

**Descriptive Summary:**

<b>Creator:</b>	John Kern Strecker, Jr., Mary Baker Boyd Strecker
<b>Title:</b>	John Kern Strecker Papers
<b>Inclusive Dates:</b>	1897-1960, undated
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	1907-1933
<b>Abstract:</b>	The John Kern Strecker Papers consist of records generated by John Kern Strecker, including correspondence, financial documents, literary productions, and a photograph.
<b>Accession #:</b>	0028
<b>Extent:</b>	1.35 linear feet (3 document boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	The papers are in English.
<b>Repository:</b>	The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

**Biographical Note:**

John Kern Strecker, Jr., was born on 1875 July 10 in Waterloo, Illinois, to Sallie F. Agnew Strecker and John Kern Strecker, Sr. The Strecker family moved to Waco, Texas, in 1887 November. As a young man, Strecker, Jr., worked in his father's trade as a stonecutter, but showed an early interest in natural science, publishing his first article on birds at the age of sixteen in the *National Bird Magazine*.

In 1903, Strecker became the curator of Baylor University's museum—a position he held until his death in 1933. The museum began in 1857 and is the oldest continuously operating museum in Texas. Strecker studied the animals of Texas and the Southwest and published more than seventy articles on topics such as birds, reptiles, and mollusks. He also traveled through Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana collecting folk stories of animals. Some of these stories were published in *Publications of the Texas Folklore Society* and Baylor University's *Contributions to Folklore*. Strecker did not attend secondary school or college, but was awarded an honorary M.S. degree by Baylor University.

Strecker was a member of many professional organizations, including the Texas Academy of Science, Texas Game and Fish Protective Association, Texas Folklore Society, Scientific Society of San Antonio, Biological Society of Washington, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Society of Mammalogists, American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, and the American Ornithologists Union.

Alongside his scientific work, Strecker was active in the community. He served as an elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Waco, manager of the Poultry Department of the Cotton Palace, and even for a time as deputy sheriff. Strecker was chairman of the McLennan County Democratic Executive Committee for twenty years. In 1918, he declared his intention to run for mayor of Waco but later withdrew from the race. Strecker also served as the chairman of the Executive Committee for the Tenth Supreme Judicial District of Texas. He was a member of the thirty-second degree in the Masonic Order, a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the head consul for the Texas division of the Woodmen of the World.

On 1915 October 27, Strecker married Mary Robert Boyd. The couple's only son, Robert Kern Strecker, was born on 1920 November 4, but died a few months later. John Strecker became seriously ill in 1932 and died on 1933 January 8. In 1940, Baylor University President Pat M. Neff renamed the Baylor University Museum in Strecker's

honor. The Strecker Museum was incorporated into the Mayborn Museum Complex in 2004. Strecker is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Waco, TX.

Sources:

Abernathy, Francis Edward. *The Texas Folklore Society: 1909-1943*. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1992.

Bragg, Arthur N. "Strecker: Naturalist and Man." *Bios* 32, no. 4 (December 1961): 177-181.

Kelley, Dayton, ed. *The Handbook of Waco and McLennan County, Texas*. Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1972.

Lintz, David. "Strecker Museum." *Handbook of Texas Online*.

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fst88>. Accessed 2012 May 18.

Neck, Raymond W. "Strecker, John Kern, Jr." *Handbook of Texas Online*.

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fst88>. Accessed 2012 May 18.

Williams, Walter J. "John Kern Strecker." *Copeia* 1933, no. 1 (April 3, 1933): 48.

**Scope and Content:**

The John Kern Strecker Papers provide a window into the life and work of John Kern Strecker, Jr., as natural scientist, museum curator, and civic leader. His series include correspondence (primarily written to Strecker or his wife), financial documents pertaining to the Texas State Peace Society, literary productions reflecting Strecker's scientific and organizational work, and a photograph of Strecker in the field. The greatest concentration of letters surrounds Strecker's illness in late 1932, followed by condolence letters to his wife, Mary Baker Boyd Strecker, after his death on 1933 January 8.

**Organization and Arrangement:**

These papers were well organized prior to processing, and some organizational categories have been maintained (i.e. eulogies, fraternal and professional organizations, and the Texas State Peace Society). The papers are now organized into four series: I. Correspondence, II. Financial Documents, III. Literary Productions, and IV. Photographic Materials. The correspondence is arranged chronologically and the literary productions are alphabetized by file title.

**Restrictions:** The collection is open for research.

**Literary Rights Statement:**

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**Index Terms:**

Strecker, John Kern, 1875-1933.  
 Zoology -- Texas.  
 Reptiles --Texas.  
 Birds -- Texas.  
 Woodmen of the World -- Texas.

