

WILLIAM B. HATCHER PAPERS

(Mss. 4242)

Inventory

Compiled by
Bradley J. Wiles

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

2009

Revised by Luana Henderson
2016

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SUMMARY

Size	1.5 linear ft.
Geographic Locations	Louisiana
Inclusive Dates	1904-1947
Bulk Dates	1941-1946
Languages	English
Summary	The William B. Hatcher Papers consist of correspondence, photographs, and other personal and administrative records from Hatcher's tenure at LSU, 1936-1947, with some earlier materials from his time as Superintendent of East Baton Rouge Parish schools.
Access Restrictions	None
Reproduction Note	May be reproduced.
Copyright	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
Related Collections	James Monroe Smith Papers, Mss. 4490; Harold W. Stoke Address, Mss. 3633; Troy H. Middleton Letter, Mss. 3357; Louisiana State University System Office of the President Records, A0002; Louisiana State University Photograph Collection, Office of the President, A5000.0002
Citation	William B. Hatcher Papers, Mss. 4242, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Locations	11:13, OS:H

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

William Bass Hatcher was born in Ripley, Mississippi, on December 12, 1888. He was the first child of Thomas William (T.W.) and Ida Hopgood Hatcher, both of whom were professional educators. T.W. and Ida were married January 12, 1888 in McGregor, Texas, but soon relocated back to Mississippi after Hatcher accepted the principal position at Ripley's town school. The Hatchers had two more children - Hallie in 1891 and James Franklin in 1893 – as they moved around to several towns in Central and East Texas to pursue teaching opportunities. William Hatcher began elementary school in Brownwood, Texas, and graduated from high school in Woodville, Texas, in 1904. That same year, at the age of fifteen, he was granted a teaching certificate in Tyler County, Texas, and began teaching at the same school from which he had graduated. A year later he moved to Louisiana to teach at the town school at Mt. Gilead in East Feliciana Parish. In 1906 the entire Hatcher family relocated to Delhi, Louisiana, and William began a two-year stint teaching first grade in Crew Lake, Louisiana.

From 1908 through 1915, Hatcher served as principal at the Junction City, Arkansas elementary school and at various school systems in Union, Iberville, and East Baton Rouge Parishes. Hatcher was able to transfer his combined teaching and administrative experience into college credit and alternated between jobs and full-time study until he earned a Bachelor's degree in 1917. In 1916, he was elected Superintendent of East Baton Rouge Parish Schools after a scandal involving shortages in school board accounts precipitated the resignation of the current superintendent. Hatcher was elected unanimously and continued to receive full endorsement by the board of directors in all subsequent elections until he resigned in 1935.

During his tenure as superintendent, Hatcher was recognized as a deft handler of the various financial problems that cropped up as state and city demographics changed and the Great Depression took hold across the country. Hatcher oversaw the construction of new facilities, the consolidation of smaller schools, the development of compulsory attendance laws, and creation of transportation services for rural students. Furthermore, he worked to increase the quality of teaching and administration and pull the district into closer alignment with state and national educational standards.

While working as superintendent, Hatcher took a brief hiatus to serve in the Army between August and December of 1918. On December 28, 1918, he married Elise McConnell of Baton Rouge. Over the next several years in his spare time he earned a M.A. in Education (1923) and completed a Ph.D. in History (1937), both from LSU. On August 6, 1933, Elise Hatcher died of cancer. The next year William offered a teaching job to his first wife's cousin, Amelia Devall, who taught at Napoleonville. After a brief courtship Hatcher married Devall on October 14, 1934. They had one daughter, Joan Amelia, in 1939.

In 1935 Hatcher took a one year leave of absence from the superintendent position to act as the state director of the National Youth Administration. This was primarily in reaction

to pressure he was facing from the Huey Long political machine to establish patronage jobs within school system. When his term expired the following year he decided not to return as superintendent and took a position as a special lecturer in LSU's History Department. After completing his doctorate in 1937 he was raised to associate professor and took on more administrative duties within the department.

While still at LSU, Hatcher was appointed temporary and acting dean of LSU affiliate John McNeese Junior College in Lake Charles in 1940. McNeese was reorganized that year and moved from the Junior Division to the College of Arts and Sciences. In 1941 Hatcher was named Associate Dean of LSU's College of Arts and Sciences and placed in charge of the Freshman Division. The following year the Junior Division was created out of the newly independent Freshman Division and Hatcher was named to oversee its operations and promoted to full dean. In addition to his new assignment, he was appointed director of the Army Services Training Program, acting as liaison between military, university, and student constituents.

