

# Guide to the William Steele West Family Papers

WA MSS S-4127



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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** WA MSS S-4127

**CREATOR:** West, William Steele, 1872-1941

**TITLE:** William Steele West family papers

**DATES:** 1803-1972

**BULK DATES:** 1850-1910

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 18.06 linear feet (19 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** In English.

**SUMMARY:** The collection documents the life, career, and family of William Steele West, particularly his life in Alaska and work with the Wild Goose Placer Mining & Trading Company. Present are West's diaries and correspondence during his time in Alaska. Several photograph albums contain photographs of the mining operations of the Wild Goose Placer Mining & Trading Company, mining facilities, and miners, including Japanese miners. Many of the mining photographs were taken by A. B. Kinne (1853-1925). There are also photographs of Eskimos and other Alaska Natives, as well as informal family photographs and formal portraits. The collection also contains a small quantity of William Steele West's personal papers, professional papers relating to his later career, his daughter Margaret West Goodrich's correspondence, financial records, and legal papers, other personal and family papers, and realia, including commemorative spoons, ivory souvenirs, and beaded gloves from Alaska.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/westfamily>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/westfamily>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from McBride Rare Books on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2021.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This material is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by William Steele West are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on the use of these materials. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

William Steele West Family Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

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## Biographical / Historical

William Steele West (1872-1941) was a lawyer, judge, and businessman. He was born in Austin, Texas to Charles Shannon West (1829-1885), a lawyer and judge, and Florence Randolph DuVal West (1840-1881). William Steele West studied at University of Texas and Cumberland University before working for a bank and later a utilities company. Circa 1900, West became manager of the Wild Goose Placer Mining & Trading Company and moved to Alaska. He married Josephine Johnson West in 1902 and their only child, Margaret West Goodrich, was born in 1904. The family settled in Brownsville, Texas circa 1910, where William Steele West began a law practice and later became a judge. William Steele West was also a member of the Republican State Executive Committee and a board member of several organizations in Texas.

Margaret West Goodrich (1904-1980) was the daughter of William Steele West and Josephine Johnson West. In 1928, she married Emmette Knepp Goodrich. The couple later moved to Mexico City, Mexico and had two children, Joe Anna Goodrich and William Newman Goodrich.

## Scope and Contents

The collection documents the life, career, and family of William Steele West, particularly his life in Alaska and work with the Wild Goose Placer Mining & Trading Company. Present are West's diaries and correspondence during his time in Alaska. Several photograph albums contain photographs of the mining operations of the Wild Goose Placer Mining & Trading Company, mining facilities, and miners, including Japanese miners. Many of the mining photographs were taken by A. B. Kinne (1853-1925). There are also photographs of Eskimos and other Alaska Natives, as well as informal family photographs and formal portraits. The collection also contains a small quantity of William Steele West's personal papers, professional papers relating to his later career, his daughter Margaret West Goodrich's correspondence, financial records, and legal papers, other personal and family papers, and realia, including commemorative spoons, ivory souvenirs, and beaded gloves from Alaska.

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## Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. William Steele West Papers, 1803-1941. II. Margaret West Goodrich Family Papers, 1889-1987. III. Photographs and Portraits, circa 1839-1972. IV. Realia, circa 1890-1959.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: William Steele West papers, 1803–1941

1.38 linear feet (2 boxes)

Arranged in rough chronological order, with materials relating to Josephine Johnson West's family filed at the end.

b. 1, f. 1	William Steele West Austin High School report card	1888
b. 1, f. 2	William Steele West diary Entries in the diary document William Steele West's life in Alaska, including the winter of 1900-1901 in Ophir, Alaska. Later entries describe his time in Nome, Alaska in 1902, when his journey to inspect mining claims was disrupted by heavy ice.	1900–1902
b. 1, f. 3	Typescript copy of lost diary Typescript copy of diary entries recounting William Steele West's journey from Nome, Alaska to San Francisco, California in 1901. The manuscript original is not present in the collection.	1901
b. 1, f. 4	Newspaper clipping	1901
b. 1, f. 5	Excerpts from <i>The Land of Nome</i> by Lanier McKee	after 1902
b. 1, f. 6	Correspondence and report concerning Wild Goose Mining & Trading Company	1905–1908
b. 1, f. 7	Personal correspondence	circa 1908-1941
b. 1, f. 8	Typescript copy of lost diary Typescript copy of diary entries recounting William Steele West's journey from Seattle, Washington to Nome, Alaska in 1909. The manuscript original is not present in the collection.	1909
b. 1, f. 9	Sharyland High School commencement address	1931
b. 1, f. 10	Resolution in memory of William Steele West	1941
b. 1, f. 11	Anecdotes concerning mining and daily life in Alaska These anecdotes may recount specific events in William Steele West's life, but they may also be excerpts from a work of fiction set in Alaska.	undated
b. 1, f. 12	Brownsville Rotary Club speech	undated
b. 1, f. 13	Legal and financial documents concerning the Johnson family	1803–1906
b. 2	Johnson family Bible	1817–1963

