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## Summary

Sarah Horton Cockrell was an entrepreneur in Dallas during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She and her husband Alexander Cockrell began a series of business enterprises in the 1850s. Due to her husband's inability to read, she handled all correspondence and finances. They owned a construction business, bought a sawmill, a gristmill (for grinding customers' own grain) and a wooden bridge across the Trinity River. They erected a building in downtown Dallas which they leased to other businesses. When Alexander died in a gunfight in 1858, Sarah took over all aspects of the enterprise. She opened the St. Nicholas Hotel and when it burned down in 1860, she opened the Dallas Hotel, which later became the St. Charles. The site is now the John F. Kennedy Memorial in Dealey Plaza.

Sarah continued to expand her business and in 1860 she received permission from the Texas legislature to build an iron suspension bridge to replace the wooden one that had collapsed. Construction was delayed by the Civil War. By 1870, she found enough investors for the Dallas Bridge Company, in which she owned most of the shares. The grand opening of the bridge took place in 1872 giving travelers a major crossing to the south and west. The bridge is considered Sarah Cockrell's most significant contribution to the economic growth of Dallas.



Sarah lived during a time when it was uncommon for women to be involved in business. She demonstrated that women could be the driving force of an enterprise. She bought, sold and took risks. She used her talents to promote and grow her businesses. Sarah formed partnerships with her son in the 1870s, but she kept her name on the business. At the time of her death in 1892, she owned approximately one-fourth of downtown Dallas, plus several thousand acres in Dallas County, as well as smaller properties in Houston, Mineral Wells, and Cleburne. Several places in Dallas County still carry her name. She was savvy, brave and not afraid to enter a new venture.

## Activity 1

Middle School

1. Choose one aspect of Sarah's business such as hotel entrepreneur, mill owner or bridge builder. Analyze one document regarding the business you chose (found at the end of this PDF).
  - CSA Ferry Receipt
  - Todd Mills invoice
  - Lumber Receipt
  - Stock Certificate for Steel Bridge
  - Property Deed 1887
  - Memo Book of land purchases (this one is longer)
2. Have students analyze the chosen document and complete the written document analysis worksheet. When students are finished use the following questions for a class discussion.

### Questions for discussion:

- How was Sarah able to continue/build her business after the death of her husband?
- Discuss how business would be done in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No phones, email, cars, etc.
- Discuss a free enterprise system and how it progressed during this time.

## 1. Type of Document

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper  | <input type="checkbox"/> Press Release |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter     | <input type="checkbox"/> Report        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patent     | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum | <input type="checkbox"/> Property Deed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invoice    | <input type="checkbox"/> Receipt       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telegram   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other         |

## 2. Unique qualities

- Handwritten
- Typed
- Seals
- Notations
- RECEIVED stamp

3. Dates of Document: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Author or Creator of the Document: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Title: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What audience was the Document written? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Document Information

A. List three things the author said that are important:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why do you think the document was written?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

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10. List two things the document tells you about life at the time it was written:

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11. What questions do you have after reading the document?

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12. What did you learn about Sarah's businesses?

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**TEKS (Activity 1)****SOCIAL STUDIES (MIDDLE SCHOOL)**

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**Sixth Grade – 113.18 (c)**

- (1) (A,B) History
- (6) (A) Economics-entrepreneurs
- (18) (A-C) Science, technology and society
- (19) (A,B,F) Social Studies skills
- (21) (A-C) Social studies skills

**Seventh Grade – 113.19 (c)**

- (11) (A,B) Economics
- (19) (A,C,D,E) Science, technology and society
- (20) (A-E) Social studies skills

**Eighth Grade – 113.20 (c)**

- (12) (A-C) Economics
- (14) (A,B) Economics
- (28) (B) Science, technology and society
- (29) (A,B,D,E) Social studies skills

**ELAR (MIDDLE SCHOOL)**

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**Sixth Grade – 110.22 (b)**

- (1) (A,D) Developing Language skills
- (5) (A, B,D-I) Comprehension skills
- (6) (A-I) Response skills

**Seventh Grade – 110.23 (b)**

- (1) (A,D) Developing Language skills
- (5) (A, B,D,I) Comprehension skills
- (6) (A-I) Response skills

**Eighth Grade – 110.24 (c)**

- (1) (A,B,D) Developing Oral language skills
- (5) (A-I) Comprehension skills
- (6) (A-J) Response Skills
- (12) (E) Inquiry and research

**SOCIAL STUDIES (HIGH SCHOOL)**

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**High School Economics – 113.31 (d)**

- (2) (A) Supply and demand
- (4) (A,B) Economic systems
- (5) (A) Free Enterprise system
- (6) (A) Right to own property
- (13) (A) Role of US Government-deeds

## Activity 2

Middle and High School

### Teacher Notes

This activity can be as simple or complex as you wish to make it. For younger students or a quick assignment have them brainstorm aloud ideas, make notes or write a response to the discussion as a class project. For older students or to include more rhetoric discussion and research, analyze the documents found at the end of this PDF and have students do independent research on the roles of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What did the law say about land ownership? Did marriage make a difference? What obstacles would women face?

