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**Manuscript Collections** 

Home

# Finding Aid to the Thomas N. Putnam Papers

Putnam, Thomas N., 1855-1931

Thomas N. Putnam Papers, 1868-1955

15.5 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 179

Mss 1596.10

Biography Scope and Content

Box and Folder List

#### **OVERVIEW**

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#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Thomas Nichols Putman was born December 3, 1855, in Seneca Falls, New York to William and Martha Putnam. In 1864 the family moved to Xenia, Iowa, and later to Rockwell, Iowa, where William Putnam was postmaster and also ran a hotel, the Putnam House. In 1878 Thomas Putnam first started in the lumber business by working for Farnham and Lovejoy Lumber Company at Rockwell. In July 1880, he moved to Brainerd, Minnesota, a wild new town, where he became retail manager for the J.J. Howe Lumber Company (later Brainerd Lumber Co.). Desiring a business of his own, in April 1886, he moved to the new village of Carrington, North Dakota, where he bought out a small lumber yard there, Sarles, Ballock and Co. He later acquired numerous property holdings including 29 farms and two sections near

Calgary, Alberta. He was a partner with his nephew, Ralph Miller, in the Putnam-Miller Company of Melville, N.D., from 1911 to 1920. From 1892 to 1898 Mr. Putnam served as Treasurer of Foster County. Shortly after his election, the Bank of Carrington (Meachem Bank) closed, and as County Treasurer, he repaid the ten thousand dollars lost, from his salary and lumber yard earnings.

On June 24, 1886, he was married in Iowa to Clara Rood, born November, 1861, near Fort Dodge, Iowa. They were the parents of four children, Leslie, Clara, (who died in 1889 as an infant), Hugh and Frank. Mr. Putnam died Nov. 11, 1931, and Mrs. Putnam, July 4, 1937. Both are buried in Carrington Cemetery.

Mr. Putnam held many public offices including County Commissioner of Foster County (1890), City Alderman, and was on the Board of Education many years. In 1910 and 1912 he was elected to the North Dakota House of Representatives, and in 1914 and 1930 was elected a State Senator. He was a Republican and was with the Independent Voter's Association. He was a past president of the Kiwanis, a member of the Knights of Pythias and Woodmen Lodge. He was also a past master of the Masons and belonged to both the York and Scottish Rites. In 1913 he was president of the North Dakota Lumberman's Association, and was on the Carl Ben Eielson Memorial Commission. He belonged to the Congregational Church of Carrington, and was Secretary of the Old Settler's Association.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Thomas N. Putnam Papers have been organized into two series: correspondence, and business records.

The Correspondence Series, arranged chronologically, ranges from 1877 to 1948 and is both incoming and outgoing. It begins with Mr. Putnam's first request for a date with Clara Weir (Rood) in Iowa, and continues through their early pioneering days in Carrington with many family communications. Also included is much business correspondence going back to Mr. Putnam's work in Brainerd and later his lumber business and land dealings in Carrington and Canada. Included are several carbon books of business letters. Much of the business correspondence of the 1920's and 1930's concerns mortgage and money problems, and losses caused by the Depression and drought of that era. There are numerous letters from Frank Putnam when with the North Dakota National Guard in Texas in 1916-17, and from Frank and Hugh Putnam in Europe during World War I. In the collection is also much of the correspondence of Nathan Graves (1869-1932) and William Frank Moore (1870-1935) of the Moore and Graves Seed Company, real estate, and Sterling Livestock Farm, chiefly in the 1930-1934 time periods. Much of Moore's correspondence concerns his position as president of the North Dakota Grimm Alfalfa Association and his dealings with the North Dakota Agricultural College personnel about seeds, livestock, birds, plants etc. There is also a large volume of letters concerning Mr. Moore's position as Inspector for the **Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation** (giving "Barnyard loans"). Grave's correspondence deals largely with the seed business and with his actions as agent for out-of-state property owners and with his Canadian land holdings. Their correspondence also deals with the Depression. Of interest are letters from lawyer, Edward P. Kelly, Justice James Morris, Gov. L. B. Hanna, and Senator Lyman R. Casey (1892).

