

JAMES B. ASWELL PAPERS
(Mss. 1408, 1426, 1468, 1483, 1620, 1621)
Inventory List

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

Reformatted 2006

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Proper acknowledgement of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

SUMMARY

Size	3.0 linear ft. (1,319 items)
Geographic Locations	Louisiana, Europe.
Inclusive Dates	1890-1959.
Bulk Dates	1909-1931.
Languages	English.
Summary	Educator, Louisiana State Superintendent of Schools, U.S. congressional representative. The collection pertains to the political career of Congressman James B. Aswell, Louisiana politics, World War I and post-war European conditions. Included are diaries documenting Aswell's official missions to Europe and scrapbooks on his career as an educator. Notable individuals mentioned in the collection include Huey Long, John M. Parker, Gaston Porterie, Herbert Hoover, and Al Smith.
Access Restrictions	Engraving plates, New Orleans bicentennial medallion. Use scans of items. Access to originals requires permission of the curator.
Copyright	Physical rights are retained by the LSU Libraries. Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the writers of these materials in accordance with U. S. copyright law.
Related Collections	James B. Aswell Letter, Mss. 3295, James B. Aswell Jr. and Family Papers, Mss. 2453, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Citation	James B. Aswell Papers, Mss. 1408, 1426, 1468, 1483, 1620, 1621, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Locations	U:172-174, G:1, 98:A, Vault:38

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Aswell was born in rural Jackson Parish in north Louisiana to Benjamin W. Aswell and the former Elizabeth A. Lyles. He attended local schools and graduated with teaching credentials in 1892 from Peabody College, in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1893, he received the Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nashville. He received his Master of Arts degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville 1894, and returned to the University to obtain his law degree in 1907. He was twice married. His first marriage was to the former Mary Lee Wright by whom he had his daughter Corinne, and his second was to the former Ella Foster by whom he had his son, James B. Aswell, Jr. (1906–1955). James B. Aswell, Jr. was an author based in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Aswell began his educational career as a teacher in country schools and high schools. In 1900, he was appointed the president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute (now Louisiana Tech University). He resigned that post in 1904 when he was elected to serve as Louisiana State Superintendent of Schools. During his four-year tenure as superintendent, he reorganized the Louisiana public-school system. He served as president for the Louisiana State Normal School (now Northwestern State University) from 1908 until 1911. In 1911, he resigned as the Northwestern president to run for governor of Louisiana. Luther Hall defeated him in the Democratic primary. Aswell was elected as a Democrat to U. S. House of Representatives in 1913 and served until his death in March 1931. Known as the "dean of the Louisiana delegation," Aswell established Kisatchie National Forest and Fish Hatchery in the Eighth District. As a ranking minority member of the Agriculture Committee, he authored several drought relief measures. Aswell visited Europe in an official capacity as congressman during and after World War.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The James B. Aswell papers dates from 1829 through 1959 with the bulk of the collection covering 1909 through 1931. Correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks, speeches, printed items and legal documents pertain principally to politics and his political career, with correspondence making up a large part of the collection. Topics includes Louisiana politics, World War I and post-war conditions in Europe, war veterans; Mississippi River floods and flood control programs; the Louisiana Highway Commission; the Ku Klux Klan; and Chautauqua lectures in Ruston, Louisiana. Chautauqua was an adult education movement in the United States, highly popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement spread throughout rural America until the mid-1920s. Bound manuscript volumes include diaries recording Aswell's official missions to Europe in 1918 and 1923; memorandum books; and scrapbooks pertaining to Aswell's careers as an educator and politician. In addition, the correspondence of Aswell's son, James B. Aswell, Jr. discusses his candidacy as the successor to his father's congressional seat.

LIST OF SERIES

- Series I. Papers, 1890-1959, undated.**
- Series II. Printed Items and Photographs, 1909-1931, undated.**
- Series III. Artifacts, 1917, undated.**

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Papers, 1890-1959, undated.

This series is comprised personal, political and business papers, travel diaries, scrapbooks, and memorandum books. Correspondence relating to Louisiana politics, personal matters, and business affairs comprises a large part of this series. Political correspondence comments on campaigns and political events, and discusses leaders such as J. W. Bolton, Hugh Corry, Q. T. Hardtner, Dolph Frantz, Gaston Porterie, E. L. Stephens, James E. Smitherman, James J. Bailey, R. W. Yarbrough, John A. Lejeune, A. W. Newlin, Huey P. Long, and J. W. Hawthorn. References are also made to Al Smith and Herbert Hoover. Constituents' letters are also included.

In addition, papers contain drafts of speeches, poll tax receipts, passports (1918, 1923), notes on conditions in Europe, Germany and Russia (ca. 1923), campaign materials, and resolutions related to Aswell's death. A reprint of the Federal Corrupt Practices Act, 1925, and materials pertaining to Democratic Executive Committee of the 8th District of Louisiana and the Democratic State Central Committee of Louisiana are present.