For more information about women and land ownership see:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Married\\_Women%27s\\_Property\\_Acts\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Married_Women%27s_Property_Acts_in_the_United_States)

### Writing prompts

1. Write a biography of Sarah Cockrell for today. How would you describe her now? What things made her unique in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? You can embellish your biography by critically guessing how she became a successful businesswoman.
2. Read the letter from James A. Smith (found at the end of this PDF)
  - What is he asking of her? What do you think was her response? (There is no evidence that she agreed to his proposal)
  - How would her business have changed if she accepted his offer?

## TEKS (Activity 2)

### ELAR (MIDDLE SCHOOL)

#### Sixth Grade – 110.22 (b)

- (5) (A,B-D-I) Comprehension skills
- (6) (A-I) Response skills
- (10) (A-D) Composition-writing process

#### Seventh Grade – 110.23 (b)

- (5) (A,B,D-I) Comprehension-writing
- (6) (A-I) Response skill-writing
- (10) (A-D) Composition-Writing Process
- (12) (A-J) Inquiry and Research

#### Eighth Grade – 110.24 (b)

- (1) (A,B,D) Developing skills, oral language
- (5) (A-H) Comprehension skills
- (6) (A-J) Response skills
- (10) (A-D) Composition-writing process
- (12) (A-F,H) Inquiry and research

### ELAR (HIGH SCHOOL)

#### English I – 110.36 (b)

- (1) (A,B,D) Developing oral language
- (4) (A-I) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-J) Response skills
- (9) (A-D) Composition-writing process
- (10) (C) Composition argument
- (11) (A-I) Inquiry and Research

#### English II – 110.37 (c)

- (1) (A,D) Develop language skills
- (4) (A-I) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-J) Response skills
- (9) (A-D) Composition-writing process
- (10) (C) Argumentative
- (11) (A-G,I) Inquiry and research

#### English III – 110.38 (c)

- (1) (A,B,D) Developing language skills
- (4) (A,B,D,E,F,G,I) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-J) Response skills
- (10) (C) Compose argument
- (11) (A-H) Inquiry and Research

#### English IV – 110.39 (c)

- (1) (A) Developing language skills
- (4) (A-G) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-H) Response skills
- (11) (A-G) Inquiry and Research

## **Activity 3**

High School

Sarah's husband Alexander built a wooden bridge across the Trinity River. When the old bridge collapsed, the only way to cross was a ferry that Sarah owned. She obtained a charter from the Texas Legislature in 1860 to sell stock to raise capital for a steel bridge as a replacement.

How would you promote the need for a new bridge? How would you convince investors to buy stock in the enterprise? Some ideas are: 1.) The ferry is slow and inefficient; 2.) City of Dallas population growth; 3.) Safety in crossing the river; 4.) Financial prospects of the bridge far outweigh the ferry system, etc.

Create a proposal for new investors. You may use PowerPoint, design a poster display or write a persuasive argument meant for publication. Describe the positive aspects of a new bridge to connect Dallas to the rest of Texas. Be descriptive regarding the importance of the literal connection the bridge would make between Dallas and the rest of the state. Consider the importance of Dallas as a commercial city. Be sure it is professional and detailed.

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## TEKS (Activity 3)

### ELAR (HIGH SCHOOL)

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#### English I – 110.36 (b)

- (1) (A,B,D) Developing oral language
- (4) (A-I) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-J) Response skills
- (9) (A-D) Composition-writing process
- (10) (C) Composition argument
- (11) (A-I) Inquiry and Research

#### English II – 110.37 (c)

- (1) (A,D) Develop language skills
- (4) (A-I) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-J) Response skills
- (9) (A-D) Composition-writing process
- (10) (C) Argumentative
- (11) (A-G,I) Inquiry and research

#### English III – 110.38 (c)

- (1) (A,B,D) Developing language skills
- (4) (A,B,D,E,F,G,I) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-J) Response skills
- (10) (C) Compose argument
- (11) (A-H) Inquiry and Research

#### English IV – 110.39 (c)

- (1) (A) Developing language skills
- (4) (A-G) Comprehension skills
- (5) (A-H) Response skills
- (11) (A-G) Inquiry and Research

**CSA Ferry Receipt**

No. 22.

The Confederate States of America,

To Mr. J. H. Cockrell Dr.

