Mercer Green Johnston Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78028001

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012122

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012
Revised 2023 June

Collection Summary

Title: Mercer Green Johnston Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1860-1964
Bulk Dates: 1894-1954
ID No.: MSS28001
Creator: Johnston, Mercer Green, 1868-1954
Extent: 40,000 items
Extent: 112 containers plus 3 oversize
Extent: 45.2 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78028001
Summary: Educator, Episcopal clergyman, and author. Correspondence, diaries, sermons, notebooks, autobiographical papers, poems, prayers, financial papers, pamphlets, periodicals, photographs, clippings, scrapbooks, and memorabilia relating to Johnston's career as an Episcopal clergyman in the United States and the Philippines, worker for the Young Men's Christian Association during World War I, director of the People's Legislative Service, director of the National Citizens Committee on Relations with Latin America, and assistant to the administrator of the United States Rural Electrification Administration.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Borah, William Edgar, 1865-1940--Correspondence.
Brent, Charles Henry, 1862-1929--Correspondence.
Cutting, Bronson M., 1888-1935--Correspondence.
Debs, Eugene V. (Eugene Victor), 1855-1926--Correspondence.
Gilman, Elisabeth Coit, 1867-1950--Correspondence.
Johnston, James Steptoe, 1843-1924--Correspondence.
Johnston, Mercer Green, 1868-1954.
King, Judson, 1872-1958--Correspondence.
La Follette, Robert M. (Robert Marion), 1855-1925--Correspondence.
Lauck, W. Jett (William Jett), 1879-1949--Correspondence.
Milton, George Fort, 1894-1955--Correspondence.
Norris, George William, 1861-1944--Correspondence.
Oxnam, G. Bromley (Garfield Bromley), 1891-1963--Correspondence.
Rawleigh, William Thomas, 1870-1951--Correspondence.
Villard, Oswald Garrison, 1872-1949--Correspondence.
Walsh, Thomas James, 1859-1933--Correspondence.
Wheeler, Burton K. (Burton Kendall), 1882-1975--Correspondence.

Organizations
Episcopal Church--Clergy.
Episcopal Church--Philippines.
Episcopal Church--United States.
National Citizens Committee on Relations with Latin America.
National Progressive Headquarters.
People's Legislative Service.
Trinity Church (Newark, N.J.)
United States. Rural Electrification Administration.

Subjects

Labor--United States.
New Deal, 1933-1939.
Progressivism (United States politics)
World War, 1914-1918--War work--Young Men's Christian associations.

Places
Latin America--Foreign relations--United States.
United States--Economic conditions--20th century.
United States--Foreign relations--Latin America.
United States--Politics and government--1901-1953.
United States--Social conditions--20th century.

Occupations
Authors.
Clergy.
Educators.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Mercer Green Johnston, educator, Episcopal clergyman, and author, were given to the Library of Congress by his widow, Katherine Aubrey Johnston, in 1955.

Processing History

The papers of Mercer Green Johnston were arranged and described in 1958. The finding aid was revised in 2012.
The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Mercer Green Johnston in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Mercer Green Johnston are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Mercer Green Johnston Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1868	Born, Church Hill, Miss.
1889-1891	Law clerk for Barnard and Green, San Antonio, Tex.
1891-1892	Studied law, University of Virginia , Charlottesville, Va., under John B. Minor

