

**JAMES MONROE SMITH PAPERS**

Mss. 4490

Inventory

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

2015

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**SUMMARY**

<b>Size.</b>	0.5 linear ft.
<b>Geographic locations.</b>	Louisiana, Canada.
<b>Inclusive dates.</b>	1924-1939.
<b>Bulk dates.</b>	1930-1931, 1939.
<b>Language.</b>	English.
<b>Summary.</b>	Collection contains personal accounts, photographs, correspondence, invitations and announcements, scrapbook materials, newspaper clippings, and diplomas.
<b>Restrictions on access.</b>	No restrictions on access.
<b>Related collections.</b>	J. Hugo Dore Papers, Mss. 1389. Louisiana Scandals Scrapbook, Mss. 2600. James Monroe Smith Papers, Mss. 1742. Louisiana State University Office of the Comptroller Records, A0200, Louisiana State University Archives.
<b>Copyright.</b>	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
<b>Citation.</b>	James Monroe Smith Papers, Mss. 4490, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
<b>Stack locations.</b>	R:15; OS:S

**BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

James Monroe Smith was born October 9, 1888 in rural Jackson Parish in north Louisiana, the son of John Henry Smith and Mary Adney Sims Smith. He married Thelma Ford July 3, 1914, and they had two children: Marjorie Lee Smith and James Monroe Smith, Jr.

Smith was a Louisiana educator and university administrator. He attended undergraduate programs in Indiana and Louisiana, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1921. He was awarded a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University Teachers College in 1925, and he received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1927. During his academic career, Smith taught high school in rural Louisiana, the summer of 1917 at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana State University, and Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette (renamed University of Louisiana at Lafayette). He served as dean of the College of Education at the Institute from 1923 until 1930. In 1931, Governor Huey P. Long of Louisiana appointed him president of Louisiana State University. He served in that capacity until he resigned in 1939 after he was implicated in a scandal involving misappropriation of University funds. Prior to facing charges, Smith and his wife traveled to Canada. He was arrested on July 1, 1939 in Brockville, Ontario and was later sentenced to eight to twenty-four years at Louisiana State Prison at Angola for forgery and embezzlement, and to thirty months in federal prison for mail fraud and tax evasion. In 1945, Governor Jimmie Davis commuted his sentence in Louisiana; he was also paroled from federal prison that same year.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Collection contains two personal narratives, correspondence, ephemera, photographs, and newspaper clippings. The first narrative begins with a brief family history, and then focuses on his tenure as president of LSU (undated). Smith discusses political pressure, the involvement of Governor Huey P. Long in University affairs, construction projects, and administrative appointments. He tells of the governor's remark that coeducation could be eliminated at LSU (p. 39-44), Governor Long's involvement the construction of the Field House (p. 65-74), and the creation of the Graduate School (p. 92-99).

The second narrative, possibly written in Canada, recounts James Monroe Smith's conversations with Governor Richard Leche concerning the misappropriation of University bonds. He discusses the legal use of funds for construction projects and the governor's interference in these projects. He also writes about the governor's misuse of public funds and government contracts (ca. 1939).

Correspondence consists of personal letters written to Mrs. Smith relating to academic clubs and her recovery from an illness (1931, undated). Printed items contain photocopies of newspaper articles on the appointment of James Monroe Smith as president of Louisiana State University and local social events (1930-1931). Ephemera includes diplomas, invitations and programs (1924-1936, undated). Identified individuals in the photographs include James Monroe Smith, Governor Richard Leche, E. N. Jackson and Smith's children Marjorie Lee Smith and James Monroe Smith, Jr. (ca. 1930s, undated). The collection also contains framed medals and appointment plaque awarded to James Monroe Smith by Governor Richard Leche (May 12, 1936).

**INDEX TERMS**

College presidents' spouses--Louisiana.

College presidents--Louisiana.

Governors--Louisiana.

Leche, Richard W. (Richard Webster), 1898-1965.

Long, Huey Pierce, 1893-1935.

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical--Presidents.

Political corruption--Louisiana.

Smith, James Monroe, 1888-1949.

Smith, Thelma Ford.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u>			
<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents with dates</u>
<b>R:15</b>	1	1-2	Correspondence, 1931, undated.
		3-5	Ephemera, 1924-1936, undated.
		6-7	Printed items, 1930-1931.
		8-12	Personal narrative, undated.
		13	Personal narrative, ca. 1939.
		14-18	Photographs, ca. 1930s, undated.
		2	Framed medals and appointment plaque, May 12, 1936.
<b>OS:S</b>		1	Diplomas, 1925, 1927. Photographs, undated.