DATE.	Particulars.	DOLLARS.	CENTS.
<p><i>May 8<sup>th</sup> 1865</i></p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">See article in Dallas News on 7-31-32 by Frank M. Cockrell</p>	<p><i>For</i></p> <p><i>Furnish of Govt. Employees. Trains &amp; mss Trinity River, at Dallas Texas, From January 1<sup>st</sup> 1864, To February 1<sup>st</sup> 1865, } said trains &amp; being under the direction of Capt. G. Field P. S. M. Viz:</i></p> <p><i>Aggregate,</i></p> <p><i>(183) Seven hundred &amp; eighty five wagons &amp; teams, at \$2.50 each. } 1570 00</i></p> <p><i>(62) Sixty two, Horsesmen at 25cts each } 15 50</i></p> <p><i>(8) Eight, Mules at \$1.50 " } 12 00</i></p>	<p><i>1593 50</i></p>	

I CERTIFY, on honor, that the above account is correct and just; that the services were rendered as stated, and that they were necessary for the Public Service.

*This account has not been paid, for want of funds. }*

*Julian Keith*  
Capt. QUARTERMASTER.

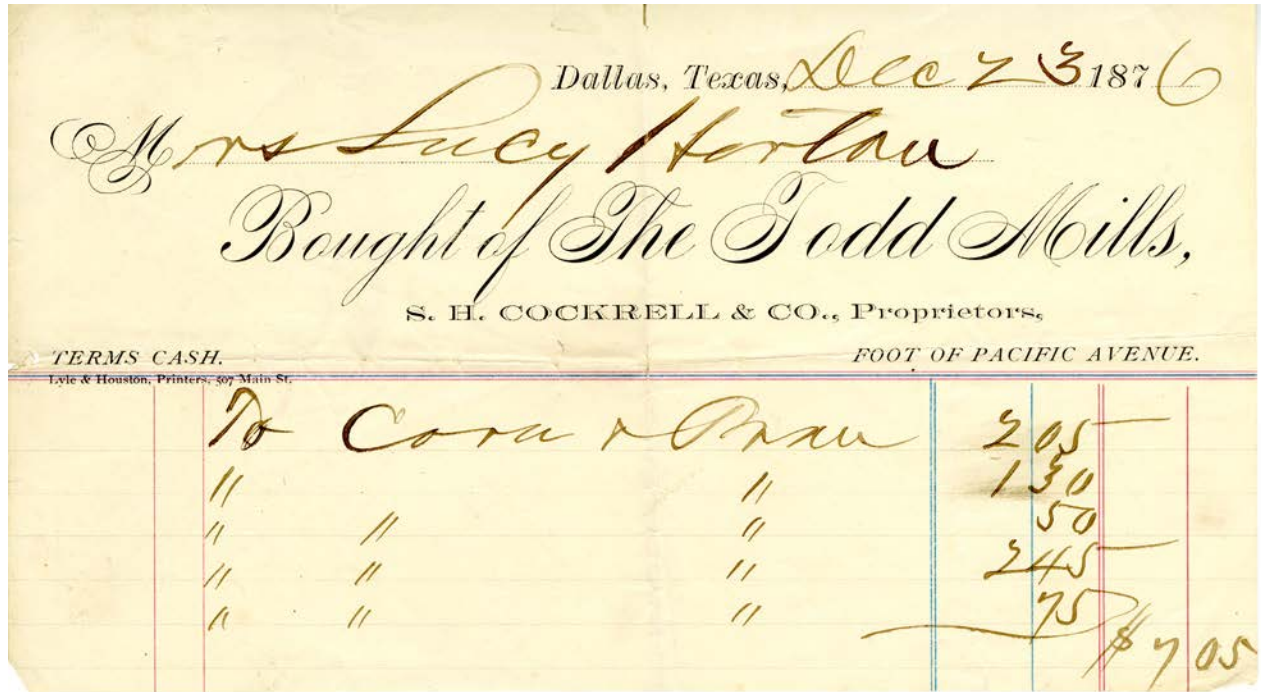
RECEIVED, at ..... the ..... day of ..... 186 .....

of ..... Quartermaster, C. S. Army,

*Fifteen hundred & Ninety Three* ..... dollars and *50* cents, in full of the above account.

(SIGNED DUPLICATES.)