1893-1898	Studied for Episcopal ministry, University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn.
1898-1900	Member of the clergy, Grace Church, New York, N.Y.
1901	Married Katherine Aubrey
1900-1903	Chairman of the faculty, chaplain, and teacher at West Texas Military Academy, San Antonio, Tex.;also rector of St. Paul's Church and minister in charge of St. John's Church, San Antonio, Tex.
1903-1908	Rector, Cathedral Parish of St. Mary and St. John, Manila, Philippine Islands
1909-1912	Secretary and treasurer, Diocese of West Tex., and business manager, West Texas Military Academy, San Antonio, Tex.
1912-1916	Rector, Trinity Church, Newark, N.J.
1917	Moved to Baltimore, Md.
1917-1919	Member, American Field Service attached to the French army in France
circa 1920-1927	Director, Baltimore Open Forum, Baltimore, Md. State chairman, Committee of 48 for Maryland President, Christian Social Justice Fund Editor, *Voice of the People* Executive secretary, Public Committee on Coal, New York, N.Y. Member, Wise Committee investigating mining conditions in West Virginia Executive secretary, Wheeler Defense Committee Executive secretary, National Citizens Committee on Relation with Latin America Member, National Committee for the Relief of Political Prisoners after World War I
1924	Treasurer, state committee of the Progressive Party; managed 1924 Maryland election campaign
1933-1936	Senior code advisor, Consumer's Advisory Board, National Recovery Administration, Washington, D.C.
1936-1942	Assistant to director, Developments and Operations Division, Rural Electrification Administration, Washington, D.C.
1940-1944	Labor relations advisor, Labor Relations Division, Federal Public Housing Authority, Washington, D.C.
1944, June 30	Retired
1954	Died, Washington, D. C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Mercer Green Johnston (1868-1954) span the years 1860-1954, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1894-1954. The collection consists of correspondence, diaries, sermons, notebooks, autobiographical papers, poems, prayers, financial papers, pamphlets, periodicals, photographs, clippings, scrapbooks, and memorabilia. The material is organized into thirteen series: Diaries and Notebooks, Family Correspondence, Personal Correspondence, General Correspondence, Subject File, Sermons, Autobiographical Papers, Book File, Financial File, Miscellany, Photographs, Scrapbooks, and Memorabilia and Oversize.

The General Correspondence covers all phases of Johnston's career as a minister, educator, and author, including numerous letters exchanged with Episcopal bishop Charles Henry Brent, with whom Johnston was associated in missionary work in the Philippines. Other correspondence in the series relates to his activities as rector of Trinity Church in Newark, New Jersey; as a freelance writer in the fields of social, economic, labor, and political activity; chairman of the National Progressive Headquarters and Peoples' Legislative Service with headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland; and as a New Deal official with the Rural Electrification Association and other agencies from 1932 until his retirement in 1944. Additional topics include his work with the Young Men's Christian Association during World War I and as director of the National Citizens Committee on Relations with Latin America in the 1920s.

The Family Correspondence includes letters with his wife's, Katherine Aubrey Johnston's, family and his father, Bishop James Steptoe Johnston, reflecting opinions of both father and son regarding religion, politics, and world affairs.

The Sermons series contains copies of Johnston's messages in various stages of preparation for delivery and publication and includes a cross-reference index to their contents.

Prominent correspondents include William Edgar Borah, Charles Henry Brent, Bronson M. Cutting, Eugene V. Debs, Elizabeth Colt Gilman, Judson King, Robert M. La Follette, W. Jett Lauck, George Fort Milton, George W. Norris, G. Bromley Oxnam, William Thomas Rawleigh, Oswald Garrison Villard, Thomas James Walsh, and Burton K. Wheeler.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in thirteen series:

- Diaries and Notebooks, 1898-1954
- Family Correspondence, 1860-1954
- Personal Correspondence, 1916-1954
- General Correspondence, 1885-1944
- Subject File, 1894-1954
- Sermons, 1894-1922
- Autobiographical Papers, 1869-1954
- Book File, 1917-1950
- Financial File, 1922-1948
- Miscellany
- Photographs, 1875-1954
- Scrapbooks, 1860-1925
- Memorabilia and Oversize, 1895-1920

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-5	**Diaries and Notebooks, 1898-1954** Diaries and notebooks. The diaries are largely desk-type appointment books. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 6-29	**Family Correspondence, 1860-1954** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 30-36	**Personal Correspondence, 1916-1954** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 37-66	**General Correspondence, 1885-1944** Folders of letters sent and received and two letterbooks.
BOX 67-79	**Subject File, 1894-1954** Clippings, pamphlets, and miscellaneous printed matter. Arranged by subject.
BOX 80-OV 92	**Sermons, 1894-1922** Handwritten drafts, printed or typed copies, and sermon books containing miscellaneous notes for Johnston's sermons. The sermons are arranged according to Johnston's numerical system. A cross-reference card index arranged alphabetically by title of sermon with each card containing the number of the sermon is filed at the end of the series.
BOX 93-94	**Autobiographical Papers, 1869-1954** Correspondence, notes, manuscripts, clippings, genealogical material, and brief biographical sketches assembled by Johnston. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 95-101	**Book File, 1917-1950** Typed and handwritten manuscripts and galley proofs of Johnston's books and related correspondence. The manuscripts are arranged alphabetically by title and the correspondence is arranged chronologically.
BOX 102-103	**Financial File, 1922-1948** Income and property tax statements, bills and receipts. Unarranged.
BOX 104-110	**Miscellany** Chiefly fragmentary notes on religion with a few annotated newspaper clippings and mailing addresses. Unarranged.