Scrapbooks contain materials pertaining to Aswell's attendance at Peabody Normal College and the University of Nashville, his association with the Chautauqua lecture series, his service as Louisiana State Superintendent of Public Education, his presidency at Louisiana State Normal College, and his gubernatorial and congressional campaigns in Louisiana. Scrapbook #12 includes a speech by Donald Caffery supporting Murphy J. Foster for governor of Louisiana. Also contains newspaper clippings pertaining to the Chautauqua. Scrapbook #13 contains a typewritten copy of Aswell's defense of his accounts as former State Superintendent of Education. Scrapbook #15 includes items concerning his support of Colonel William Mitchell as well as the establishment of the Llano colony. Scrapbook #15 contains clippings referring the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, and Aswell's denunciation of Governor John M. Parker's request to defer the investigation of Klan activities in Louisiana (1922). Contains items dealing with Aswell's reaction to segregation and to the Pleasant-Parker campaign. Scrapbook #16 contains materials opposing John M. Parker in his gubernatorial campaign against Frank P. Stubbs as well as a copy of a speech by Luther E. Hall opposing Parker. Also has newspaper clippings reflecting Aswell's position in Congress on the veteran's bonus. Scrapbook #17 has items pertaining to Aswell's congressional campaign as well as clippings about his opponent Gaston Louis Porterie. Scrapbook #18 has newspaper clippings regarding the building and dedication of the Veterans' Hospital. Also contains materials supporting Al Smith for president.

Diary entries reflect Aswell's observations of Europe as he traveled as a congressman to the European war zone and post war Europe.

Diary #1 includes descriptions of German atrocities committed during World War I (August 14, 1918). Some entries tell of precautions taken by American transport and

passenger ships against submarine warfare by Germans. A reward of 2 million francs offered by Kaiser Wilhelm II for the captain of the U. S. transport ship *Olympia*. The August 16 entry depicts the establishment of an Allied military post on the Isle of Wright for the training of British soldiers. The presence of a captured Zeppelin airship among the planes escorting the U. S. transport ship *Olympia* is reported. The August 19 entry describes the activities and attitudes of 2000 German prisoners at the allied prison camp in Northampton, England. The entry for August 26 relates the bravery of American troops at the Battle of Chateau-Thierry as well as the tour of European battlefronts by a party of U. S. Congressmen conducted by General John J. Pershing. The entry also reports on the death of 200 American troops from poison gas on the German-French border.

Diary #2 describes the veterans' rehabilitation hospitals in England, the rehabilitation program for disabled veterans' and the support of the rehabilitation program by public contributions and by the British labor unions. Diary describes the conditions at the Army hospital at Dijon, France. The August 30 entry tells of the tour of the battlefields along the Loire River and praises the American Red Cross for its care of 20,000 Italian children. The September 7 entry relates the escape of 400 Italians from Italia *irredenta* (Austrian held Italian territory) and their arrival in Italy via Russia, Japan and the United States. The participation in trench warfare by James B. Aswell and a party of U. S. Congressmen during an official tour of European warfronts and the hazards of trench warfare are described in the September 15 entry.

Diary #3 contains Aswell's prediction that the African American will be different after World War I, because he has been accepted socially in Europe.

Diary #4 relates a tour of central European countries by Joseph J. Davis, U. S. Secretary of Labor, for the purpose of studying immigration problems as they related to proposed U. S. immigration legislation. Also tells the necessity for exclusion of undesirable immigrants from Central Europe for the preservation of American economic, social, and cultural standards. The July 16 entry tells of the problems presented by the presence of Jews in Poland following World War I.

Diary #5 describes the bitterness of German officials resulting from French occupation of the Ruhr Valley. It also describes a riot at the Krup Factory Works at the town of Essen in the Ruhr Valley. The August 3 entry tells the news of the death of Warren G. Harding and the anticipated effects of his death upon the Republican Party.

Series II. Printed Items and Photographs, 1909-1931, undated.

Printed items consist newspaper clippings, newspapers (1878-1940), printed speeches, political handbills and broadside, pamphlets and photographs. Clippings pertain to Louisiana politics, politicians and Aswell's political campaigns. Newspapers titles include *The Farmer's Friend* (Hammond: July 31, 1939), *The People's Vindicator* (Natchitoches: July 13, 1878), *The Sepia Socialite* (New Orleans: Jan. 20, 1940), *The*

LaSalle Ledger (Jena, La.: Aug. 7, 14, 28, 1912), and *The Dodson Times* (Dodson, La.: Aug. 30, 1912).