**Todd Mills invoice**



## Lumber Receipt

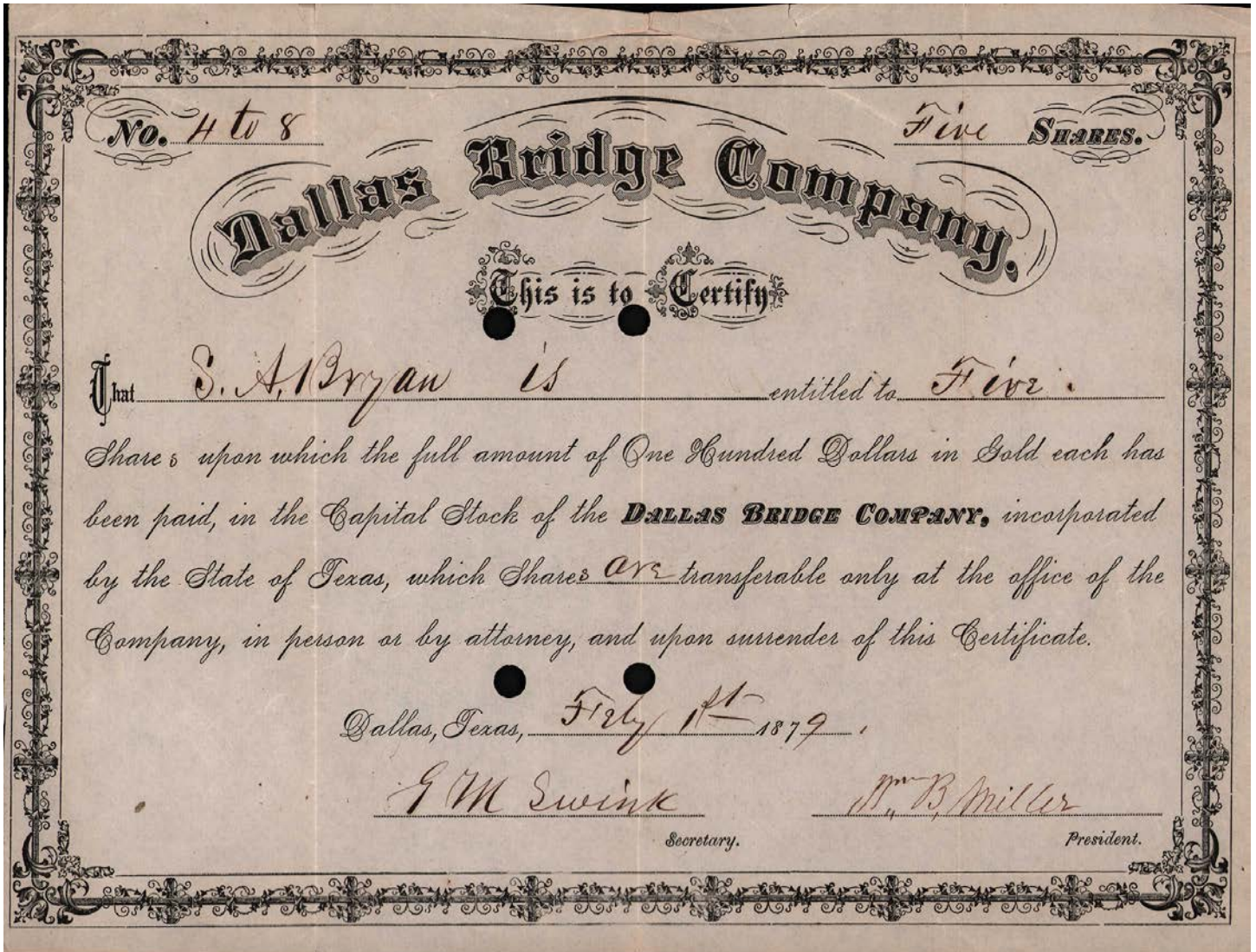
Mrs. Sarah Cockrell Cr. 1858  
in account with Smider & Beasey

Apr. 30 To	3400 ft lumber	\$ 51.00
July 8 ..	5111 ft. lumber	76.66
		<u>\$ 127.66</u>
July 28	Cr. of cash	\$ 60.00
	Due Smider & Beasey	\$ 60.00
Aug 11	in Cr. is put up the above acct.	60 00
	Aug 15 1858	res. under & over

\$ 67.66  
Mrs. Cockrell  
in Cr. with  
Smider & Beasey

11/2/58

**Stock Certificate for Steel Bridge**



**Property Deed 1887** (page 1 of 2)

No. 200—DEED, WARRANTY (SINGLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT)

The State of Texas, )  
County of Dallas )