Hatcher was appointed President of LSU on June 14, 1944. Under his administration the enrollment at LSU skyrocketed with the return of young men and women from military service. This led to new problems with providing adequate housing, facilities, faculty, and staff, and resulted in the reorganization of several colleges and departments across the state university system. There were also controversies involving censorship, integration, and an appointment to the medical school that led to twenty-three faculty resignations in 1945.

In the fall of 1946, Hatcher's health declined and after a brief recovery he determined that he would be unable to maintain his duties as LSU president. He retired on February 8, 1947, but was elected president emeritus for the remaining fiscal year. Hatcher died of heart failure on April 3, 1947.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The William B. Hatcher Papers consist of office files with correspondence and other personal and administrative records from Hatcher's tenure at LSU, 1936-1947, with some earlier materials from his time as Superintendent of East Baton Rouge Parish schools. Included are letters, memoranda, speeches, and other items accumulated by Hatcher as a faculty member and graduate student in the History Department, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the President of the university. Hatcher's files also contain course papers, newspaper clippings, book reviews, and materials relating to his book, *Edward Livingston, Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democrat*. In addition, the collection includes a 14x12 photographic portrait of Hatcher and several photographs and duplicate prints of him at campus events with faculty, staff, students, and various dignitaries.

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

- Series I. Correspondence, 1904-1947.**
Subseries 1. Personal, 1918-1947.
Subseries 2. Professional Associates, 1941-1947.
Subseries 3. History Department, 1939-1944.
Subseries 4. Letters of Congratulations, 1944.
Subseries 5. Miscellaneous, 1904-1946.
- Series II Writings and Speeches, 1928-1946.**
Subseries 1. History Department, ca. 1929-1944.
Subseries 2. Speeches, ca. 1928-1946.
- Series III. Photographs, ca. 1932-1946.**
Subseries 1. Original Prints, undated.
Subseries 2. Archival Copies, 1932, undated.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Correspondence, 1904-1947, undated.

Subseries 1. Personal, 1904-1947.

The Personal correspondence is primarily letters from Hatcher's family, friends, students, military contacts, and work colleagues from 1941-1947. There are several requests for letters-of-reference from former students and affectionate communiqués from soldiers Hatcher knew from LSU's Army Services Training Program who had gone on to serve in the war effort. The subseries also contains offers of employment, personal financial and housekeeping records, and items indicative of Hatcher's wide professional and personal reach. Of note are letters to and from the family of John and Gertrude Preston. Gertrude was Hatcher's sister-in-law by his first wife Elise, and much of the correspondence concerns the finances and education of his nieces, Anne and Jane Preston, from 1943-1947. In addition, this subseries contains several personal records of Hatcher's including his wedding vows booklet, teaching certificate, and military discharge.

Subseries 2. Professional Associates, 1941-1947.

The Professional Associates correspondence includes letters, postcards, and handwritten messages between Hatcher and colleagues in the Baton Rouge community and throughout Louisiana, LSU faculty and administrators, and government and military officials. In correspondence between Hatcher and Lafayette attorney David Debaillon there are several references to Hatcher's controversial selection of a new medical school director in 1945. The series also includes correspondence between Hatcher and other presidents of southern land-grant colleges with the intent of organizing a conference. Other correspondents of note include Jimmie, H. Davis, G.B. Erskine, William J. Dodd, Harnett T. Kane, Frances Parkinson Keyes, and Bell Irvin Wiley.

Subseries 3. History Department, 1939-1944.

The LSU History Department correspondence consists primarily of letters and memoranda relating to Hatcher's responsibilities as an instructor and administrator. The materials are from book and journal vendors, university officials, students, and contacts at professional organizations. The correspondence is from 1941-1943 and most pieces have a carbon copy of Hatcher's response attached.

Subseries 3. History Department, 1939-1944.

The Letters of Congratulation subseries includes felicitations to Hatcher upon being elected President of LSU in 1944. These letters are from friends, colleagues, and associates statewide and throughout the country. Each letter is followed by a carbon copy of Hatcher's response. The subseries is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and contains a title page in the first folder.

Subseries 5. Miscellaneous, 1904-1946.

Miscellaneous correspondence includes items from 1930-1936 when Hatcher was still Superintendent of East Baton Rouge Parish schools, various messages and newspaper

clippings from 1944-1945, administrative correspondence from LSU, and letters and notes referencing Hatcher's attendance at LSU football games throughout 1946.