## Series II: Margaret West Goodrich family papers, 1889–1987

*0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Arranged in rough chronological order, with undated materials and genealogical research materials filed at the end.

b. 3, f. 1	Letters to Emmette Knepp Goodrich and Margaret West Goodrich	1909–1973
b. 3, f. 2	Margaret West Goodrich letters to William Steele West and Josephine Johnson West	1928–1929
b. 3, f. 3	Joe Anna Goodrich baby book	1936
b. 3, f. 4	Newspaper clippings	1953–1972
b. 3, f. 5	School report by Joe Anna Goodrich	1957
b. 3, f. 6	Joe Anna Goodrich Columbia University Vernon prize	1957
b. 3, f. 7	Art collected by Margaret West Goodrich	circa 1961
b. 4, f. 1-3	Emmette Knepp Goodrich and Margaret West Goodrich financial and legal papers	1972–1982
b. 4, f. 4	Postcards to Joe Anna Goodrich Enriquez de Rivera	1987
b. 4, f. 5	Margaret West Goodrich Bible and Goodrich Castle bookmark	undated
b. 4, f. 6	Hymnal	undated
b. 4, f. 7-8	Genealogical research material	circa 1889-1983

**Series III: Photographs and portraits, circa 1839-1972***9.00 linear feet (10 boxes)*

Organized into three subseries: Photograph Albums, Cased Photographs and Framed Portraits, and Other Photographs and Portraits.

	Photograph albums Arranged chronologically.	circa 1903-1937
b. 5	Photograph album of Alaska  Photograph album containing photographs depicting several locations in Alaska including Nome, Council, Candle, and Ophir. Many of the photographs document the operations of Wild Goose Mining & Trading Company, including mining facilities, a sawmill, freight shipments, and dogsleds. Also present are panoramas, photographs of Alaska landscapes, and family photographs. Many of the photographs concerning Wild Goose Mining & Trading Company were taken by A. B. Kinne.  Note that this album contains many loose pages and photographs. Handle with caution.	circa 1903-1909
b. 6	Photograph album of Alaska  Photograph album containing photographs depicting several locations in Alaska, including the Niukluk River, Nome, and Golovin Mission. Many of the photographs depict Eskimo communities, including fishing villages, women cleaning fish, a gravesite, and formal portraits. Some Eskimo individuals are identified by name in the captions. The subjects of other photographs include dogsledding, landscapes, and freight boats. Most of the photographs in this album were taken by A. B. Kinne.	circa 1904-1905
b. 7	Photograph album of Alaska and Texas  Photograph album containing photographs depicting Alaska and Texas. Subjects in the Alaska photographs include mining operations, landscapes, Eskimo people, dogs, and family photographs. The Texas photographs are primarily family photographs.	circa 1904-1910
b. 8	Photograph album of Texas  Photograph album containing family photographs taken in Texas. Subjects include formal and informal portraits, family vacations, fishing, automobiles, trains, and a women's suffrage club founded by young girls in Brownsville, Texas.	circa 1910-1920
b. 9	Photograph album of Texas and Mexico  Photograph album containing family photographs taken in Texas and Mexico. Subjects include fishing, hunting, and family vacations.  Note that this album contains many loose pages and photographs. Handle with caution.	circa 1931-1937
	Cased photographs and framed portraits	circa 1839-1934
b. 10, f. 1	Daguerreotype of an unidentified woman	circa 1839-1860
b. 10, f. 2	Ambrotype of an unidentified woman and child	circa 1851-1880
b. 10, f. 3	Daguerreotype of an unidentified girl	circa 1839-1860