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That J. H. C. Purniman

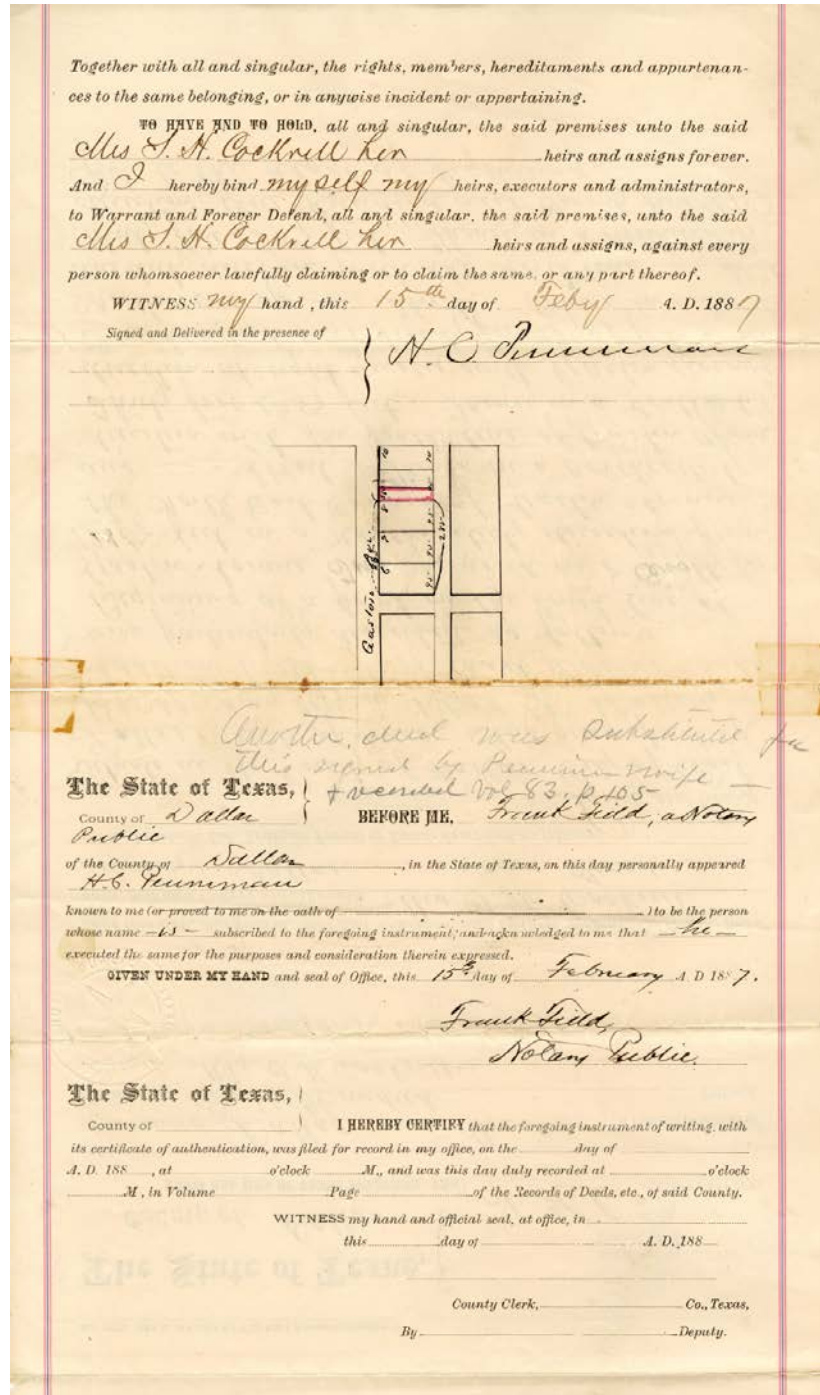
of the County of Dallas, State of Texas, in consideration of  
the sum of Eight Hundred Dollars,  
paid by Mrs. S. H. Cockrell

have Granted, Bargained, Sold and Conveyed, and by these presents do Grant, Bargain, Sell and Convey unto the said Mrs. S. H. Cockrell  
of the County of Dallas in the State of Texas  
all that certain Lot, Tract or Parcel of Land; described as follows:

