

1-2-100-10-2

AUSTIN STREET RAILWAY COMPANY
RECORDS, 1911-1930
485 ITEMS
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

1. Correspondence, March 14, 1911 - May 14, 1913 (4 items)
2 items by George E. McComber
2 items by William J. Jones
2. Correspondence, January 27, 1915 - July 9, 1915 (20 items)
10 items by McComber
8 items by Jones
2 items by F. W. Watriss
3. Correspondence, October 14, 1916 - May 24, 1917 (5 items)
3 items by Jones
2 items by McComber
4. Correspondence, February 5, 1918 - May 28, 1918 (18 items)
9 items by McComber
5 items by Jones
3 items by Watriss
1 item by A. M. Rackliff
5. Correspondence, June 1, 1918 - June 29, 1918 (18 items)
9 items by McComber
6 items by Jones
3 items by Watriss
6. Correspondence, July 2, 1918 - December 12, 1918 (15 items)
7 items by Jones
5 items by McComber
3 items by ? Gallagher
7. Correspondence, January 26, 1919 - December 31, 1919 (15 items)
8 items by McComber
4 items by Jones
2 items by Watriss
1 item by Richard C. Storey
8. Correspondence, January 2, 1920 - January 30, 1920 (14 items)
6 items by Jones
6 items by McComber
2 items by Watriss
9. Correspondence, February 3, 1920 - March 29, 1920 (19 items)
10 items by McComber
8 items by Jones
1 item by Watriss
10. Correspondence, April 24, 1920 - July 23, 1920 (21 items)
14 items by McComber
7 items by Jones

11. Correspondence, August 8, 1920 - November 24, 1920 (20 items)
 - 12 items by McComber
 - 8 items by Jones
12. Correspondence, December 1, 1920 - December 30, 1920 (25 items)
 - 14 items by Jones
 - 10 items by McComber
 - 1 item by American Car Company
13. Correspondence, January 1, 1921 - February 22, 1921 (21 items)
 - 12 items by Jones
 - 9 items by McComber
14. Correspondence, March 3, 1921 - March 26, 1921 (33 items)
 - 12 items by Jones
 - 9 items by Rackliff
 - 8 items by McComber
 - 3 items by Springfield
 - 1 item by Watriss
15. Correspondence, April 3, 1921 - May 31, 1921 (21 items)
 - 11 items by McComber
 - 10 items by Jones
16. Correspondence, June 2, 1921 - June 30, 1921 (18 items)
 - 10 items by McComber
 - 8 items by Jones
17. Correspondence, July 2, 1921 - July 29, 1921 (23 items)
 - 13 items by McComber
 - 9 items by Jones
 - 1 item by Watriss
18. Correspondence, August 2, 1921 - August 31, 1921 (21 items)
 - 11 items by McComber
 - 6 items by Jones
 - 1 item by Springfield
 - 1 item by William H. Stacy
19. Correspondence, September 6, 1921 - October 26, 1921 (14 items)
 - 9 items by Jones
 - 5 items by McComber
20. Correspondence, November 29, 1921 - December 28, 1921 (17 items)
 - 11 items by McComber
 - 5 items by Jones
 - 1 (unidentified)
21. Correspondence, January 3, 1922 - September 30, 1922 (37 items)
 - 25 items by Jones
 - 11 items by McComber
 - 1 item by Springfield
22. Correspondence, February 17, 1923 - October 13, 1924 (26 items)
 - 10 items by Springfield
 - 6 items by Lora Simpson
 - 5 items by Rackliff
 - 3 items by McComber
 - 1 item by Watriss
 - 1 item by E. Q. Bond

23. Correspondence, January 19, 1925 - October 18, 1926 (20 items)
 - 12 items by Springfield
 - 6 items by Rackliff
 - 1 item by Simpson
 - 1 item by Hanson & Hanson
24. Correspondence, January 31, 1927 - June 29, 1929 (18 items)
 - 9 items by Springfield
 - 7 items by Rackliff
 - 2 items by McComber
25. Correspondence, January 8, 1930 - November 17, 1930 (21 items)
 - 11 items by Springfield
 - 8 items by Rackliff
 - 2 items by McComber

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 AGENCY HISTORY

The Austin Street Railway Company was established January 3, 1911 when 28 New England businessmen bought out the Austin Electric Railway Company. Income had been dwindling, and an expansion project was launched. New cars were purchased, tracks improved, lines extended and efforts made to encourage residents to ride the streetcars. William J. Jones was appointed President and continued to serve as general manager through June 30, 1922.

While dividends continued to be paid to stockholders through March 1915, jitney operators, the popularity of the automobile and World War I were beginning to cut into revenues. The "Jitney War" in the Spring of 1915 was ended when a city ordinance was adopted which required a \$5,000 bond be furnished by jitney operators to ensure public safety. Most were forced off the streets when they could not afford this.

Despite these efforts income continued to dwindle, but in January 1920 Austin City Council finally approved an increase in streetcar rider fares. This step was the first in the road to financial recovery for the Company, and by December several new cars were purchased, and expansion of lines renewed. Even though the Company appeared to be "out of the woods" many creditors were aware of their previous difficulties. The possibility of going into federal receivership had been discussed before the fare increase, and in April 1921 Wm. Jones was appointed by the court as the official receiver. While this was a saving grace designed to protect the Company from creditors, it was able to continue essentially as it had before.

William Jones resigned as general manager effective June 30, 1922 and the position was taken over by John F. Springfield, a businessman and engineer from Missouri. At that time the courts did not approve

Springfield as the succeeding receiver, so Jones who had returned to New England, continued in this capacity for some time. While the Company continued to operate with a profit, economic times continued to grow worse as bus routes developed, and the Depression hit. By 1940 streetcars were becoming a thing of the past, and slowly as new bus lines were expanded railway tracks were frequently paved over.

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SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

Materials relating to the Austin Street Railway Company, 1911-1930 (485 items) are strictly correspondence (letters and telegrams) which document financial and legal concerns of the Company's officers. Communications, primarily between President-General Manager William J. Jones (1911-1922) and Assistant Treasurer George E. McComber (1911-1930), concern efforts to expand services, to increase revenues and to prevent federal receivership, the bulk from 1918 to 1922. Correspondence^{nce} with Vice-President F. H. Watriss is dispersed also throughout the collection. Generally all communications deal with routine financial transactions concerning bonds, interest and corporate taxes. Other notable issues include the "jitney war" of 1915 (Watriss to McComber August 12, 1915), establishment of the Liberty Motor Buss Company, the effect of World War I on availability of materials and personnel, and the result of expansion to Camp Mabry after World War I. The correspondence illustrates development of a personal as well as business relationship between Jones and McComber from 1911 to 1922. Correspondence once John Springfield became General Manager (1922-1939) was principally through McComber's secretary A. M. Rackliff, and these materials are brief strictly financial concerns. Gaps are evident through out the collection especially in earlier, and later dates. As one type of material, correspondence makes up the entire group, and a perspective from legal documents, printed materials, minutes or photographs is lacking.