Guide

McMURRY FAMILY PAPERS 1853-1995 & undated

Archives of the Big Bend
Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library
Sul Ross State University
Alpine, Texas
The McMurry Family Papers were donated to Archives of the Big Bend by the grandchildren of Robert A. and Lola Beyer McMurry. The collection consists of family correspondence; a small group of McMurry Plumbing Company records; family and business photographs; school papers, photograph albums, scrapbooks, and diaries created and organized by their daughter Melba McMurry Rogers. Also included are photographs and records of the extended families (McMurry, Beyers, Douglass, and Rogers) of Robert A. McMurry and Lola Beyer McMurry.

Robert A. (Bob) McMurry (1891-1976), son of Robert Lee McMurry and Frances Douglass McMurry, married Lola Beyer November 11, 1917. Their only child, Lola Melba McMurry, was born September 5, 1918, in Fort Worth, Texas.

In 1920, Robert A. McMurry, a metal smith, established McMurry Plumbing Company in Alpine. For the next twenty years, he installed plumbing and heating systems for clients across West Texas. Between 1939 and 1941, R. A. McMurry completed a photographic survey of the buildings in which he had installed heating and plumbing systems through the years. From 1941 to 1944, he was a defense contractor for the U. S. government, working on housing for military bases in Texas. In retirement, the McMurrys acquired several ranches, living at the ranch near Waco, Texas until their deaths.

Melba McMurry graduated from Alpine High School in 1935, attended Sul Ross State College in Alpine for two years, and graduated from University of Texas in 1940. An artist and an athlete, she was named the jitterbug champion of West Texas in 1941. In November of 1941, Melba married geologist Carl P. Rogers. The couple lived in Panama for two years before returning to the United States, living in several Western states as they reared their three children. In retirement, they returned to Texas, with homes in Waco and the McMurry Ranch nearby. Melba McMurry died in 1995 and is buried beside her husband Carl P. Rogers, who died in 1992, and her parents, Robert and Lola McMurry, in the Valley Mills, Texas Cemetery.

The McMurry Family Papers are arranged in six series: Beyer Family Papers, R. A. & Lola McMurry Correspondence, McMurry Plumbing Company Records, Rogers-McMurry Correspondence, R. A. McMurry (biographical/genealogical) and Melba McMurry Rogers (savings materials). Savings Materials include photographs of the McMurry, Douglass, Beyer, and Rogers families. The collection is housed in four document boxes, five photograph boxes, three oversize boxes, and one cubic foot box.

Gaylan Corbin
Associate Archivist
April 9, 2008
CONDITIONS OF USE OF THE MCMURRY FAMILY PAPERS

1. No copying or publication of personal correspondence.

2. Copying of photographs is permitted for genealogical and scholarly purposes only.

3. No copying or publication of diaries and personal notes in folders 31-35.
Beyer Family Papers

Folder 1  A. D. Beyer (Battle of Cold Harbor) 1864
Folder 2  A. D. Beyer Records 1853-1862
Folder 3  H. H. Beyer Papers c. 1865
Folder 4  H. H. Beyer Journal (Trip to Mexico) 1883
Folder 5  H. H. Beyer - F. E. (Mrs. H. H.) Beyer Correspondence 1895-1899
Folder 6  Beyer Family Business Records 1878 - 1908
Folder 7  Lola Beyer Correspondence 1914-1916

R. A. (Bob) & Lola McMurry Correspondence 1917-1940

During these years, R. A. McMurry married Lola Beyer, their daughter Melba was born, and the McMurrays settled in Alpine, Texas, where Melba grew up. The couple exchange letters about his work and his daughter while he is away on business.

Folder 8  Lola & R. A. (Bob) McMurry Correspondence 1917-1918
Folder 9  Lola & R. A. (Bob) McMurry Correspondence 1919-1920
Folder 10 Lena Sarles - Lola McMurry Correspondence 1921-1922

At this time, Lola McMurry, too ill to care for her daughter, sent Melba to live with "Nannie," Lola’s sister, Lena Beyer Sarles.

Folder 11 Lola McMurry Correspondence (Melba) 1921-1922
Folder 12  R. A. (Bob) & Lola McMurry Correspondence 1926-1930
Folder 13  R. A. (Bob) McMurry Correspondence 1936 & 1939
Folder 14  R. A. (Bob) & Lola McMurry Correspondence 1931-1940
Folder 15  R. A. (Bob) & Lola McMurry Correspondence 1941
Folder 16  R. A. (Bob) & Lola McMurry Correspondence 1942-1943 & 1946
McMurry Plumbing Company Records 1941-1943

Folder 17  McMurry Plumbing Company Correspondence 1941-1944 & undated
Folder 18  McMurry Plumbing Company War Contracts 1941-1944 & undated
Folder 19  McMurry Plumbing Company General Office Book 1943

Rogers - McMurry Correspondence 1941-1967

This correspondence is primarily between Melba & Carl Rogers and their parents, Lola & Bob McMurry and C. P. & Ethel Black Rogers. "Nannie" is Melba’s aunt, Lena Beyer Sarles. When Melba McMurry marries Carl Rogers in 1941 and moves to Panama where he is employed in the operation of the Panama Canal, Lola and Bob McMurry also leave their Alpine home, first following his work as a government contractor on military bases, then retiring near Waco, Texas, where they celebrate their 50th anniversary in 1967.

