MATTHEWS, THOMAS EDWIN
(1854-1945)
PAPERS
1789-1945

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INTRODUCTION

The Thomas E. Matthews Papers were placed on deposit in with the Tennessee State Library and Archives by the owner, Tom Schlater, through the agency of Mrs. Henry Buckner on behalf of the Colonial Dames Manuscripts program.

The materials in this collection measure 1.21 linear feet. There are approximately 800 items in collection. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Thomas E. Matthews Collection may be made for purposes of scholarly research. Since the papers are on deposit with the State Library and Archives, where use may constitute a potential copyright infringement, or for use for commercial purposes, the user should seek permission from the owner of the materials.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Thomas E. Matthews Collection, consisting of approximately 800 items, contains correspondence, clippings, and biographical and genealogical materials, all of which are primarily concerned with Judge Matthews’s book, General James Robertson, Father of Tennessee. There are numerous photostats and typed copies of materials obtained from the Indian Affairs Section of the Department of the Interior, the Draper Manuscripts, and the Library of Congress. These documents are for the period from 1789 to 1814. The correspondence of Judge Matthews is for the years 1921 to 1945. It deals with arrangements for the publication and distribution of his book. The collection is most valuable for its twenty-seven Willie Blount letters, twenty-seven R. J. Meigs letters, and its sixty-eight James Robertson letters, as well as its quantity of genealogical material on the families of Cockrill, Eakin, Erwin, Fort, Matthews, Robertson, Sharp and Thompson. All of these materials are either typed copies or photostats. There are no originals of the early material in this collection.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas Edwin Matthews

1854  April – Born in Plaquemine, Louisiana. Son of Elizabeth Sharp and Samuel Williams. His father had a law degree from Harvard. He was the great, great grandson of James Robertson. Willie Blount Robertson was his great grandfather whose daughter, Tennessee Robertson was his grandmother. His mother, Elizabeth Sharp, was the daughter of Tennessee Robertson Sharp.

1870  Attended Montgomery Bell Academy

1874  Attended the University of Virginia

1876  Graduated in first law class of Vanderbilt University Founders medalist

1886  May 13 – Married Mary Jane Strickler Adams

1908-1918  Judge of the Circuit Court of Davidson County; appointed by Gov. M. R. Patterson following the death of Judge John W. Childress

1938  Published General James Robertson, Father of Tennessee

1945  Jan 28 – Died at his home in Davidson County, Tennessee
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Robertson

1742  Born in Brunswick County, Virginia

1750  Moved to Western North Carolina

1771  Led a colony to the Watauga River and established a settlement which became the nucleus of the future state of Tennessee; took part in organization

1774  Took part in bloody battle of Point Pleasant

1776  Chosen to command a fort built near Watauga

1777  Appointed Indian agent to reside at their capital, Echota, to act as a medium

1778  Chosen to command the expedition to settle in Nashborough

1779  Gave warning of invasion by hostile portion of the Cherokees; led exploration from Watauga to the Cumberland; settlement increased from ten to 200; Indians tried to destroy the whites

1780  Brought a party and built first stockades on the site which he named Nashborough now Nashville

1781  Indians attacked Freeland’s station

1783  Robertson represented county of Davidson in North Carolina

1790  Commissioned as brigadier-general; organized campaigns to resist invasion, negotiated treaties until close of Indian Wars; always selected to make treaties with the Indians; appointed agent to the Chickasaw tribe

1814  Died at Chickasaw Agency
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9. Correspondence – Robertson, James 1791-1800 Draper Mss – photostats – 12 items  
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List of Thomas E. Matthews Collection of Manuscripts Placed on Deposit by Tom Schlater, the owner

Materials obtained from the Draper Manuscripts:
1. 12 James Robertson Letters 1791-1800 (Photostats)
2. 9 Felix Robertson Letters 1839-1869 and an account of the attack on Nashville by Indians given to Lyman C. Draper by Felix Robertson (Photostats)
3. 4 Indian Letters 1789-1793 to James Robertson (Photostats)
4. 48 pages of genealogical data on the Robertson family (Photostats)
5. 48 pages of biographical data 1833-1849 on James Robertson; copies from the Draper Manuscripts
6. 8 letters of Alexander McGilvray 1776-1788; copies from the Draper Manuscripts

Genealogical Data:
1. Paper bound volume of Robertson family records by J. Montgomery Seaver; mimeographed by American Historical Genealogical Society 1928
2. 59 pages of Family History by Judge William Blount Robertson (1880)
3. 9 Typed pages of Robertson family history from Shane Scrapbook from the Nashville Clarion, Sept. 8, 1814

Materials obtained from the Department of the Interior:
1. 26 letters of Willie Blount 1809-1814 (typed copies)
2. 27 letters of R. J. Miegs 1804-1814 (typed copies)
3. 9 letters of James Robertson 1803-1812 (typed copies)

Materials from the Library of Congress:
1. 7 letters of James Robertson 1790-1807 (Photostats)
2. 14 letters of James Robertson 1808-1812 (Photostats)
3. 14 letters of James Robertson 1813 (Photostats)
4. 12 letters of James Robertson 1814 (Photostats)
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