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Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 4

Sylvan J. Crooker Collection

1820 - 1965

2 boxes
1 linear foot
Accession No. LB 2007.22

Stephen Phillips Memorial Library

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PMM 4

Sylvan J. Crooker Collection

Crooker, Sebra Banks, 1797-1886

Crooker, Sylvan Jay, 1893-

Papers, 1820-1965

2 boxes (1 linear foot)

Shipbuilders in Stockton Springs, Maine

Documents related to the Crooker family of Stockton Springs, Maine, collected by Sylvan Jay Crooker. The bulk of the material is business and family correspondence, receipts, and personal papers of Sebra Banks Crooker, Sylvan's great-grandfather, who operated a shipyard in Stockton Springs from 1820 to 1875. There is also a ledger, plans, and specifications for shipyard layout and schooners built at the Stockton Yards, Inc., a World War I era shipyard. The collection also contains genealogical notes and letters to Sylvan J. Crooker.

In English

Organized in three series: Series I. Sebra Banks Crooker; Series II. Stockton Yard, Inc.; Series III. Sylvan J. Crooker

Sylvia & Bill Tribby; Gift; 2007; LB2007.22

Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:

Crooker, Sylvan Jay, 1893-

Crooker, Sebra, 1797-1886

Stockton Yards, Inc.

Stockton Springs (Me.)

California—gold discoveries

Gold mines and mining

Photography

Shipbuilders

Shipbuilding

Shipbuilding—equipment and supplies

Ships—design and construction

Shipyards

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

World War, 1914-1918

Acquisition:

This collection was donated by Sylvia and Bill Tribby. Sylvia Tribby was the daughter of Sylvan J. Crooker, and inherited the collection from him.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. There are no special restrictions.

Condition:

This collection is mostly in good condition. There is some wear to the bindings of the volumes and insect damage on the leather pocketbook.

Processing Note:

Sylvan J. Crooker apparently collected the materials in this collection and used them for research, organizing and making transcripts of some items.

Related Materials:

More material on Stockton Yard, Inc., including a map and reminiscences of Lincoln Albert Gardner's nephew, can be found in the Richard B. Gardner folder of PMM 3.

Historical Note:

Sebra Banks Crooker (1797-1886) was a shipbuilder in Stockton Springs, Maine. He was born on Deer Isle, but moved to South Prospect as a young man. (South Prospect would later be incorporated as Stockton Springs.) By 1818, Crooker was working with Prospect shipbuilder Crawford Staples, and, after Staples's death circa 1820, Crooker went into business on his own account. He built at least 46 vessels over the next 55 years. Many of his early vessels were small coasting schooners, though he later built larger, ocean-going barks and brigs. Crooker retired in 1875.

Crooker married Ruth Staples, the daughter of Crawford Staples. They nine children. At least two of their sons, Hiram and Simeon F. Crooker, went to California during the gold rush and stayed there for several years as miners. Hiram and several of his brothers later served, and died, in the Civil War.

Two of Sebra Crooker's great-grandchildren are represented in this collection. Lincoln Albert Gardner (1886-1958), the step-grandson of Crooker's daughter Catherine (1822-1909), was the treasurer of Stockton Yard, Inc., a shipyard formed in Stockton Springs during World War I. Stockton Yards, Inc. produced four large schooners and two barges in Stockton Springs between 1917 and 1921.

Sylvan J. Crooker (b. 1893), grandson of Simeon F. Crooker, was a physicist and engineer. Though he was born in Minnesota, Sylvan took an active interest in his family's history in Stockton Springs, researching and collecting the materials in this collection.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains material from Sebra Banks Crooker and Lincoln Albert Gardner, two generations of shipbuilders in Stockton Springs, Maine, as collected by Sylvan J. Crooker.

Series I contains accounts and correspondence from Sebra Banks Crooker. The accounts, both loose and in an account book, are primarily for shipyard business and mostly date to the 1830s. These include relatively detailed, though fragmentary, accounts for labor and tools, as well as bills for timber, paint, oakum, and other shipbuilding materials. These are mixed with accounts for boarding and foodstuffs, with which Crooker apparently supplied some of his employees. (The front half of the account book was later re-used by younger members of the Crooker family as a scrapbook and sketchbook.)

There is some business correspondence from Crooker's shipyard, mostly regarding construction of new vessels or repairs of existing ones. However, the bulk of correspondence is personal: letters written by Crooker's sons recounting their experiences in the California gold rush and the Civil War. The former are particularly detailed, covering several years of Hiram and Simeon F. Crooker's hunt for gold in Rich Gulch and Gold Springs.

Series II contains accounts, drawings, and photographs from Stockton Yards, Inc., likely kept by Crooker's great-grandson, Lincoln Albert Gardner. An account book and loose papers both contain detailed lists of materials and fittings, often with dimensions, used in the four-masted schooners constructed by the yard. Some plans and sketches for the schooners also survive, which likewise delineate dimensions of timber, spars, and fittings, as does a sketch of a planned drydock for the shipyard. Series II also contains photographs, both loose and contained in an album, of schooners and barges under construction at the Stockton Yards.

Series III contains material written or collected by Sylvan J. Crooker while researching his family's history. This includes genealogies, lists of ships built by the Crooker family, newspaper clippings, postcards, and lines for Sebra Crooker's brig ELMIRANDA, taken from a half-model at the Smithsonian. There is also some of Sylvan J. Crooker's personal correspondence, much of it on genealogy and family history.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	
	<u>Series I. Sebra Banks Crooker</u>	
1	1	Sebra Banks Crooker, shipbuilding account book, 1833-1838 Re-used as a scrapbook and sketchbook, c. 1870
	2	Shipbuilding and general accounts, 1835-1838 From leather pocketbook stored in folder 1.
	3	Bills, deeds, and accounts, 1837-1862
	4	Correspondence, business and family, 1827-1866
(shelf)		Family Bible
	<u>Series II. Stockton Yard, Inc.</u>	
	5	Materials accounts (loose), c.1917-1920
	6	Materials account book, Lincoln Albert Gardner, c. 1917-1920
2	1	Drawings and plans, vessels built by Stockton Yard, Inc. Plan for proposed drydock, Stockton Yard, Inc.
	2	Photographs, vessels under construction at Stockton Yard
	3	Photograph album, vessels under construction at Stockton Yard
(shelf)		American Bureau of Shipping, <i>Rules for Building and Classing Vessels</i> , inscribed by Lincoln Albert Gardner, 1917
	<u>Series III. Sylvan J. Crooker</u>	
	4	Sylvan J. Crooker, correspondence, 1951-1965
	5	Research notes: Crooker family genealogy
	6	Ships built by Sebra Banks Crooker
	7	Clippings and articles, miscellaneous
	8	Photographs and postcards
	9	Lines of brig ELMIRANDA, taken from a half model at the Smithsonian