

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG5636 .AM: Crossley, William F., 1857-

Papers: 1881-1920

Kearney, Buffalo County, Neb.: Contractor/Builder

Size: 2.0 cu. ft.; 3 boxes

BACKGROUND NOTE

This collection consists of papers relating to William F. Crossley of Kearney, Neb. The majority of the materials relate to Crossley's building and contracting business with offices on First Avenue and on 9th Ave. (between 23rd and 24th streets) during the contractor's 40 years in business. Contained here are record books, ledgers, correspondence, estimates, contracts, and subcontracts. The records date from 1881-1920, and provide intricate details of some of Crossley's largest building projects. Crossley worked on the State Normal School at Kearney, Kearney High School, the First Methodist Church of Kearney, and the Crescent Theatre. He corresponded with other firms, some of which he subcontracted work under, including the Hastings Foundry and Iron Works (Hastings, Neb.), the Hibberd Brick Company (Kearney, Neb.), and Nebraska Chandelier Works (Kearney, Neb). Included here also are some of Crossley's personal finances, correspondence exchanged during WWI, and records from the Rebekah Assembly of the I.O.O.F Lodge in Nebraska.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is arranged in two series: 1) W.F. Crossley's Builder and Contractor Business Records; and 2) Financial Ledgers.

Series 1 contains Crossley's correspondence, contracts, estimates and bills, receipts, subcontractor records, employee timesheets, and miscellany; including a notebook with handwritten entries relating to Crossley's family history.

Series 2 holds Crossley's Financial Ledgers with regular weekly entries made from December 23, 1881-December 10, 1914; and occasional entries up to 1920. Collectively, the records outline the growth of a small business that opened in the late nineteenth century through its peak years during WWI. By 1919, Crossley's firm was able to command \$53,000 dollars to construct of commercial garage. These ledgers indicate that for more than a generation, Crossley owned one of the more successful building and contracting firms in Buffalo County. Typically, Crossley would have a page or two per client---arranged alphabetically, and then make entries for each customer in chronological order.

Series 1 - Builder and Contractor Business Records

Box 1

Folder

Folder 1 holds W. F. Crossley's correspondence from March 3, 1899- March 15, 1918.

Correspondence:

-1899, Mar. 3, to W.F. Crossley from Wood-Mosaic Co.

-1908, Feb., 17, Open Letter from W.F. Crossley regarding First Methodist Church.

-W.F. Crossley, Feb. 5, 1910 from J.T. Kealy, Hastings Foundry and Iron Works.

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- 1912, Jan. 23, from E. Bowker of Kearney Canning Co. to stockholders.
- 1912, Feb. 26, from W.J. Erle, regarding the State Tubercular Hospital.
- 1912, Mar. 1, W.F. Crossley to A. J. Mercer.
- 1914, Aug. 7, from T.W. Maus.
- 1915, May 15, from C. L. Bliss of the City Bank of Elmcreek.
- 1915, May 20 1915, from H. Holderman, Neb. Chandelier Works.
- 1917, May 16, from Burke and Son Plumbing & Heating.
- 1918, Mar. 15, from J.F. Kealy, Manager, Hastings Foundry and Iron Works.
- 1918, Apr. 18, W.F. Crossley to Baker Nickey Motor Co.

Folder 2 is comprised of contracts dating from 1901, June 28 through 1917, July 26. This folder documents Crossley's work on the Longfellow Building on the Kearney High School Campus, the First Methodist Church, a local Masonic lodge and many other projects. Folder 3 contains estimates and bills, arranged chronologically between January 24, 1903, and Aug. 6, 1919. This folder provides information on the cost to the repairs and additions made to Kearny Normal School and to the State Tubercular Hospital; building costs for a local Masonic Hall;

Folder 4 holds bills of sale, for property purchased and sold by Crossley dating from 1900, Aug. 16-1918, May, 20. Folder 5 includes receipts, 1909, Mar., 1-1920, Mar., 30. Some interesting items include vehicle registration receipts (\$2.00 in 1911), and records from the payment of telephone bills (\$4.00 per month in 1912), and electric lighting (\$11.42 per month in 1913 for Crossley). Also documented here is Crossley's membership in the Kearney Commercial Club.