BOX 111 **Photographs, 1875-1954**

Arranged alphabetically by subject within chronological periods.

BOX 112-113 **Scrapbooks, 1860-1925**

Chiefly clippings from newspapers and magazines mounted in scrapbooks.
Arranged chronologically.

BOX OV 1-OV 2 **Memorabilia and Oversize, 1895-1920**

Diplomas, certificates, photographs, and scrapbooks.
Arranged by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-5	**Diaries and Notebooks, 1898-1954**
	Diaries and notebooks. The diaries are largely desk-type appointment books. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	Diaries
BOX 1	1903
BOX 1	1905-1909
BOX 1	1913-1914
BOX 1	1916-1918
BOX 1	1920
BOX 1	1928
BOX 2	1929-1931
BOX 2	1936
BOX 2	1938-1945
BOX 3	Notebooks
BOX 3	1898-1905
BOX 4	1908-1909, undated
BOX 5	Undated
BOX 6-29	**Family Correspondence, 1860-1954**
	Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 6	1860-1891
BOX 7	July 1892-1894
BOX 8	1894-Aug. 1896
BOX 9	June 1897-1898
BOX 10	July 1898-Mar. 1899
BOX 11	Apr. 1899-Mar. 1900
BOX 12	Apr. 1900-Feb. 1901
BOX 13	Mar.-May 1901
BOX 14	June-Aug. 1901
BOX 15	1901-Aug. 1903
BOX 16	July 1904-1905
BOX 17	Aug. 1905-May 1907
BOX 18	June 1907-Sept. 1909
BOX 19	Oct. 1909-Sept. 1912
BOX 20	1912-Oct. 1914
BOX 21	June 1915-1917
BOX 22	July 1917-Aug. 1918
BOX 23	1918-Sept. 1920
BOX 24	June 1921-1923

Container	Contents
BOX 25	July 1923-Feb. 1928
BOX 26	1928-Mar. 1934
BOX 27	1935-1939
BOX 28	1940-1954
BOX 29	Undated
BOX 30-36	**Personal Correspondence, 1916-1954** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 30	1916-1941
BOX 31	1942-1945
BOX 32	1946-1947
BOX 33	June 1948-1949
BOX 34	July 1949-June 1951
BOX 35	July 1951-Sept. 1953
BOX 36	1953-Oct. 1954
BOX 36	Undated
BOX 37-66	**General Correspondence, 1885-1944** Folders of letters sent and received and two letterbooks.
BOX 37	Early period, 1885-1903
BOX 38	Philippine period
BOX 38	1903-1908, undated
BOX 39	Letterbooks, 1903-1908 (2 vols.)
BOX 40	San Antonio, Tex., period, Oct. 1909-1912
BOX 40	Newark, N.J., period
BOX 40	1912, Nov. 1913
BOX 41	Jan. 1914-June 1915
BOX 42	July 1915-1916
BOX 43	Aug.-Dec. 1916, undated
BOX 44	Baltimore, Md., period
BOX 44	1917-1919
BOX 45	1920
BOX 46	1921
BOX 47	1922
BOX 48	Apr. 1923-1924
BOX 49	May-Dec. 1924
BOX 50	Jan.-May 1925
BOX 51	June-Dec. 1925
BOX 52	Jan.-July 1926
BOX 53	Aug. 1926-Apr. 1927
BOX 54	May-Aug. 1927
BOX 55	Sept.-Dec. 1927, undated
BOX 56	Washington, D.C., period