Series II. Writings and Speeches, 1928-1946.

Subseries 1. History Department, ca. 1929-1944.

This subseries includes Hatcher graduate term papers, letters and reviews relating to his book, *Edward Livingston, Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democrat*, and a copy of *A Syllabus on American History*. The term papers cover historical topics on British colonialism and the development of governments in America, India, Egypt, Australia, and New Zealand. The materials on his book include both published and manuscript copies of reviews and correspondence related to its publication. Hatcher's syllabus is a course booklet published in 1942, which features a detailed outline and reprints of historical sources covering the years 1492-1865.

Subseries 2. Speeches, ca. 1928-1946.

The second subseries contains drafts of speeches given at various events throughout Hatcher's career. These fall roughly between 1928 and 1946, but some are undated. The speeches cover a variety of topics including memorial addresses for veterans and President Franklin Roosevelt, commencement addresses to graduating students, welcome addresses for international dignitaries such as the British Ambassador to the United States and the Archbishop of Quebec, and others discussing local and national history. Several of the drafts contain notes.

Series III. Photographs, ca. 1932-1946.

Photographs include Hatcher at LSU events and meetings, and other "photo-op" prints with notable Louisiana residents such as Governor Jimmie H. Davis and U.S. Marines Major General G.B. Erskine. This series also contains a photograph of Hatcher with the Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to the United States, and one of Will Rogers at the 1932 Olympics. Several photos show Hatcher accompanied by his second wife Amelia and their daughter Joan, and there are a number of portraits of Hatcher that vary in size. Also included are two photograph cards with the images of Hatcher's father and sister. Photographs also contain undated copy prints of the originals.

INDEX TERMS

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found in the series indicated, as represented by their numbers.

College presidents--Louisiana--Baton Rouge.	Series I-III
Criticism.	Series II
Davis Jimmie, 1899-2000.	Series I, III
Debaillon David.	Series I
Hatcher William Bass 1888-1947.	Series I-III
Louisiana--Education--Baton Rouge.	Series II
Louisiana--Politics and government--1865-1950.	Series I-II
Louisiana State University Agricultural and Mechanical College, Dept. of History--Faculty.	Series I-II
Louisiana State University and Agriculture and Mechanical College— Presidents.	Series I-III
Soldiers--Louisiana.	Series I-III

CONTAINER LIST

Stack

Location Box Folders Contents (with dates)

			Series I. Correspondence, 1904-1947
11:13			Subseries 1. Personal, 1904-1947
	1	1-4	Friends and colleagues, 1918-1947
		5-6	Preston family, 1943-1947
		7	Miscellaneous items, 1904-1945
			Subseries 2. Professional Associates, 1941-1947
		8	Appointments, 1936-1942
		9-11	Military and alumni, 1944-1947
		12	Presidents' conference, 1943-1944
		13	Daniel Debaillon office, 1944-1946
			Subseries 3. History Department, 1939-1944
		14	1939-1941
		15	1941-1942
		16	1942-1943
		17	1943-1944
			Subseries 4. Letters of Congratulations, 1944
		18	Abraham-Baskin
		19	Bateman-Burgoyne
		20	Burns-Culpepper
		21	Curry-Enis
		22	Erskine-Grafton
		23	Graham-Holcombe
		24	Honeycutt-Lawhon
		25	Lawrence-Mendelsohn
		26	Merrick-Osborn
		27	Oviatt-Richardson
		28	Robinson-Smith
		29	Smith-Watkins
		30	Wells-Zingler
			Subseries 5. Miscellaneous, 1930-1946
		31	East Baton Rouge superintendent, 1930-1936
		32	Newspaper clippings, 1944-1945
		33	LSU administration, 1936-1944
		34	LSU football games, 1946

Stack

<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
			Series II. Writings and Speeches, 1928-1946
			Subseries 1. History Department, ca. 1929-1942
	1	35-37	Term papers, undated, 1929
		38-40	Edward Livingston book materials, 1938-1941
		41	<i>A Syllabus of American History</i> copy, 1942
			Subseries 2. Speeches, ca. 1928-1946
11:13	2	1	1928-1946
		2	Undated.
			Series III. Photographs, ca. 1936-1946
		3	Hatcher at LSU, undated
		4	Hatcher and military associates, undated
		5	Hatcher and family, undated
		6	Hatcher portraits, undated
		7	Hatcher portraits, undated
		8	Hatcher and Jimmie H. Davis, undated
11:13	3	--	Copy prints of originals, undated.
OS:H	--	1	12x14 portrait, undated