## Cased photographs and framed portraits (continued)

b. 10, f. 4	Framed portrait of Margaret West Goodrich	1909
b. 10, f. 5	Framed portrait of Charles Shannon West	circa 1870-1885
b. 10, f. 6	Framed portrait of Anna Titus Johnson	circa 1860-1880
b. 11, f. 1	Daguerreotype of an unidentified man	circa 1839-1860
b. 11, f. 2	Daguerreotype of an unidentified man	circa 1839-1860
b. 11, f. 3	Ambrotype of an unidentified man	circa 1851-1880
b. 11, f. 4	Tintype of an unidentified man	circa 1850-1879
b. 11, f. 5	Tintype of an unidentified woman	circa 1850-1879
b. 12, f. 1	Tintype of an unidentified woman	circa 1860-1879
b. 12, f. 2	Tintype of an unidentified man	circa 1850-1879
b. 12, f. 3	Ambrotype of an unidentified girl	circa 1851-1880
b. 12, f. 4	Ambrotype of an unidentified man	circa 1851-1880
b. 12, f. 5	Framed portrait of Margaret West Goodrich	1934
b. 12, f. 6	Framed portrait of H. Tiff Johnson	circa 1840-1860
b. 15	Framed photograph of Emmette Goodrich	1923
b. 15	Framed photographs of Anna Titus Johnson	circa 1865-1880
	Other photographs and portraits	circa 1850-1972
b. 13, f. 1	Photographs of Alaska	circa 1903-1909
b. 13, f. 2	Photographic postcards	circa 1900-1920
b. 13, f. 3-6	Family photographs and portraits	circa 1850-1972
b. 14, f. 1-8	Oversize family photographs and portraits	circa 1850-1972

**Series IV: Realia, circa 1890-1959***6.85 linear feet (5 boxes)*

b. 15	Silver measuring stick	circa 1900-1940
b. 15	Silver chain	undated
b. 15	Empty ink bottle	circa 1950s
b. 15	William Steele West's watch cover	circa 1890-1920
b. 15	Button	undated
b. 16	Council, Alaska commemorative spoon	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Nome, Alaska commemorative spoon	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Ivory awl	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Ivory tweezers	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Animal figurine	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Ivory seal figurine	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Josephine Johnson West hair pin	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Decorated walrus tusk	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	2 ivory napkin rings	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Leather pouch with zipper	undated
b. 16	3 fossilized walrus tusks	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Necklace with heart-shaped pendant	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Heart-shaped pendant	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	2 ivory pendants	circa 1900-1910
b. 16	Broach with portrait of an unidentified girl	undated
b. 17	Leather gloves with beading	circa 1900-1910
b. 17	Handkerchief	undated
b. 18	Decorative box with gilt flowers	undated
b. 19	Decorative box	undated

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Alaska Natives -- Pictorial works  
Alaska Natives -- Portraits  
Eskimos -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Eskimos -- Alaska -- Portraits  
Fishers -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Gold miners -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Gold mines and mining -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Indians of North America -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Indians of North America -- Alaska -- Portraits  
Japanese -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Mines and mineral resources -- Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Women -- West (U.S.)

### Geographic Names

Alaska -- Description and travel  
Alaska -- Economic conditions -- 20th Century  
Alaska -- Gold discoveries  
Alaska -- Pictorial works  
Alaska -- Social life and customs -- 20th Century  
Brownsville (Tex.)  
Candle (Alaska)  
Council (Alaska)  
Golovin (Alaska)  
Nome (Alaska)  
Ophir (Alaska)  
Texas -- Pictorial works  
Texas -- Social life and customs -- 20th Century

### Genres / Formats

Ambrotypes (photographs)  
Artifacts (object genre)  
Daguerreotypes (photographs)  
Panoramas  
Panoramic photographs  
Photograph albums  
Photographic postcards  
Photographs  
Salted paper prints  
Souvenirs

### Names

Goodrich, Emmette Knepp, 1904-1996  
Kinne, A. B., (Albert Barnes)  
West, Josephine Johnson, 1872-1934

### Corporate Body

Wild Goose Mining & Trading Company

### Contributors

West, William Steele, 1872-1941  
Goodrich, Margaret West, 1904-1980