

EDWIN L. STEPHENS CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. 965

Inventory

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

Reformatted 2003

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SUMMARY

Size.	303 items
Geographic locations.	Lafayette, La.; Natchitoches, La.; Baton Rouge, La.; New Orleans, La.; Fort Monroe, Va.; San Francisco, Calif.; Havana, Cuba
Inclusive dates.	1889-1940
Bulk dates.	N/A
Language.	English
Summary.	Graduate of LSU, Professor of Science at Louisiana Normal School at Natchitoches, and president of Southwestern Louisiana Institute of Lafayette (1900-1938). Papers pertain to secondary and higher education in Louisiana, and consist of letters and related items from Thomas D. Boyd, president of LSU; Colonel E. S. Benton, onetime Commandant at LSU; and James H. Dillard, professor at Tulane University.
Restrictions on access.	If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
Related collections.	Edwin Lewis Stephens Grade Reports, Mss. 2315 Edwin Lewis Stephens Memorabilia, Mss. 965 Edwin Lewis Stephens Papers, Mss. 403, 893 Edwin Lewis Stephens Papers, 83, Special Collections, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.
Copyright.	Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
Citation.	Edwin L. Stephens Correspondence, Mss. 965, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Stack locations.	A:37, OS:L

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Edwin Lewis Stephens (1872-1938) was a Louisiana educator and university administrator. He attended Louisiana State Agricultural and Mechanical College in Baton Rouge and held teaching positions at the Louisiana State Normal School, later Northwestern State University, in Natchitoches, La., and at other Louisiana institutions before becoming the first president of Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute, later University of Louisiana at Lafayette, from 1900-1938.

E.S. Benton (d. 1925) attended LSU with Stephens and served in the U.S. Army during the Spanish-American War. He retired with the rank of Colonel at Columbia Military Academy in 1914. Thomas D. Boyd (1854-1932) was a professor of mathematics at Louisiana State University (1873-1877) while his brother, David French Boyd, was superintendent. In 1888, he became president of the Louisiana State Normal school at Natchitoches, and in 1896, was elected president of Louisiana State University. James H. Dillard (1856-1940) was an administrator and teacher at Tulane University and president of the New Orleans public library. In 1908, he became director of the Negro Rural School Fund (Jeanes Fund), and in 1917, the Slater Fund – two philanthropic foundations which supported vocational training for African Americans and training institutes for African American teachers.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Correspondence of Edwin Lewis Stephens principally concerns Stephens' duties as president of Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute, his personal relationships with friends, and secondary and higher education in Louisiana. Included are numerous letters from E.S. Benton, who reminisces about cadet days in Baton Rouge, La., describes army life at Ft. Monroe, Va., and relays news of family members' marriages and deaths; and letters from Stella Benton Vaughan, Benton's daughter, concerning her father's death and his friendship with Stephens. Another equally large group of letters is from J.H. Dillard, professor of Latin at Tulane University and later an associate of the John F. Slater Fund, an organization that worked to promote the education of African Americans in the Southern U.S. Dillard's letters describe travels to Europe and elsewhere, discuss various educational topics, and report news of family members. Offprints of several of Dillard's articles on educational subjects accompany the correspondence.

The largest group of letters is by Thomas D. Boyd, then president of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College. The letters concern Stephens' graduate studies in pedagogy at New York University, job prospects for Stephens at local universities, recommendations of candidates for faculty teaching positions at Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College and other state schools, Stephens' duties at Northwestern State College of Louisiana and later at Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute, academic conferences and symposia, state funding of Louisiana universities, and other issues related to higher education in Louisiana.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

In addition to the following groups of correspondence are three photographs, one an LSU group photograph (ca. 1900), one from the Department of Superintendents NEA Conference in Chicago, featuring among others Stephens and Boyd (1907), and another of the Lafayette Chess Club during the visit of Judge L.L. Labatt (ca. 1915).

