manuscripts and Codices

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Portraits, Illustrations, and Cartographic Material

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Reuben T. Durrett. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Richard H. Collins. Papers

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Richard Jouett Menefee Collection on Matthew Harris Jouett

Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Shelby Family. Papers

Subject Headings

- Durrett, Reuben T. (Reuben Thomas), 1824-1913
- Croghan, William, 1752-1823
- Croghan, George, 1720?-1782
- Croghan, George, d. 1782 -- Diaries
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- Frontier and pioneer life -- Kentucky -- Early works to 1800
- Kentucky -- History
- Pioneers -- United States -- Diaries
- Frontier and pioneer life -- Northwest, Old
- Frontier and pioneer life -- Ohio River Valley
- Indians of North America -- Northwest, Old
- Indians of North America -- Ohio River Valley
- Northwest, Old -- Description and travel -- Early works to 1800
- Ohio River Valley -- Description and travel -- Early works to 1800
- Diaries

- Manuscripts, American
- Account books
- Ledgers (account books)

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Croghan, George, "Journal of George Croghan" – Codex journal – 1765-1765 – Manuscript transcript. 46 p.

- Cdx53

Box 1

Folder 2

Croghan, William – Single-entry Ledger – 1784-1788 – Codex manuscript. 165 p.

- Cdx55

Box 1

Folder 3

Croghan, William – Single-entry Ledger with table of contents – 1788-1822 – Codex manuscript. 154 p.

- Cdx56; 144-154 blank.

Box 1

Folder 3

Anderson, Richard C. to William Croghan – Statement of Account – May 6, 1794 – A.D.S. 2 p.

Box 1

Folder 4

Kirkpatrick, A. – Payment Agreement – April 6, 1789 – A.D.S. 2 p.

- To pay debt of William Croghan to Blaine and Wilkins

Box 1

Folder 5

Fitzpatrick, A. and William Croghan – Statement of Account – May 29, 1795 – A.D.1 p.

Box 1

Folder 6

Croghan [William] to Abraham Chapline – Receipt – June 15, 1800 – A.D.S. 1 p.

Box 1

Folder 7

Bass, Peter to Major William Croghan – Receipt – March 21, 1802 – A.D.S 1 p.

Box 1

Folder 8

Croghan, William to Edmund Clark – Statement of Account – December, 1802 – A.D.S. 1 p.

Box 1

Folder 9

Croghan, W[illiam] to Thomas Carneal – Receipt – January 3, 1804 – A.D.S. 1 p. David Ross for expenses in making surveys

Box 1

Folder 10

Croghan, William, Louisville, Kentucky – Return of Taxable Property – July 9, 1805 – A.D.S. 1 p.

Box 1

Folder 11

Clark, Edmund to William Croghan – Received Account – November 3, 1807 – A.D.S. 1 p.

Box 1

Folder 12

Richard, Taylor to William [Croghan] – Letter – November 30, 1808 – A.L.S. 2 p.

Box 1

Folder 13

Croghan, William to Joseph Crockett – Statement of Account – November 16, 1809 – A.D.S. 2 p.

Box 1

Folder 14

Croghan, William to [James Barbour] – Letter – December 15, 1812 – Copy of A.L.S. 1 p.

Box 1

Folder 15

Joseph Bartholomew to William Croghan – Letter – 1818 – A.L.S. 2p.

Box 1

Folder 16

Bank of the United States, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Indenture – November 1, 1827 – A.D.S. 2 p.

- Deeding land to William Croghan; Certified by Joseph Watson, Mayor of Philadelphia and Worden Pope

Box 1

Folder 17

Everett, Clayton W., Toledo, Ohio to B.F. Alford, Louisville, Kentucky – Letter – August 11, 1905 – Typed Letter 2 p.

- Concerning the life and achievements of Colonel Croghan

Box 1

Folder 18

Rogers, Edmund to William Croghan – Receipt – n.d. – A.D.S. 1 p.

Box 2

Croghan, William – Single-entry Ledger – 1781-1796 – Codex manuscript. 119 p.

- Cdx54