**Related Materials:** None.

**Separated Materials:** None.

**Custodial History:**

<b>Acquisition:</b>	These papers were acquired as a gift circa 1969.
<b>Citation:</b>	John Kern Strecker Papers, Accession #0028, Box #, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

**Processing Information:** Finding aid completed by Jonathan Riddle, 2012 May 22.

**Container List:**

**Series I: Correspondence**

This is a series of letters written to John Kern Strecker and his wife, Mary Robert Boyd Strecker (“Ruby”). Towards the end of 1932, the letters began mentioning John’s serious illness and also began to be addressed to Ruby. Following John’s death on 1933 January 8, Ruby received many condolence letters, found here.

<b>BOX NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER TITLE</b>	<b>DATES</b>
1	1	Correspondence: General	1913 May 25- 1915 November 9
	2	Correspondence: General	1916-1924 July 28
	3	Correspondence: General	1924 August 24- 1930 September 24
	4	Correspondence: General	1931 September 10-1932 July 20
	5	Correspondence: General	1932 July 26- November 19, undated

<b>BOX NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER TITLE</b>	<b>DATES</b>
1	6	Correspondence: General	1932 December 1-28
	7	Correspondence: General	1933 January 6-10
	8	Correspondence: General	1933 January 10-11
	9	Correspondence: General	1933 January 11-12
	10	Correspondence: General	1933 January 12-20
	11	Correspondence: General	1933 January 21-February 7
	12	Correspondence: General	1933 February 8-April 6
	13	Correspondence: General	1933 May 1-1941 January 25
	14	Correspondence: General	1960, undated
	15	Correspondence: General: (1 of 2)	undated
	16	Correspondence: General: (2 of 2)	undated

### **Series II: Financial Documents**

The series contains receipts and ledger record donations to and expenses of the Texas State Peace Society. The ledger also contains meeting minutes regarding the formation of the Society on 1907 December 15. The Society sought to establish “law as a substitute for war in the international realm” as well as “a sentiment in favor of peace and arbitration.”

<b>BOX NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER TITLE</b>	<b>DATES</b>
1	17	Financial Documents: Receipts: Texas State Peace Society	1907-1908
	18	Financial Documents: Ledger: Texas State Peace Society	1907-1913

### **Series III: Literary Productions**

This series of literary productions includes articles written and edited by John Kern Strecker, many of them bound. The series also contains a bound copy of the proceedings of the Texas Peace Congress, papers and cards related to fraternal and professional organizations, and Mary Robert Boyd Strecker’s notes on letters from her husband John.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	1	Literary Productions: General	1918-1932, undated
	2	Literary Productions: Booklet: Clippings	1897 December-1899 April
	3	Literary Productions: Booklet: Clippings	1897 November-1909 September 11
	4	Literary Productions: Booklet: Clippings	1925 July-1927 December
	5	Literary Productions: Clippings	1923-1953, undated
	6	Literary Productions: Eulogies	undated
	7	Literary Productions: Fraternal Organizations	1915-1926, undated
	8	Literary Productions: Fraternal Organizations	1929-1932
	9	Literary Productions: Fraternal Organization Cards	1928-1932
3	1	Literary Productions: Event Passes	1892-1931, undated
	2	Literary Productions: Periodicals: <i>Baylor Bulletin</i> : "Notes on the Zoology of Texas"	1935 August
	3	Literary Productions: Periodicals: <u>Texas Humane Review</u> : "Birds, the Gift of A Beneficent Creator"	1928 July 10
	4	Literary Productions: Printed Materials: General	undated
	5	Literary Productions: Printed Materials: "The Herpetology of Caddo and Desoto Parishes, Louisiana"	1926 May 15
	6	Literary Productions: Printed Materials: "A List of Reptiles and Amphibians Collected in the Vicinity of Boerne, Texas"	1926 June 15
	7	Literary Productions: Printed Materials: "Notes on the Herpetology of the East Texas Timber Belt: 2. Henderson County Amphibians and Reptiles"	1926 July 15
	8	Literary Productions: Printed Materials: "Chapters from the Life Histories of Texas Reptiles and Amphibians"	1926 September 15

<b>BOX NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER TITLE</b>	<b>DATES</b>
3	9	Literary Productions: Proceedings: The Texas Peace Congress	1907 November 19-21
	10	Literary Productions: Professional Organizations	1926-1933
	11	Literary Productions: Professional Organizations Cards	1928-1932
	12	Literary Productions: Programs	1925-1928
	13	Literary Productions: Programs	1926
	14	Literary Productions: Research Notes	1916 August 12- 1932 April
	15	Literary Productions: Speech	undated

**Series IV: Photographic Materials**

This series consists of one undated photograph of John Kern Strecker, labeled on the back, "John Kern Strecker in the field."

<b>BOX NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER NUMBER</b>	<b>FOLDER TITLE</b>	<b>DATES</b>
3	16	Photographic Materials: Photograph: John Kern Strecker	undated