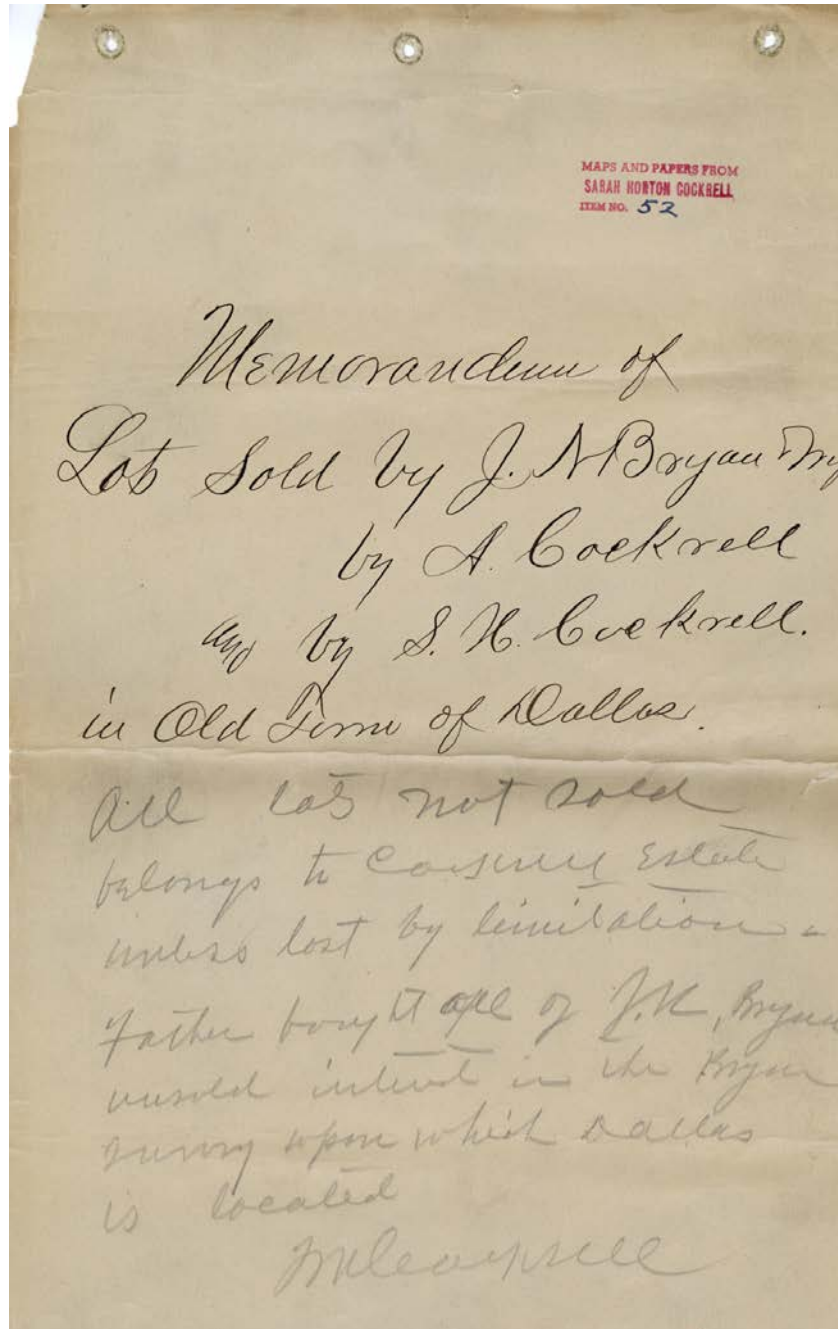
*Lying and being*  
Situate in the County of Dallas, City of East Dallas, State of Texas, and being part of Lot No. nine 197 in Block "A" of Miller's Addition to the City of East Dallas, and more particularly described as follows:  
Beginning at a point on the South line of Gaston Avenue Two hundred and Eighty five (285) feet in a Northeasterly direction from the North East Corner of Gaston Avenue and — Street. Thence in a Northeasterly direction with the South line of Gaston Avenue Thirty five (35) feet. Thence in a Southeasterly direction at right angles with Gaston Avenue One hundred and Seventy five (175) feet to the North line of — Street. Thence in a South westerly direction with the North line — Street Thirty five (35) feet. Thence in a Northwesterly direction, One hundred and Seventy five (175) feet to the place of beginning.

MAPS AND PAPERS FROM SARAH HORTON COCKRELL ITEM NO. 24

**Property Deed 1887** (page 2 of 2)



**Memo Book of Land Purchases** (page 1 of 5)



**Memo Book of Land Purchases** (page 2 of 5)

Name of Survey

MAPS AND PAPERS FROM  
SARAH HORTON COCKRELL  
ITEM NO. 53

No. ACRES.	GRANTOR.	GRANTEE.	DATE INST. MT.			DATE OF TITLE.			Book.	Page.
			Mo.	Day	Year	Mo.	Day	Year		
<i>Block 1</i>										
203	J.M. Bryan wife	Wm. Traughber	Oct	27	1846				H	74
104	"	Chas. Durgan & Chas. W. Stanley, M. Wood	7		1846				H	96
8	"	J.M. Patterson	"	27	"				B	28
8	"	"	Feb	6	1852				C	71
5	"	J.M. Smith	"	6	1852				C	62
<i>Block 2</i>										
4	Bryan wife	Jas. A. Scott	Oct	7	1846				H	73
6	"	J.M. Smith	Wed	18	"				B	28
"	"	"	Feb	6	1852				C	72
102	"	W.H. Beaman	Wed	22	"				C	86
3	"	J.M. Smith	Sept	11	1850				B	35
8	"	Thos. F. Cutchfield	Dec	31	"				B	41
7	"	"	Feb	26	1857				C	62
<i>Block 3</i>										
506	Bryan's wife	Mary Horton	Oct	7	1846				H	67
304	"	Elizabeth Horton	"	7	"				H	71
102	"	J.B. Missouri & Co. Young	Dec	9	1847				B	27
7	"	Lt. C. Hodges	July	20	1851				B	43
8	"	Jas. B. & Elizabeth Bryan	Sept	20	1852				C	28
<i>Block 4</i>										
506	Bryan's wife	Chas. H. Durgan	Apr	9	1849				B	111
8	"	Chas. W. Stanley	Aug	10	"				B	170