Folder 6 is comprised of subcontractor records dating from April 1903 through April 16, 1918. Records contain costs to have Burke and Son install heating in the "old" and renovated portions of Kearney High School among other items. Folder 7 contains employee time sheets, 1901, Jan. 1 to 1918 Dec. 21. The records are arranged alphabetically by the "laborer's" last name. Workers at Crossley's firm were: A.E. Alleir, Fred Bollison, A. M. Brownfield, L.E. Burkham, Carlage, F.E. Coover, John Darm, Geo Dottry, Geo Dutton, Tom Hogg, John Darm, Jim Kirkpatrick, A.B. Lake, C.E. May, J.R. Moore, Geo Johnson, H.L. Ilgerrfritz, A.M. Schwieger, A.D. Rice, C.L. Rork, Geo. Tappen, Frank Walenta, L.J. Watson and Jas Wymore.

Folder 8 holds a single notebook, [n.d.] with handwritten entries noting the places where members of Crossley's family lived. Folder 9 contains miscellany from W.F. Crossley's business dating from 1880-1909. Holds a Centennial Calendar (AKA Simmons Liver Regulator Almanac) from 1882-1883 with new from the International Cotton Exposition held in Atlanta, Georgia.

Series 2 - Financial Ledgers

Folder 10 contains W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger 1881, Dec. 23-1885, Nov. 26. Folder 11 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1891, Mar. 14-1905, Feb. 11. Folder 12 includes W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1902, Feb. 1-1906, Feb. 1. Folder 13 contains W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1903, Feb. 1-1903, July 9. Names on accounts in Crossley's include some members of Kearney's middle class families. Geo Downing, F. L. Whedon (the Editor), "Dr. Myers," and "Headey the Baker," were some of Crossley's clients.

Folder 14 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1904, Feb. 1-1905, Jan. 21. Crossley secured several major building contracts, but he also continued to repair the barns, garages, and

doors of neighbors and farm families. He worked on a barn in January of 1905. Folder 15 includes W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1906, Feb. 1-1907, Jan. 17. Many of Crossley's business relationships were reciprocal and the received and paid out pages in his ledger often reflected this by repetition in both columns of the same names.

Folder 16 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1907, Feb. 1-1908, Feb. 1. Many of Crossley's business relationships were reciprocal and the received and paid out pages in his ledger often reflected this by repetition in both columns of the same names. Folder 17 contains W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1908, Feb. 1-1909, Mar., 1. Folder 18 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1909, Feb. 1-1909 Dec. 24.

Folder 19 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1910, Mar. 5-1911, Feb. 13. The Builder's most lucrative contract during these dates was for work on the State Normal School at Kearney. Folder 20 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1913, June 13-1914, Dec. 10. No job was too small, and Crossley's books reflect his attention to simple repairs, like one requiring a single door spring. This folder also contains payment information on rent paid to Crossley from tenants.

Box 2

Folder 21 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for, 1915, Mar., 1-1916, Mar., 1.

Folder 22 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1916, Feb. 1-1917, Jan. 31. Received funds for work from the Methodist Church, Kearney Hardware, the County Club, and Wesleyan University.

Folder 23 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1917, Feb. 8-1918, Jan. 1. In 1917, Crossley's customers included "Judge Evert," Farmers Bank, Holdrege Steam Foundry, Masonic Hall, Keens Theater, Woods Brothers and Steward Ranch, and the School Board for work at the local High School. Folder 24 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1918, Feb. 1-1919, Jan. 23. Crossley sometimes worked on credit, and would carry amounts forward for his customers. During this calendar year he supplied hundreds of pounds of saw dust to the Tubercular Hospital and also completed a project for the American Red Cross.

Box 3

Folder 25 holds W.F. Crossley's Financial Ledger for 1919, Jan. 1-1919, Oct. 25. This ledger contains information on the following Crossley clientele: "Anderson kid at laundry," Arthur Barney "res.," City National Bank, Farmers Bank, Gaston Music Co. Kearney Newsstand, State Normal Dormitory.