Letters of E. S. Benton, 1893-1931

E. S. Benton writes to Stephens mostly of personal news, with some mention of the militia while LSU Commandant of cadets (1893-1894), and later from Fort Barrancas, Washington, Florida, providing a description of the fort; a psychological discussion on the behavior of man, self-evaluation and religion; the Chickamauga campaign; and descriptions of Havana, Cuba (1894-1896). Letters from Fort Monroe, Virginia, describe quarters and social life at the Fort, worthless land defenses, poor ships in the U.S. Navy, and the inevitability of war with Spain (1896-1898). He also writes from Roanoke, Va., concerning curriculum and educational methods in secondary schools and universities, and congratulates Stephens on his presidency of the Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute (1901). In a letter from San Francisco, Benton tells of his time in Puerto Rico accompanying the Miles Expedition, his presence in Portsmouth during the peace treaty ending the Russo-Japanese War, and finally of the earthquake and fire in San Francisco and the work of the army there (Feb. 15, 1907). Also included is a letter from Benton at Columbia Military Academy announcing the marriage of his daughter, Stella, to Mr. Glenn Kieffer Vaughan of Lawrenceburg, Tenn. (Oct. 27, 1914). He also writes to Stephens his views on the nation and current events, including the First World War, women's suffrage, and the Philippines, as well as education and Stephens' work at SLI, and the administration at LSU (1917-1924). Also included are letters from Benton's daughter, Stella Benton Vaughan, concerning memories of her father after his death in 1925 (1930-1931).

Letters of Colonel Thomas D. Boyd, 1889-1926

Thomas D. Boyd writes to Stephens during his presidency at Louisiana State Normal School, Natchitoches upon Stephens' entrance to LSU (1889-1896). He provides advice concerning the benefits of an education and proper conduct at school, as well as mentions a smallpox epidemic at Natchitoches in 1896. Also in 1896, Boyd became president of LSU and writes to Stephens of the number of cadets (1896); participation in the Spanish-American War (1898); yellow fever epidemics (1898); recruitment, and university statistics such as enrollment, number of instructors, and room/board costs (1896-1900). He also writes concerning the establishment of Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute (1900-1901); issues including references for students, prospective faculty members, and funding (1902-1910), his opposition to state appropriations to fund Tulane University's Law School (1906), the possibility of establishing a Department of Music (1910), and a football game between LSU and Tulane (1911). A number of letters discuss the state of education in Louisiana (1912-1922), legislative appropriations (1920-1922), professional conferences and meetings (1924-1925), and an article in the *Christian Register* concerning a course on evolution at LSU (1926).

Letters of James H. Dillard, 1899-1940

Earliest items include a short letter from Dillard mentioning upcoming exams and inviting Stephens to visit (1899) and a poem written by Dillard with homage to Walt Whitman (1900).

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Letters among Stephens, Dillard, and William Beer concern the arrangement of a concert of William Hayden, "Louisiana's distinguished young blind musician," at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in New Orleans (1902-1903), and a letter from Dillard to Stephens mentions the yellow fever epidemic of 1905 in New Orleans and Biloxi (Aug. 12, 1905). Many letters concern professional conferences and meetings, as well as articles on the subject of education written by either Dillard or Stephens for publication in journals, particularly the *Louisiana School Review* (1906-1937). A number of letters, telegrams, and recommendations are concerned with Dillard's activities as chairman of a committee in Louisiana appointed to investigate the School Book Adoption (1909-1910). Also included is a broadside of the song, "Forward America," by Dillard (1917); printed information on the Jeanes Fund (1926); reprints of a number of articles by Dillard related to education and teacher training (1920-1938, undated); and newspaper clippings, including one concerning Dillard University (ca. 1930).

INDEX TERMS

Benton, E. S.
Boyd, Thomas Duckett, 1854-1932.
College presidents--Louisiana.
College teachers--Selection and appointment--Louisiana.
Congresses and conventions--United States.
Dillard, J. H. (James Hardy), 1856-1940.
Education, Higher--Louisiana.
Education, Higher--Louisiana--Finance.
Educational leadership--Louisiana.
Fort Monroe (Va.)--History--19th century.
John F. Slater Fund.
Lafayette (La.)--History--19th century.
Letters (correspondence)
Louisiana State Agricultural and Mechanical College--Students.
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College--Faculty.
Male friendship--Louisiana.
Military cadets--Louisiana--Baton Rouge.
New York University--Graduate students.
Northwestern State College of Louisiana--Faculty.
Offprints.
Soldiers--United States.
Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute--Faculty.
Stephens, Edwin Lewis, 1872-1938.
United States. Army--Military life.
Universities and colleges--Louisiana--Administration.
Vaughan, Stella Benton.

CONTAINER LIST

Stack

<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
A:37	1a	1-2 3-5	E.S. Benton correspondence (1893-1931) Thomas D. Boyd correspondence (1899-1926)
	1b	6-9a 9b 9c	J. H. Dillard correspondence, articles (1899-1940, undated) Photograph of NEA Conference, Chicago (1907) Photograph of Lafayette Chess Club (undated)
OS:L	--	1	LSU group photograph (ca. 1900)