Container	Contents
BOX 56	1928
BOX 57	1929-1930
BOX 58	1931-1932
BOX 59	1933
BOX 60	1934
BOX 61	1935
BOX 62	1936-1937
BOX 63	1938-1939
BOX 64	1940-1941
BOX 65	1942-1943
BOX 66	1944, undated
BOX 67-79	**Subject File, 1894-1954** Clippings, pamphlets, and miscellaneous printed matter. Arranged by subject.
BOX 67	American Civil Liberties Union, 1921
BOX 67	Baltimore Dry Dock Strike, Baltimore, Md., 1920
BOX 67	Brent, Charles Henry, 1903
BOX 67	Christian Social Justice Fund, 1939
BOX 67	Coal Industry, Commission of Inquiry, 1922
BOX 67	Committee of 48, 1920-1924 (2 folders)
BOX 67	Congressional hearings, 1930-1931
BOX 67	Farmer Labor Party, 1920-1922
BOX 68	Federal Public Housing Authority
BOX 68	Hampton Roads data, 1944
BOX 68	Labor legislation, 1942-1944
BOX 68	Labor relations executive, 1943
BOX 68	Miscellaneous data, 1942-1944 (2 folders)
BOX 68	Wage stabilization agreements, 1941-1943
BOX 68	Gilman, Elisabeth Coit, 1916-1948
BOX 68	Gray, John H., 1914-1922
BOX 69	Hoover, Herbert, indictment of, 1951
BOX 69	King, Judson, 1951
BOX 69	Lattimore, Owen, 1953
BOX 69	Manila, Philippines, 1903-1908
BOX 70	National Citizens Committee on Relations with Latin America, 1927-1929 (2 folders)
BOX 70	National Progressive Headquarters, 1924-1925 (2 folders)
BOX 71	National Recovery Administration, 1933-1935
BOX 71	Complaints of small manufacturers against codes
BOX 71	Consumers advisory board
BOX 71	Cooperatives and codes for fair competition
BOX 71	Electric light power industry

Container	Contents
BOX 71	Lumber code authority
BOX 71	Miscellaneous
	(2 folders)
BOX 72	Proposed revision of
BOX 72	Status of anti-trust laws under
BOX 72	Textile industry, codes and finances of
BOX 72	Textiles, production control in
BOX 72	*Outlook*, 1905-1907
BOX 72	Oxnam, G. Bromley, 1953-1954
BOX 72	Parker, John J., 1930
BOX 72	Passaic Textile Strike, Passaic, N.Y., 1926
BOX 72	People's Legislative Service *The People's Business*, 1926-1931
BOX 72	1926-Apr., 1929
BOX 73	May, 1929-1931
BOX 73	People's Legislative Service, 1921-1932
	(2 folders)
BOX 73	Progressive League for Alfred E. Smith, 1928
BOX 74	Rawleigh Tariff Bureau, 1929-1930
BOX 74	Rural Electrification Administration
BOX 74	Annual staff conference, May 9, 1940
BOX 74	Arkansas cooperatives, 1938
BOX 74	Columbia Basin project, 1941
BOX 74	Generating plants, 1937-1940
BOX 74	Jurisdiction of public service commissions over cooperatives, 1936-1940
BOX 74	Minnesota, cooperatives, 1936-1941
BOX 74	Miscellaneous data, 1936-1942
	(4 folders)
BOX 75	Miscellaneous printed matter, 1936-1942
	(4 folders)
BOX 76	(1 folder)
BOX 76	National Nutrition Conference for defense, 1941
BOX 76	National nutrition through R.E.A., 1941
BOX 76	North Dakota, Grand Forks generating plant, 1940
BOX 76	Pennsylvania cooperatives, 1936-1941
BOX 76	Pennsylvania cooperatives vs. private utilities, 1937-1939
BOX 77	Power rates, 1938-1940
BOX 77	Private utility interference with nationwide, 1936
BOX 77	Report of the Inter Bureau Coordinating Committee on Rural Electrification, March, 1941
BOX 77	Senatorial investigation of, 1943-1944
	(2 folders)
BOX 78	Southside cooperative, Crewe, Virginia, 1941-1942
BOX 78	Status of projects in 48 states as of Jan. 1, 1942
BOX 78	Tennessee Valley Authority
BOX 78	Wisconsin cooperatives, 1939
BOX 78	Sacco and Vanzetti, 1920-1927
BOX 78	Sewanee and the death of Willie Six, 1950
BOX 78	Sewanee, Tenn., University of the South, 1894-1954