**Memo Book of Land Purchases** (page 3 of 5)

		Name of Survey									
No. ACRES.	GRANTOR.	GRANTEE.	DATE INST'MT.			DATE OF TITLE.			Book	Page	
			Mo.	Day	Year	Mo.	Day	Year			
<i>Block 5</i>											
<i>Lots</i>											
<i>4</i>	<i>Bryans wife</i>	<i>Geo. C. McCoy</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>1847</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>31</i>		
<i>13 1/2</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>1849</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>96</i>		
<i>6.7</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Jonathan L. Simpson</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>123</i>		
<i>5</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>E. A. McPherson</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>1850</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>269</i>		
<i>3</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>G. M. Alexander</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>1848</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>543</i>		
<i>1 1/2</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>J. B. Allen</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>1849</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>524</i>		
<i>Block 6</i>											
<i>2</i>	<i>Bryans wife</i>	<i>Jas. A. Seatt</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1846</i>			<i>H</i>	<i>79</i>		
<i>4</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>J. B. McPherson</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1850</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>409</i>		
<i>3</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1851</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>419</i>		
<i>50.6</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Hiram Zaxery</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>"</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>535</i>		
<i>10.8</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Mary McCannas</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>1852</i>			<i>C</i>	<i>146</i>		
<i>7</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Hebner B. McCannas</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>"</i>			<i>C</i>	<i>171</i>		
<i>Block 7</i>											
<i>2</i>	<i>Bryans wife</i>	<i>Wm. Beaman</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1846</i>			<i>H</i>	<i>95</i>		
<i>50.6</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ann M. Bryer</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>1848</i>				<i>D</i>	<i>403</i>		
<i>1.7</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Wm. Beaman</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1849</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>217</i>		
<i>4</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>A. Gauthier</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>1851</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>596</i>		
<i>Block 8</i>											
<i>1</i>	<i>A. Cockrell</i>	<i>J. M. Manfield</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>1853</i>			<i>D</i>	<i>94</i>		
<i>2</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>1855</i>			<i>H</i>	<i>73</i>		
<i>20 1/2</i>	<i>Covey &amp; Rustey</i>	<i>Sarah H. Cockrell</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1869</i>			<i>R</i>	<i>314</i>		

**Memo Book of Land Purchases** (page 4 of 5)

Name of Survey		No. ACRES.	GRANTOR.	GRANTEE.	DATE INST. MT. Mo. Day Year	DATE OF TITLE. Mo. Day Year	Book.	Page.	K. Ir.
Lots				<b>Block 9</b>					
4	JM Bryan wife		James Norton		May 26 1852	✓	C	162	
				<b>Block 10</b>					
4	Bryan wife		Chas. M. Starling	Eff. Bryan	Dec 9 1847		B	168	
253	"		John D. Exline		July 20 1852	✓	C	37	
1	W. Cockrell		Green Distilling Co					30744	
				<b>Block 11</b>					
3+4	Alon Cockrell		A. J. Walker		Nov 17 1855	✓	C	41	
				<b>Block 12</b>					
2, 3, 4	W. Cockrell		Nathan Goslight Co		Aug 22 1873		U	391	
				<b>Block 13</b>					
718	JM Bryan wife		Mary E. Bond		Oct 25 1849		B	218	
3+4	"		Mary Keen		July 3 "		B	239	
5+6	"		Wm. Traughber		" 14 1847	✓	B	321	
1+2	"		Mrs. Tucker		Nov 9 1850		B	347	
				<b>Block 14</b>					
6	Bryan wife		Mary O. McClunwa		Feb 11 1850		B	262	

**Memo Book of Land Purchases** (page 5 of 5)

Name of Survey

No. ACRES.	GRANTOR.	GRANTEE.	DATE INST. MT.			DATE OF TITLE.			Book	Page
			Mo.	Day	Year	Mo.	Day	Year		
Block 14										
504	A. Cockrell	Ed. Hunt.	Feb	25	1857				E 671	
Block 15										
506	Oryano wife	Nat. M. Burford	Dec	11	1850				B 361	
304	"	Ed. Wilburne	July	8	1851				B 425	
182	"	W. A. Gald	Dec	12	"				B 600	
Block 16										
567	Oryano wife	Dallas County	July	10	1851				C 226	
304	A. Cockrell	J. S. Jones							E 436	
1205	A. W. Cockrell	O. W. Knight	Apr	9	1860				H 275	
Block 17										
567	Oryano wife	Dallas County	July	10	1851				C 226	
304	"	W. E. Burman	Oct	20	"				B 605	
182	Alex. Cockrell	W. H. Burgess	"	2	1855				E 165	
Block 18										
708	Oryano wife	J. A. McCommas	July	10	1851				B 432	
182	"	Rejus Burnett	"	28	"				B 441	
6	"	A. D. Rice	Feb	14	"				B 450	