Folder 20  Melba McMurry - Carl Rogers Correspondence 1941
Folder 21  Rogers - McMurry (Panama) Correspondence 1942
Folder 22  Rogers - McMurry (Panama) Correspondence 1943
Folder 23  Letters to Carl & Melba Rogers (Panama) 1941-1943
Folder 24  Rogers - McMurry Correspondence 1944-1949
Folder 25  Rogers - McMurry Correspondence 1950-1957
Folder 26  Rogers - McMurry Correspondence 1958-1960
Folder 27  Rogers - McMurry Correspondence 1961-1962
Folder 28  Rogers - McMurry Correspondence 1963-1967

R. A. McMurry

Melba McMurry Rogers

RESEARCH ONLY. NO COPYING OR PUBLICATION (folders 31-35)

Folder 31  Diaries of Melba McMurry Rogers 1934-1995

Digital copy (DVD) viewable. Original diaries do not circulate.

Folder 32  Final Illness of Carl Rogers 1991

Folder 33  Rogers - Heyman Correspondence 1992 VFW

Folder 34  Certificate 1993

Folder 35  Final Illness of Melba Rogers 1994-1995

Savings Materials

In 1930, R. A. McMurry gave his daughter a "Memory Book," the first of a series of photograph album scrapbooks in which Melba McMurry displays a passion for collecting, preservation, and documentation. She researched family history and became the keeper of the family archives. Her notes add value to correspondence, photographs, and other memorabilia throughout the materials.

Folder 36  Lola Melba McMurry Birth Records 1918 & 1941

Folder 37  Melba to Lola McMurry 1929-1930 & undated

Folder 38  Poems for English 711931

Folder 39  Compositions for English classes 1936-1940

Folder 40  Melba McMurry’s Autograph Book 1929-1935 & undated

Folder 41  Melba McMurry’s Sul Ross Brand (yearbook) 1936

Folder 42  Melba McMurry’s College Years, 1935-1940

Folder 43  Melba McMurry & Carl Rogers Wedding Album 1941

Folder 44  Materials Associated with Wedding Album 1941-1966 & undated

Folder 45  50th Anniversary Album (R. A. & Lola McMurry) 1967

Folder 46  Rogers Family Record & Associated Materials c. 1900-1965
Photographs: McMurry-Douglass-Beyer-Rogers Families

Box A [OS] Melba McMurry’s “Memory Book” (Photograph Album/Scrapbook) 1925-1954 & undated

Alpine & Marfa public schools; Locust swimming pool; Rainbow girls; Fletcher’s Ranch (1930); Sul Ross training school: Melba McMurry, Gena Parr, Paul & Florence Forchheimer, Merritt Hopson, Inda Benson, Johnnie Chandley (1925-27); Sul Ross football team [1937-38]; Lola McMurry (1931); Allen Ludden; Sun Carnival (El Paso) 1935-1936.

Folder A-1 Melba to Lola McMurry (Mother’s Day) 1929


Folder A-3 Materials Associated with Memory Book: Sun Carnival 1935-1936

BOX B [OS] Melba McMurry’s Photograph Album & Certificates 1935-1941 & undated

Sul Ross football team (includes Snooks Green, Bigham Luna) 1938; UT classmates (Hardin House, Austin) 1939-1940; Alpine/Marfa people: Ross Smith, Benton Adams, Reuben Allen, Arlia Blankenship, Jerry Parker Turney, Margaret Weyerts, Mary Virginia McIntyre, Ford Rackley, Sam Humphris, Alvin Johnson Jr. Other: Allen Ludden, Margo Littlejohn, Keith Hurley

Folder B-1 Materials associated with Photograph Album

Folder B-2 Certificates/ Diplomas (Melba McMurry) 1935-1941

BOX C [OS] Melba McMurry Rogers’s Scrapbook 1942-1959 & undated

Includes photographs and clippings of Panama, Columbia, New Mexico, Montana, Odessa (TX) and associated materials in folders.

Folder C-1 Melba Rogers’s account of trip to Columbia 1943

Folder C-2 Guatemala (Savings Materials) 1957 & undated
Photographs: McMurry-Douglass-Beyer-Rogers Families, cont.

BOX C [OS] Laura Touchstone Rogers, undated
Portait of Laura Touchstone Rogers (reproduction in folder 46)

Box D [PH] R. A. McMurry Family Photographs & Savings Materials
1916-1967 & undated
Includes R. A. McMurry in WWI uniform; Alpine Rotary Club; photograph of hunters R. A. McMurry, Carl Thain & Roy Spence; McMurry home in Alpine; Melba McMurry; savings material: Alpine Drug Store advertising blotter, cigarette cards, postcards, Alpine High School patch, Jitterbug contest. [Jitterbug championship trophy in Box I.]

Box E [PH] McMurry Plumbing Company Photographs 1915-1941 & undated

Box F [PH] Melba & Carl Rogers Family Photographs 1941-1984 & undated


Artifacts / special formats

Box I [CU] From Earth to Heaven (book, belonged to H. H. Beyer) 1886
Natural Beauty all occasion folders (box only) undated
Originals of MMR diaries, 1934-1995 (do not circulate)
"Big Bend Jitterbug Contest/ First Place/ [Melba] McMurry- [Keith] Morrow." 1941 (trophy) [Contest photos in Box D.]
Slide format images (viewable as prints in boxes D-H)

Box J [DOC] Negative format images (viewable as positives in boxes D-H)