The extensive <u>Business Records Series</u> includes concerning Mr. Putnam's lumber company, land dealings, Carrington, military, organizations and numerous other topics. There is much material relating

to agriculture, mainly in the 1930's. From the U.S. Department of Agriculture are Wheat Allotment contracts, Landlord's Proof of Compliance forms, soil conservation goals, and other papers. There are papers from Moore and Grave's Seed Business, from the North Dakota Grimm Alfalfa Association and the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation as well as notebooks with crop records from 1915 and 1935. There are publications, The Wheat Grower, (September, 1928), "North Dakota Seed Committee Organized," the Dakota Farmer (1931), and a report on "Shriveled Light Weight Wheat," from NDAC Extension (1936). There are other various papers from Wool Growers and Livestock Associations and other farming matters.

From the early days of Carrington are clippings on aviator, "Lucky Bob" St. Henry (1911-1913), papers from the Fire Department, and much covering the early history of Carrington and Foster County with clippings, reminiscences, directories, maps and other papers. There are numerous obituaries, some clippings, ballots (1904, 1910, and 1920), and other political papers (1890-1930), a variety of material on the schools, including clippings, announcements, plays and various papers, (1902-1936). Also in this collection is a set of applications for seed to the County Commissioner, T. N. Putnam (1890). Separated to Mss 1596.10 are four election certificates of T.N. Putnam to the North Dakota House of Representatives in 1912 and the North Dakota Senate in 1914 and 1930

The Financial and Legal Series is very extensive. On the subject of banks is a bank book from the (Meachem) Bank of Carrington, (1891-1893), a bank book (1898-1900) and County Treasurer's book (1893-1895) from the Carrington State Bank, and a bank book from the Foster County State Bank (1905-1931). Among business papers are some concerning Putnam's and Grave's land dealings. There are many miscellaneous papers, arranged chronologically by year and alphabetically therein, from Putnam's Lumber and Coal business covering orders, estimates, and notations (1927-1931). There is a group of statements to the Putnam business (1881-1937), and Moore and Graves business (1931-1934). Within the financial and legal papers are numerous documents including certificates, affidavits, contracts, including farm and crop contracts (1888-1931), and foreclosures with sheriff's deeds, notices, and affidavits of publication. Types of deeds included are warranty deeds, auditor's deeds, quit-claim deeds, contracts for deeds, as well as land contracts and titles (1883-1936).

In the collection are insurance policies for hail, fire and wind (1876-1946), and life and accident insurance including policies from the Masons and Modern Woodmen (1887-1930), also there is a 1930 pamphlet on a court decision about rate by-laws of the Woodmen. There are several papers involving loans, especially from the Federal Land Bank (1914-1939). Several types of mortgages are represented, chattel mortgages, crop mortgages, assignments, abstracts and satisfactions of mortgages, and mortgage notes, (1901-1937). In the promissory notes are many to the Clear Lake Lumber Co. of Washington (1917-1923), the Farm Mortgage Loan and Trust Co. (1903-1919), and many other miscellaneous notes (1877-1937). There are various receipts (1878-1933), and stocks from the Carrington Hospital Association (1917-1921), and Atlantic Oil Co. (1927-1929). Also included are summons and legal notices regarding property matters and loans (1918-1939).

In the financial and legal papers are many concerning taxes, including Canadian land taxes, and delinquent taxes, with contracts for settlement, final notices, notices of sales, sheriff's sales and receipts (1906-1944). There are Federal Income Tax forms (1919-1930), and personal property statements,

expiration notices and receipts (1889-1947). In the tax papers are also many Treasurer's receipts (1885-1944), and Treasurer's statements (1911-1939).

The collection contains a large number of record sheets from 1886 to 1938, containing information about the personal and business affairs of the Putnams, including invoices, purchases, inventories, cash accounts, accounts of land holdings, and numerous estimates on lumber sales. Of interest is the April, 1886 inventory of Sarles, Ballack, and Co., and an 1874 record of the account of W. R. Putnam with S.D. Johnson in Iowa. In the record sheets of 1932 are listings of the business and land holdings in the T. N. Putnam estate. A number of items are found which have reference to the lumber and coal business such as charts, tables, and quotations (1881-1914), advertising, a book of sales records from Farnham and Lovejoy Lumber Co. (1882), and from Putnam Lumber Co. (1886-1887). There is also a notebook of lumber data, and a group of plans and specifications (1892-1928).

