

## Edmond History Museum (EHM)

### Ramsey Family Collection (2019.020)

1. **Scope :** The J. M. Ramsey collection came to Edmond History Museum (EHM), from the Cleveland County Historical Society. Cleveland County's transfer of the Ramsey collection is an important addition to EHM's archives of early settlers in the Edmond area. The Ramsey collection contains 140 items ranging from photos, letters, and various legal certificates and documents that reflect Ramsey's drive for land and his family's strong work ethics. The collection dates from 1861 to 1983 and contains three major categories; photographs, letters and business records that document the growth and professional life of the Ramsey family.
2. The collection is unique in that it provides evidence that the land runs brought Ramsey to Oklahoma. He claimed land near Luther, in the 1893 run and by 1896 had built a two-bedroom farmhouse on the homestead. Ramsey participated in the 1896 Oklahoma land run and made a claim on land near El Reno. J.M.'s brothers would join him in Oklahoma to help work the land and build commerce. Family letters in the collection offer a glimpse into the life of these homesteaders on the Oklahoma plains and their participation in the development of community.

In 1902, J.M. Ramsey and his wife, Ella (Briscoe) Ramsey, had twins, Lillian and Leslie. The Ramsey's added two rooms to their farmhouse to accommodate their growing family. Photos of the twins and the farmhouse are

in the collection. As his family and ventures grew, so did an interest in community service. In November of 1898 J.M. was elected as Clerk for OK County and in 1907 he was appointed to the Election Board of the township of Luther.

While maintaining his homestead near Luther, Ramsey's desire to be involved in state and local government brought his family to the larger community of Edmond, where he was elected, Mayor from 1923-1925. Several years after his term as Mayor, Ramsey passed away and left his land and dealings to his descendants. In the collection, 1951 records from the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority reveal how the Ramsey land was in the middle of progress and growth as the plans for a turnpike cut through the middle of the Ramsey homestead. The letters from Ramsey's descendants to the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority honored their ancestor's past and worked with the growth of Oklahoma as roads of commerce were built.

3. Dividing the Ramsey collection into three major categories; photographs, letters and business records, will assist researchers as they browse the EHM database.

**Photos:** 2019.020.001- 2019.020.035. These photos date from 1861 tin types to 1961 color photos of family members celebrating various gatherings. Many of photos are identified including names and locations.

**Letters:** 2019.020.036-2019.020.046, 2019.020.058-2019.020.126. Letters range from topics of daily life, weather and family business. One letter of significance is 2019.020.095, Letter and envelope addressed to Mrs. J.M. Ramsey, Neodesha KS, Wilson Co. and postmarked Arcadia Okla, Jan.20,1891. This 5-page letter begins, *Dear Ella & Mother and all, I write you to let you know the Indians havent gotten us yet. I would have written sooner but I hardly knew what to say about the Indians. We heard today the soldiers and Indians had a fight at Fort Reno.....Write soon, Bell.* Also included in this letter is a fabric swatch for a dress that Bell was making.

**Business Records:** 2019.020.047-2019.020.057 Lists of assets for yearly reports.  
2019.020.127-2019.020.130 education certificates