

**PRELIMINARY INVENTORY**  
**K0024 (KA0038, KA0075, KA0130)**  
**MILDRED KITTELL (MRS. SAM) RAY (1895-1996) COLLECTION**

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City](http://The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City). If you would like more information, please contact us at [shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu).

**Introduction**

The Mildred Kittell (Mrs. Sam) Ray (1895-1996) Collection contains letters written by John Taylor, Mrs. Ray's great grandfather, and his brother, James Taylor, to their parents in Oldham, England, about their experiences in Kansas City, Missouri, 1857-1863. Letters from Mrs. Ray's mother and grandmother are also found. Research notes and writings by Mrs. Ray concerning the Taylor and Fisher families, such as notes on diaries kept by Abel Fisher concerning his trip to California and his early days in Kansas City, 1855-1858, are included. Photographs of both the Taylor and Fisher families also are found within the collection.

Contents range from ca. 1855-ca. 1982. 10 folders, .25 c.f.

**Donor Information**

This collection was received as accession KA0038 on August 19, 1980 and KA0075 on April 2, 1981 as gifts from Mildred Kittell (Mrs. Sam) Ray.

**Copyright**

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**Biographical / Historical Note**

In 1848, John Taylor (1826-1905), his wife, Sarah Ann Ashworth Taylor (1828-1887), and their infant daughter, Annie, left Oldham, England, for the United States. Their destination was New York City, but storms at sea forced them off course to land in New Orleans. The family then took a steamboat up the Mississippi River to an English colony near Jacksonville, Illinois, where they remained for nine years.

By 1857, John's family was joined by his brothers, William and James, and James' wife Mary. The families left Illinois, traveling up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to Kansas City. Their intent was to continue by covered wagon to California. However, Milton McGee, a Kansas City real estate speculator and city booster, met them at the boat landing and persuaded them not to travel west, but to buy land and settle in Kansas City.

Brothers James E. and Abel Fisher were born and raised near Chagrin Falls, Ohio. In 1858, after returning via Panama from the gold fields of California, they arrived to settle in the growing community of the City of Kansas. The new city needed both lumber and carpenters and the Fishers readily found work. By 1866, they had constructed a saw mill at the foot of 5<sup>th</sup> street in the West Bottoms.

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The Taylor brothers established themselves as major brickmaking and construction businessmen who were responsible for the building of most of the larger important brick structures in 19<sup>th</sup> century Kansas City.

January 12, 1870, James E. Fisher (1835- ) married Annie Taylor (1848-1941), daughter of John Taylor. The family grew to six children, among whom was the future Mrs. Kate Fisher (Mrs. George H.) Kittell (1871-1952), mother of Mildred Kittell, Mrs. Sam Ray.

Mildred Kittell was born in Halstead, Kansas, on September 22, 1895. She attended Westport High in Kansas City, Missouri, and graduated from Canyon City High School in Colorado. After earning a teaching degree from the Kansas State Teacher's College in Emporia, she taught in Kansas City Schools. She married Sam Ray in 1918, and the couple had three children.

At the age of 72, Mrs. Ray began writing a column in the *Kansas City Times* and *Kansas City Star* entitled "A Postcard from Old Kansas City" using postcards that she inherited and she collected through the years. Drawing upon her own knowledge, that of her ancestors, and careful research, she authored the popular series for 23 years in a very personal prose. Two books were drawn from the columns.

Mrs. Ray died at the age of 100 on April 10, 1996.

**Box List**

**Box 1 (038414)**

- Folder 1. Articles written by Mrs. Sam Ray, c. 1950-1966, concerning her family in Kansas City.
- Folder 2. Correspondence, 1891-1973  
Including Mrs. Ray's grandmother, Annie Taylor Fisher and her mother, Kate Fisher Kittell.
- Folder 3. Taylor family notes  
Research, genealogical notes and newspaper clippings.
- Folder 4. Correspondence, 1857-1888  
Letters written by John and James Taylor to Oldham, England, concerning life in Kansas City.
- Folder 5. John Taylor/Cass County, Missouri, c. 1870s-1900s  
Materials concerning John Taylor's activities and life when he lived in Cass County.
- Folder 6. Fisher family notes  
Research, genealogical notes, Troost Avenue Cemetery Co. deed (1921), and newspaper clippings.

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- Folder 7. Diaries of Abel Fisher, 1855-1858  
Two (2) volumes: December 1855-December 1856; January 1857-December 1858. Writings of trip made by the Fisher brothers to the California gold fields and their early days in Kansas City.
- Folder 8. Legal documents, c. 1920s-1930s  
Miscellaneous legal documents belonging to Annie Taylor Fisher chiefly concerning land transactions in Kansas City.
- Folder 9. Taylor family photograph
- Folder 10. Fisher family photographs