Among items concerned with the military are catalogs of uniforms and military books (1932), the Epitome of Upton's Military Policy (1916), Army policies and Regulations (1921), a carbine Score Book (1946), clippings and souvenirs from World War I, including "le Pantheon de la Guerre," various certificates, Service Records and other papers. Among newspaper articles within the collection is an interesting series, "In the Footsteps of Abraham Lincoln", by Ida Tarbell (Minneapolis Tribune, 1923-1924), several clippings about the Putnam family, and numerous articles on famous women including Amy Winship, Hetty Green, Sojourner Truth, Clara Darrow, Mary Starkweather, first policewoman – Alice Steffins Wells, Anna Howard Shaw, Maris L. Sanford, Mary Swain Wagner, "General: Rosalie Jones, Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence, Marguerite Wells, the First Ladies up to Eleanor Roosevelt, and many articles deal with Women's Suffrage.

Among miscellaneous notebooks present is the cashbook and list of medical remedies of W. R. Putnam (1868-1870), the Collection Register of Graves and Co. (1897-1926), Farnham and Lovejoy's cashbook (1878-1880) pages 2-115 and purchase lists of the Foster County Red Cross (1917) pages 120-228. There is also a notebook and other papers from the University of North Dakota (1912-1917). The North Dakota National Guard material includes a correspondence course (1923-1928), and clippings about the Guard in Texas (1916-1917). In the collection is material from various organizations including the American Legion, and an article, The Boy Scouts by Jacob Nis (1916). From the Foster County Red Cross there is the bookkeeper's Ledger (1917), and assorted papers and publications (1917-1932). Also represented is the Grand Amy of the Republic (1888-1895, 1914), Kiwanis (1923-1931), Masons (1902-1935), and the Old Settler's Association including information cards, a list of early settlers and dates of arrival, posters, ribbons, certificates, and clippings (1905-1950). Among women's organizations are the American Legion Auxiliary (1918-1950), the secretary's book of the Apiary Society-Hestian Lodge (1893-1903), Daughters of the American Revolution (1926-1935), North Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs (1926-1934), W.C.T.U. convention (1915), Order of the Eastern Star (1890-1933), and Women's Literary Club with speeches, programs and clippings.

From some schools in Iowa are papers, certificates, announcements, and notebooks (1870-1891).

The business records section includes of the Putnam-Miller Company and the Putnam Lumber Company. The Putnam-Miller material includes the corporation record book and stock certificates (1911). The Lumber company records are quite complete for the periods, 1886 to 1920. It includes cash books (1886-1900, 1917-1920) account ledgers (1886-1905, 1913-1920) day book journals (1886-1920), transfer journal (1919-1920), book of invoices (1914-1919), inventory book (1919-1930), and three letterpress books (1925-1932). A cash accounts ledger of 1890, 1892 also includes a time book for workers of the Brainerd Lumber Company in 1882.

#### SEPARATIONS RECORD

The following non manuscript items were removed from the Thomas Putnam papers and sent to the section indicated.

**Books** (Library book collection, consult the main library for call number and location.)

- The Call of the West, information about lands in Foster County, N.D., a comprehensive outline of Carrington and Foster County in Fertile N.D.
- The Revised Ordinances of the City of Carrington, N.D. 1907.
- Souvenir, Masonic Temple (Fargo), 1903.

#### **Newspapers** (Institute Newspaper Collection)

- Carrington Citizen, August-December, 1892
- Carrington Independent, December 17, 1908
- Carrington News, July 1887-August 1889
- Carrington Record, 1901-1905, 1911, 1912, 1915, 1917, 1920
- Foster County Independent, October 29, 1921, November 12, 1931, November 19, 1931, July 8, 1937, February 15, 1951
- The Record, June, 1896

#### **Broadsides** (Institute broadside collection)

- "The Carrington Fire Department Players present 'Here Comes Charlie
- "Acadia"
- "State Debate, Washburn High School vs. Carrington High School"
- "Something doing at the High School Gymnasium"
- "Voters of Foster County, Attention"

#### **Photographs** (Institute photograph collection)

- Collection integrated into the Carrington, N.D. general photograph collection (Institute Photo 24)
- 106 World War I stereo views processed as Institute Photo 2030

#### **BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

#### **Box/Folder** Contents

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## **Financial and Legal Material Series**

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### Letterpress correspondence-

36/2	July 11, 1925-April 2, 1931
36/3	January 31-December 9, 1930
36/4	June 26, 1931-May 20, 1932

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