**Letter from James A. Smith** (page 1 of 2)

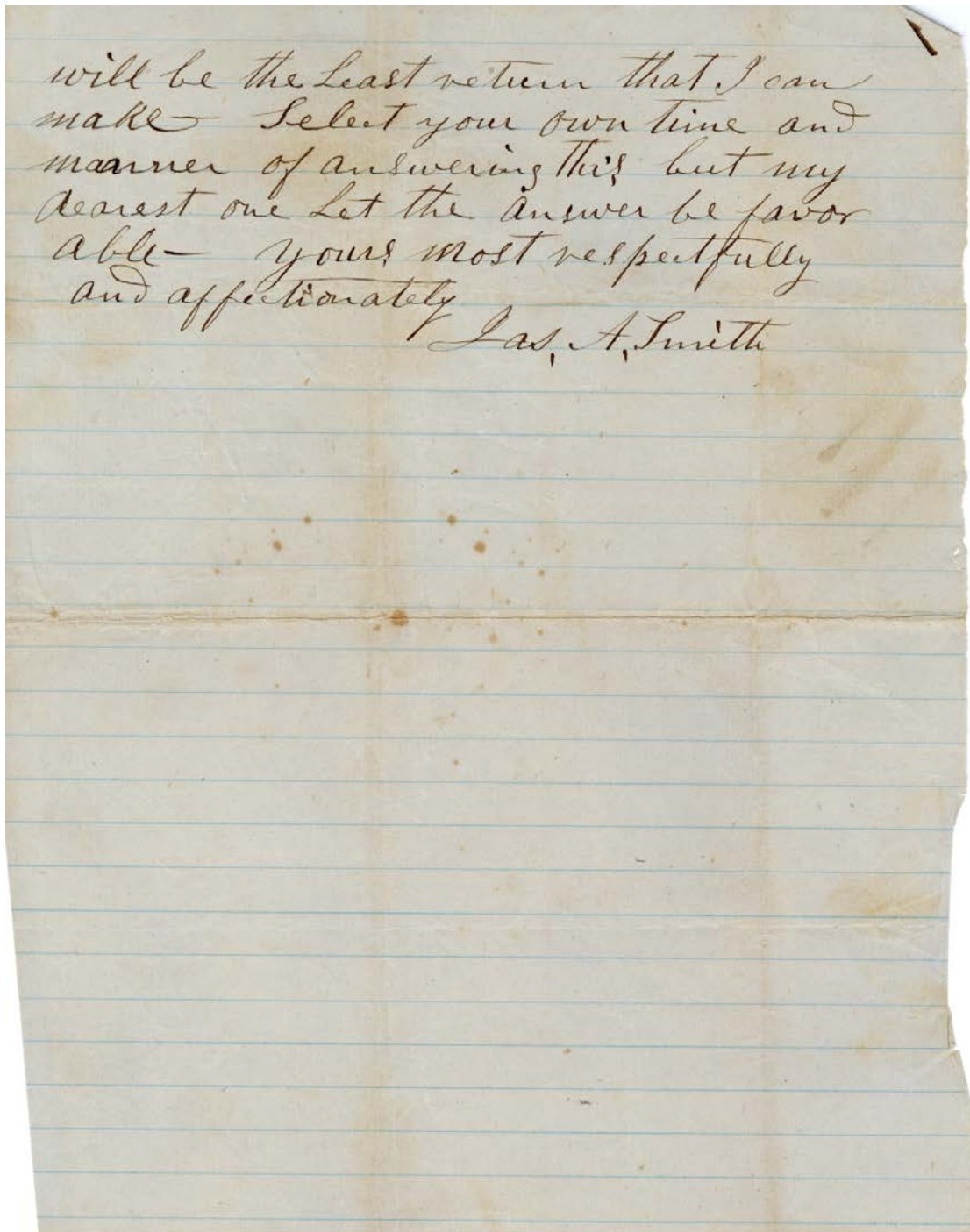
A proposal of  
marriage.

My dear Mr. Cockrell

The many and pressing claims on your time and attention preclude the possibility of a personal interview I therefore pen a few lines for your perusal with the hope of eliciting an answer that will relieve me from this painful suspense - I entreat of you by that undying Love I have for you to give the subject a favorable consideration

I have reflected on it maturely and prayerfully and the more I think of it the more thoroughly am I convinced that no evil of any kind to us or injury to any one else can possibly grow out of our union and am the more convinced our happiness would be mutually promoted and secured - Then why my dear Sarah should there be any further hesitation why postpone those sweet enjoyments that belong alone to conjugal Love and domestic affection - My very soul longs to call you mine please my sweet loved one to answer me favorably though it should be ever so briefly - If only that one sweet word yes will be enough to complete my happiness and a life's devotion to your happiness

**Letter from James A. Smith** (page 2 of 2)



will be the least return that I can  
make - Select your own time and  
manner of answering this but my  
dearest one let the answer be favor-  
able - yours most respectfully  
and affectionately  
Jas. A. Smith