

University of Oklahoma Libraries
Western History Collections

Dorothy Johnson Collection

Johnson, Dorothy. Papers, 1876–1970. .50 foot.

Collector. Stories (n.d.) written by Matie Mowbray Thomas regarding the exploits of Deputy U.S. Marshal Heck Thomas; a transcription of a letter written by Isaac Parker recommending Thomas's appointment as marshal of U.S. courts for Oklahoma; correspondence (1876–1960) regarding Heck Thomas, including a letter to Thomas from U.S. Senator Tom P. Gore, a letter to Bill Doolin from his wife, Edith, and a letter to Matie Thomas from Chris Madsen; magazine articles (1935) recounting the exploits of Heck Thomas as a railroad express messenger in Texas and as U.S. deputy marshal in Indian Territory; and diaries (1889–1895) kept by Heck Thomas that include notations about cases, witnesses, etc.

Folder:

1. Thomas, Matie Mowbray, obituary, 1953

Story about the murder by Indians of a newly married couple who was prospecting in the Kiamichi Mountains in 1887, written by Matie Mowbray Thomas as told to her by Heck Thomas, n.d.

Story about the investigation of the murder of Ed Davis by George Morris, written by Matie Mowbray Thomas as told to her by Heck Thomas. Besides the story, Matie Mowbray Thomas copied a letter written by I.C. Parker, District Judge, Ft. Smith, Arkansas to President Grover Cleveland on February 21, 1893, recommending that Heck Thomas be appointed Marshal of the United States Courts for Oklahoma, n.d.

2. Letter to Hon. Heck Thomas, Lawton, Oklahoma from U.S. Senator Tom P. Gore, re. the resignation of Abernathy, 12-21-1910.

Letter to Bill Doolin from his wife, Edith, in which she mentions travelling to stay with Sadie, problems with the "creek up and bridges out", and Dr. Briggs wanting to know if Dick was there. (This letter was found on Bill Doolin's body after his death), 6-25-1896.

Letter to Matie Mowbray Thomas (?) from C. Madsen, discusses Madsen's work with the "Writer's Program" at Oklahoma City; the "Outlaw Fort", the "old Dugout", and the arrest of outlaws at the Dugout in 1894 by Bill Tilghman, Heck Thomas, and Chris Madsen; the Bill (?) Dunn residence; disputes the story that Bill Tilghman told his wife as well as John Hale's testimony concerning a visit by

Tilghman to the outlaws at the Dugout; family illnesses and operations; an auto accident and cancellation of Madsen's auto insurance; and the killing of Bill Doolin, as well as the division of the reward money, 1939.

Letter (photocopy) of introduction of Henry A. Thomas at the time of his move from Atlanta, Georgia to Texas. The letter commends Thomas for his seven years as a receiving and shipping clerk at one of the largest wholesale grocery houses in Georgia, 4-8-1876.

3. "Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction," by Grant Richardson, material by Mrs. Heck Thomas, *Sunday Post-Dispatch Magazine*, Lawton, Oklahoma. Discusses Sam Bass and his gang of train robbers in the "Cross Timbers" part of Texas in 1875, and specifically the robbery of the "Texas Express" at Allen, Texas and the actions by Jim Thomas, was wounded but was still able to switch bogus money envelopes for the real ones. Also includes information concerning Heck Thomas' promotion to express agent at Fort Worth; outlaws in "The Nation" (Indian Territory), as well as the U.S. Deputy Marshals in Oklahoma know as "The Three Guardsmen," Heck Thomas, Bill Tilghman, and Chris Madsen; and the killing of Bill Doolin by Heck Thomas, n.d.

"Heck Thomas Collects," by Col. Clarence B. Douglas, *Daily Oklahoman*. Biographical sketch of Heck Thomas and story told to Douglas by "the old-timer" about the hunt for and slaying of Jim and Pink Lee, and Smoky Joe by Heck Thomas and Jim Taylor, 11-10-1935.

4. Letter addressed to "Dear Friends" from Reno Madsen and Jessie re. "the error about Uncle Heck's education," the book *Trigger Marshal*, and family matters, 8-18-1958.

Letter to Mrs. J.B. Meeks (daughter of Heck Thomas) from Marvin E. Tong, Jr., Director, Museum of the Great Plains, concerning some newspaper clippings, and the diamond-studded badge presented to Heck Thomas by a group of his friends in Lawton, Oklahoma, 12-9-1960.

5. Heck Thomas' diaries (memo books) and warrant book, three.
 - (1) Includes notations such as "Left Fort Smith 14 day Aug. 1889", names of posse members, names of cases and witnesses, provisions and supply costs, notes about crimes, etc. Dated 91 pages (6" x 3.5"), 1889-1890.
 - (2) Similar information as in other diary. Calendar, dated, approximately 185 pages (6" x 3.5"), 1894-1895.
 - (3) Warrant book. Includes style of case, offence charged, date warrant issued, issuer, site, complainant, site where warrant received, date received, date

executed, site executed, and date warrant returned, approximately 50 pages (8" x 4"), 1894-1895.

Outsized Material

Box 1

Appointment (copy) of H.A. Thomas as United States Marshal's Deputy for the Territory of Oklahoma, July 1, 1896.

Certificate stating that Mary Mowbray completed first term primary grade, Free Schools of the City of Elmira, N.Y., June 25, 1879.

Broadside. "\$300 Standing Reward Offered by Wells, Fargo & Company for the Arrest and Conviction of Highwaymen", 1889.

New clippings. Stories about Heck Thomas including "How Heck Hexed the Outlaws," "The Law West of Fort Smith," "Battle of Atlanta, July 22, 1864," etc. Also includes obituaries of Heck Thomas and Matie Mowbray Thomas.

Scrapbook. Contains news clippings about Heck Thomas, and obituaries of Thomas, Bill Tilghman, and Chris Madsen. Also card certifying Heck Thomas as a member in good standing of the Confederate Veteran Soldiers, 4-6-1907.