

Collection Summary

Title

Richard B. Stevens collection

Date

1942-2007

Extent

1 archival box

Name and Location of Repository

Midwest Genealogy Center, Independence (Mo.)

Reference code: MGC 2006-RSC

Processed by: Nicole Schlagel, 2016; finding aid created by Nicole Schlagel, 2016

Name of Creator

Stevens, Richard B.

Biographical History

Richard B. Stevens was born in Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas in 1899. His father, William Stevens, was a professor at Kansas University, now the University of Kansas. Richard attended and graduated from Kansas University. He became an attorney and served as county attorney and in the Kansas state legislature. Richard married Sarah Jane Griffiths on July 13, 1929 and together they had 3 children. In 1942, Stevens started work at The Sunflower Ordnance Works. This plant was commissioned by the United States War Department as a rocket propellant factory. The factory was built and managed by the Hercules Powder Company. Stevens was hired by Hercules Powder Company and stayed with the company into the 1980s. As a member of the legal department, Stevens worked with construction contracts and labor regulations. Richard died in Lawrence on January 15, 1991.

Administrative History

Sunflower Ordnance Works was commissioned by the United States War Department in 1942 as a rocket propellant factory. It was constructed in the northwest section of Johnson County close to the town of De Soto. The factory was built and managed by the Hercules Powder Company. The factory drew large numbers of people to the area and created population booms in De Soto and other surrounding towns. During its operation during World War II, 12,000 employees worked 24 hours to meet the military's demand. After the war, Sunflower Ordnance Works was closed until the Korean War caused it to reopen. It subsequently closed again after that conflict. During the Vietnam War, it reopened again and was renamed Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant in 1963. The plant continued to make ammunition until production was stopped in 1992. The U.S. Army sold the land to private developers in 2005.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of items relating to the Sunflower Ordnance Works and then later the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant. Collected by Richard B. Stevens, the contents include personal correspondence and a scrapbook. Also included are the entire run of The Sunflower Sentinel, the weekly employee newspaper for the Sunflower Ordnance Works and some editions for the Sunflower Planet, newspaper for the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant. There is also one edition of the Lawrence [KS] Journal –World.

Collection Inventory

System of Arrangement

These records are arranged in 5 series.

Series 1, Correspondence

Series 2, Lawrence Daily Journal-World loose volume

Folder 1, May 3, 1945

Series 3, Scrapbook, 1950-2004

Contains: Obituaries from former Sunflower Ordnance Works employees, articles from area newspapers regarding the sale and future use of the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant

Series 4, Sunflower Planet [loose]

Folder 1, Volume 24 Number 6, June 23, 1955

Folder 2, Volume 8 Number 31, May 11, 1967

Series 5, Sunflower Sentinel [bound volume]

Contains: Volume 1 Numbers 1-52, July 2, 1942-June 18, 1943

Volume 2 Numbers 1-52, June 25, 1943-March 16, 1945

Volume 3 Numbers 1-31, March 23, 1945-October 19, 1945

Rights and Access

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use by appointment.

Physical Access

Most records within this collection are housed within oversize file folders.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

Materials in the collection are entirely in English.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was donated to the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected for this collection.

Existence and Location of Originals

Originals owned by the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Notes

The following sources were consulted during the preparation of the biographical and administrative history:

- Ancestry.com. *1900 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004. Year: 1900; Census Place: *Lawrence Ward 2, Douglas, Kansas*; Roll: 479; Page: 1A; Enumeration District:0060; FHL microfilm: 1240479
- Ancestry.com. *Kansas State Census Collection, 1855-1925* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Kansas State Historical Society; Topeka, Kansas; *1925 Kansas Territory Census*; Roll: *KS1925_42*; Line: 19
- Eudora, KS History. "Sunflower Ordnance Works, Population Boom, and Housing Solutions: 1940-1949." Accessed April 11, 2016. <http://eudorakshistory.com/by-decade/1940/1940-to-1949.htm>.
- FindAGrave.com. "Richard Barnett Stevens." Accessed April 12, 2016. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=STEV&GSpartial=1&GSbyrel=all&GSst=18&GSctry=4&GSsr=1401&GRid=21896304&>.
- FindAGrave.com. "Sarah Jane Griffiths Stevens." Accessed April 12, 2016. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=STEV&GSpartial=1&GSbyrel=all&GSst=18&GSctry=4&GSsr=1481&GRid=20576640&>.
- Johnson County Museum. "Finding Aid for the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant Records." Accessed April 11, 2016. <http://www.jocogov.org/sites/default/files/documents/MUS/Finding%20Aid-Sunflower%202005.103.pdf>
- Johnson County Museum. "Johnson County History." Accessed April 11, 2016. <http://www.jocogov.org/dept/museum/about-museum/county-history>.