

MsSC 119

E.A Hesseltine Papers

BIOGRAPHY

E.A. Hesseltine was born in Brown County, Kansas on June 25, 1860. Having received little in the way of formal education due to his family's constant movement on the Plains, Hesseltine largely pursued his own education through reading and night school classes. A voracious appetite for books and a propensity for learning enabled Hesseltine, in spite of his lack of academic training, to teach in local schools from the age of eighteen. In 1882, Hesseltine homesteaded six miles north of Wilbur, Washington, where he cultivated wheat and continued to teach. In 1887, Hesseltine began a long and distinguished legal career by entering the Spokane law firm of Turner and Forester as a clerk. This position gave Hesseltine the opportunity to study the law. Within a year, Hesseltine had sufficiently acquainted himself with the law to pass the State Bar and establish a practice in Wilbur.

In addition to having established the town's first law firm, Hesseltine made a strong imprint upon Wilbur, by acting as its city attorney and police judge for several years. He was an important fixture in the town's legal community from 1888 to 1915. Although he was deemed an expert in land law, Hesseltine handled all manner of civil and criminal cases, including divorce, bankruptcy, murder, and estate cases. Lending and later donating volumes from his personal collection of books, Hesseltine also established the first Public Library in Wilbur in 1901.

In 1895, Hesseltine married Carrie A. Woodman and their union produced one child, Lee, in 1899. Hesseltine and his family were active in Wilbur's social circles, including church, civic and fraternal organizations. On October 22, 1915, E.A. Hesseltine died.

(For biographical information, see:

An Illustrated History of the Big Bend Country Embracing Lincoln, Douglas, Adams and Franklin Counties. 1904

Lincoln County: A Lasting Legacy. Lincoln County Centennial Committee. 1988)

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers of E.A. Hesseltine cover the years 1888 to 1963 and include legal dockets, case files, a letterpress book, an inventory ledger, meeting minutes, a speech, travel diaries. The bulk of the material documents Hesseltine's law practice in Wilbur and primarily covers the years 1895 to 1915. The travel diaries, which were likely created by Lee Hesseltine's wife,

Ethel Mae Hesseltine, from 1934 to 1963, do not address any aspect of E.A. Hesseltine's life. While fragmentary, these materials offer a representative depiction of small-town life in this era through the lens of legal disputes that expose social problems (spousal abuse, divorce), and economic issues (the land grant system, bankruptcy).

The case files constitute roughly half of the collection and are organized alphabetically by the name of the plaintiff in each case. Covering the span of much of Hesseltine's career (1895-1915), these files contain correspondence, legal documents, trial transcripts, newspaper clippings, and personal notes pertaining to individual cases. Many of these files offer detailed accounts of everyday social realities and economic issues in this era. The personal correspondence between Hesseltine and his clients are especially interesting in this regard.

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1888-1963

RESTRICTIONS: None

VOLUME: 1.3 linear ft.

ACCESSION NO: 1996.107

FILE LISTING

Box 1: Case Files

1. Case Files: Jacob Anderson (Estate, interesting inventory of property) November 1898-October 1904
2. Case Files: Thomas T. Bender (Estate) September 1914
3. Case Files: Herman Bott (Appointment of Juvenile Guardian) May 1909
4. Case Files: Robert J. Cartwell (Application To Make Homestead Entry after initial rejection) June-November 1908
5. Case Files: Albert Clancy (Estate, interesting family letters to Hesseltine) July 1897-February 1915
6. Case Files: The Columbia River Milling Co. vs. The Town of Wilbur (Town charges that dam is a public health hazard) April 1908
7. Case Files: Commercial Bank of Manitoba vs. Anderson and Stirrett (Promissory Note) 1895-October 1899
8. Case Files: Sarah Evans vs. Frank Evans (Divorce, husband's abuse described in detail) 1901
9. Case Files: Florence S. Gibson vs. F.C. Gibson (Divorce) March 1895-January 1896
10. Case Files: W.F. Hankel vs. Elmer Simons (Non-payment of Debt) September 1906-

January 1911

22. Case Files: Clifford Wood vs. James Beckham (Land Dispute) April 1906-January 1907

23. Case Files: Woodbury Lumber Co. vs. George Thornbrue (Garnishee) October 1911

Box 3: Cash Journal, Dockets

1. Cash Journal "A": Cole and Hesseltine Law Firm. April 1888-October 1888

A cash journal from Hesseltine's law firm (April to October 1888) detailing expenses and payments.

2. Docket #3: June 1897-March 1900.

Volumes detailing a record of the cases handled by Hesseltine from June 1897 to September 1915. The dockets contain entries on particular cases, their verdicts, expenses and payments associated with them, and courses of action taken in each case.

3. Docket #4: March 1900-April 1905.

4. Docket #5: February 1905-January 1909.

5. Docket #6: September 1908-June 1914.

6. Docket #7: May 1914-September 1915.

Box 4: Inventory Ledger, Legal Form, Letterpress Book, Meeting Minutes, Misc., Speech, Travel Diaries, University of Washington Commencement Programs

1. Inventory Ledger: List of Volumes in Personal Library, Labeled "Library Catalogue." An inventory ledger listing the volumes in Hesseltine's personal library in 1892. An interesting testament to Hesseltine's love of reading and pursuit of knowledge.

2. Legal Form: Blank Estate Final Report Form. Undated

Blank legal form (estate final report) created for use by Superior Court in Lincoln County and found in one of the case files.

3. Letterpress Book: November 27, 1903-April 19, 1915.

A volume containing correspondence dating from November 27, 1903 to April 18, 1915. The letters were generated in the course of Hesseltine's legal practice and are indexed in the front of the volume by name of client.

4. Meeting Minutes: Organization of Old Settlers, September 5 and 26, 1903.

5. Misc., 1904-1914.

6. Speech: Sabbath School in Wilbur. Undated

An undated speech given by Hesseltine promoting the local Sabbath school.

7. Travel Diaries: June 15, 1934-August 2, 1934 (U.S. and Canada)

Most likely produced by Lee Hesseltine's wife, Ethel Mae, over the periods 1934-1936, 1959, and 1962-1963, these volumes detail vacations taken by the unidentified author of the diaries, who notes political, historical and social information about the destinations visited as well as hotel and food expenses, mileage, and sites seen. Of particular interest is the volume covering a 1936 trip to Europe in which the social climate and culture of Nazi Germany is described.

8. Travel Diaries: May 10, 1935-September 2, 1935 (Japan and Europe)

9. Travel Diaries: June 12, 1936-September 1, 1936 (Europe)

10. Travel Diaries: June 11, 1959-August 7, 1959 (Western U.S. and Mexico)

11. Travel Diaries: May 27, 1962-August 22, 1963 (Brazil, Australia, and the South Pacific)

12. University of Washington Commencement Programs, 1922, 1924.

Two University of Washington Commencement programs from 1922 and 1924, both with names marked with blue pencil. One of the names noted is son Lee Hesseltine, who graduated in 1924 with a five-year normal diploma.