Folder 26 holds W.F. Crossley's Cumulative Financial Ledger for 1905, Aug.1-1914, Jan. 24. Projects entered here in ad hoc fashion suggest that these "Cumulative" ledgers were used for estimates and in the formation of bids for jobs. Folder 27 holds W.F. Crossley's Cumulative Financial Ledger for 1906, Feb. 8 -1915, Jan. 15. Folder 28 holds W.F. Crossley's Cumulative Financial Ledger for 1913, Jan. 31-1919, Jan. 22.

Series 3 - Personal Correspondence

Folder 29 contains William F. Crossley's Personal Correspondence dates from December 19, 1898-April 6, 1916. The correspondence includes a range of topics including local politics, family affairs, and includes materials from the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

DESCRIPTION

Series 1 - Builder and Contractor Business Records

Box 1

Folder

1. Correspondence, W. F. Crossley, 1899, Mar. 3-1918 Mar. 15
2. Contracts, 1901, June 28-1917, July 26
3. Estimates and Bills, 1903, Jan. 24-1919, Aug. 6
4. Bills of Sale, 1900, Aug. 16-1918, May, 20
5. Receipts, 1909, Mar., 1-1920, Mar., 30
6. Subcontractor Records, 1903, Apr.-1918, Apr. 16
7. Employee Time Sheets, 1901, Jan. 1-1918 Dec. 21
8. Notebook, [n.d.]
9. Miscellany, 1880-1909

Series 2 - Financial Ledgers

10. Financial Ledger, 1881, Dec. 23-1885, Nov. 26
11. Financial Ledger, 1891, Mar. 14-1905, Feb. 11
12. Financial Ledger, 1902, Feb. 1-1906, Feb. 1
13. Financial Ledger, 1903, Feb. 1-1903, July 9
14. Financial Ledger, 1904, Feb. 1-1905, Jan. 21
15. Financial Ledger, 1906, Feb. 1-1907, Jan. 17
16. Financial Ledger, 1907, Feb. 1-1908, Feb. 1
17. Financial Ledger, 1908, Feb. 1-1909, Mar. 1
18. Financial Ledger, 1909, Feb. 1-1909 Dec. 24
19. Financial Ledger, 1910, Mar. 5-1911, Feb. 13
20. Financial Ledger, 1913, June 13-1914, Dec. 10

Box 2

Folder

21. Financial Ledger, 1915, Mar., 1-1916, Mar. 1
22. Financial Ledger, 1916, Feb. 1-1917, Jan. 31
23. Financial Ledger, 1917, Feb. 8-1918, Jan. 1
24. Financial Ledger, 1918, Feb. 1-1919, Jan. 23

Box 3

Folder

25. Financial Ledger, 1919, Jan. 1-1919, Oct. 25
26. Financial Ledger, 1905, Aug.1-1914, Jan. 24
27. Financial Ledger, 1906, Feb. 8 -1915, Jan. 15
28. Financial Ledger, 1913, Jan., 31-1919, Jan., 22

Series 3- Personal Correspondence

29. Personal Correspondence, 1898, Dec. 19-1916, Apr. 6

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Subject headings:

Building -- Nebraska -- Kearney
Buffalo County (Neb.) -- History
Construction contracts and estimates
Construction industry -- Nebraska -- Kearney
Contractors -- Nebraska -- Kearney
Crossley, William F., 1857-
Kearney (Neb.) -- Business
Kearney (Neb.) -- History

TJ/tmm 12-07-2009

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Genealogy:

W.F. Crossley & Mary (w.)

Wilma (d.), Ethel (d.)

1920 Kearney, Buffalo Co.

William F. Crossley, 62 IN

Mary, 62 OH

Wilma 30 NE

Ethel

Hal-nephew, 27 CO

Netti (sister)

Catherine Williams [mother?]

Irene [hired girl?]

1900 Kearney, Buffalo Co.

William 43 Apr. 1857 IN (carpenter)

Mary 42 Sept. 1857 OH

Wilma 10 July, 1889 NE