Photographs consist of snap shots, group photographs, copy prints, and portraits of James B. Aswell (1915, 1930, undated). Photographs show the devastation caused in Avoyelles Parish by the 1927 Mississippi River flood. Other photos depict buildings and structures in and near Alexandria, La. (1921, undated). Photographs produced for the Louisiana Highway Commission show roadways and bridges around the state (1925, undated). Also present are several photographs of street scenes, and buildings and structures in Europe, including Roman ruins and the St. Peter Basilica in Rome (ca. 1923).

Note: The pamphlets are arranged alphabetically by author.

Series III. Artifacts, 1917, undated.

This series consists of two copper engraving plates for James B. Aswell's calling cards (undated) and one copper medallion commemorating the founding of New Orleans that was produced for the Paris celebration (1917).

INDEX TERMS

American Legion.
Aswell, James B. (James Benjamin), 1869-1931.
Aswell, James B. (James Benjamin), Jr., 1906-1955.
Chautauquas.
Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948.
Democratic Party (La.)
Education, Higher--Louisiana.
Educators—Louisiana.
Ewing, Robert, 1849-1932.
Flood control—Law and legislation—United States.
Foster, Murphy James (1849-1921).
Hoover, Herbert Clark, 1874–1964.
Ku Klux Klan (1915-)
Legislators—Louisiana.
Llano Cooperative Colony, New Llano, La.
Long, Huey P., Jr., 1893-1935.
Louisiana Highway Commission.
Louisiana—Politics and government, 1865-1950.
Louisiana Tech University.
Northwestern State University of Louisiana.
Parker, John Milliken, 1863-1939.
Political campaigns.
Smith, Alfred Emanuel, 1873-1944.
United States. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture.
Veterans.
World War, 1914-1918—Personal narratives.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
			Series I. Papers, 1892-1959, undated.
U:172	1	1-10	Papers, 1892-1927. 373 items.
U:172	2	11-18	Papers, 1928-1933, 1937. 642 items.
U:172	3	19-25	Papers, 1931-1937. 238 items.
		26	Papers, 1953, 1958-1959. 4 items.
		27-28	Papers, undated. 16 items.
		29	Papers, 1917. 1 item.
U:174	7	56-59	Drafts of Speeches, 1916-1930, undated.
G:1		v 1	Dairy # 1, August 5-26, 1918. 1 item.
		v. 2	Diary # 2, August 27-September 22, 1918. 1 item
		v. 3	Diary # 3, September 23-October 4, 1918. 1 item.
		v. 4	Diary # 4, July 4-26, 1923. 1 item.
		v. 5	Diary # 5, July 26-August 13, 1923. 1 item.
		v. 6	Memorandum Book, 1916-1918. 1 item.
		v. 7	Memorandum Book, 1925. 1 item.
		v. 8	Memorandum Book, 1925-1927. 1 item.
		v. 9	Memorandum Book, 1927-1930. 1 item.
		v. 10	Passport, 1918. 1 item.
		v. 11	Passport, 1923. 1 item.
		v. 12	Scrapbook, 1890-1903. 1 item.
		v. 13	Scrapbook, 1910. 1 item.
		v. 14	Scrapbook, 1911. 1 item.
		v. 15.	Scrapbook, 1911, 1913-1926. 1 item.
		v. 16	Scrapbook, 1919-1920. 1 item.
		v. 17	Scrapbook, 1920. 1 item.
			Loose items removed from v. 17, Scrapbook, 1920.
		v. 18	Scrapbook, 1926-1931. 1 item.
			Series II. Printed Items and Photographs,
U:174	4	30	Printed Items, 1912. 33 items.
		31-33	Printed Items, 1918, 1922, 1926-1931, undated. 90
	4	34	Photographs, 1921, undated 8 items.
		35	Photographs, 1915, 1930, undated 11 items.

JAMES B. ASWELL PAPERS
1890-1959

Mss. 1408

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LSU LIBRARIES

		36-48	Photographs, ca. 1923, 1925. 74 items.
		49	Photographs, undated. 38 items.
U:174	5	50	Printed Items, 1931, undated.
	5	50	Scans of commemorative New Orleans bicentennial, medallion, 1917, engraving plates (undated).
	5	51-53	Pamphlets, A-J, 1910-1932, undated
U:174	6	54-55	Pamphlets, K-W, 1912-1932, undated.
OS:A		1	Aswell political campaign broadside, undated.
		2	Printed Items, clippings, 1897-1931, undated.
98:A		1-2	Newspapers, 1878-1940.
Vault:38		1	Series III. Artifacts, 1917, undated. Commemorative New Orleans bicentennial, medallion, 1917. Restricted access. Access requires permission of the curator. Use scan copy in box 5, folder 50.
		1	Engraving plates (undated). Restricted access, Access requires permission of the curator. Use scan copy in box 5, folder 50.