Container	Contents
BOX 78	Trinity Church, Newark, N. J , 1912-1916
	(2 folders)
BOX 79	(1 folder)
BOX 79	*Voice of the People*, 1922-1923
BOX 79	Wheeler Defense Committee, 1924-1926
	(3 folders)
BOX 80-OV 92	**Sermons, 1894-1922**
	Handwritten drafts, printed or typed copies, and sermon books containing miscellaneous notes for Johnston's sermons.
	The sermons are arranged according to Johnston's numerical system. A cross-reference card index arranged alphabetically by title of sermon with each card containing the number of the sermon is filed at the end of the series.
BOX 80	Nos. 1-41
BOX 81	Nos. 42-85
BOX 82	Nos. 86-128
BOX 83	Nos. 129-175
BOX 84	Nos. 176-250
BOX 85	Nos. 251-335
BOX 86	Nos. 336-395
BOX 87	Nos. 396-443
BOX 88	Nos. 444-490
BOX 89	Nos. 491-510
BOX 90	Books
BOX 90	1897-1905
BOX 91	1907, undated
BOX OV 92	Index to sermons
BOX 93-94	**Autobiographical Papers, 1869-1954**
	Correspondence, notes, manuscripts, clippings, genealogical material, and brief biographical sketches assembled by Johnston.
	Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 93	Aubrey and Forsyth families
BOX 93	Beginning of an autobiography
BOX 93	Biographical sketches of Johnston
BOX 93	Correspondence, 1894-1953
BOX 93	Death of Johnston, 20 Nov. 1954
BOX 93	France, 1917-1919
BOX 93	Genealogy of the Johnston family
BOX 93	Government employment forms, 1932-1945
BOX 94	Johnston, James Steptoe, 1869-1924
BOX 94	Miscellaneous autobiographical data

Container	Contents
BOX 94	Poems, verse, and prayers by Johnston
BOX 95-101	**Book File, 1917-1950** Typed and handwritten manuscripts and galley proofs of Johnston's books and related correspondence. The manuscripts are arranged alphabetically by title and the correspondence is arranged chronologically.
BOX 95	"The Boy Brand"
BOX 96	*The First among the Unafraid*(1947)
BOX 97	"This Man of Men"
BOX 98	*Patriotism and Radicalism* (1917)
BOX 99	"Tis' Fresh Morn with Me"
BOX 100	Correspondence
BOX 100	Sept. 1917-1948
BOX 101	Oct. 1948-1950, undated
BOX 102-103	**Financial File, 1922-1948** Income and property tax statements, bills and receipts. Unarranged.
BOX 102-103	Tax statements, bills, and receipts, 1922-1948
BOX 104-110	**Miscellany** Chiefly fragmentary notes on religion with a few annotated newspaper clippings and mailing addresses. Unarranged.
BOX 104	Annotated newspaper clippings
BOX 105-107	Fragmentary notes
BOX 108-110	Mailing addresses
BOX 111	**Photographs, 1875-1954** Arranged alphabetically by subject within chronological periods.
BOX 111	1875-1954
BOX 112-113	**Scrapbooks, 1860-1925** Chiefly clippings from newspapers and magazines mounted in scrapbooks. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 112	1861, 1903-1906 *See also Oversize* (3 vols.)
BOX 113	1912-1926 *See also Oversize* (3 vols.)
BOX OV 1-OV 2	**Memorabilia and Oversize, 1895-1920** Diplomas, certificates, photographs, and scrapbooks. Arranged by type of material.

Container	Contents
BOX OV 1	Diplomas
BOX OV 1	Certificates
BOX OV 1	Photographs
BOX OV 2	Scrapbooks
BOX OV 2	1895-1923 (Container 112)
BOX OV 2	1912-1920 (Container 113)
BOX OV 2	1916-1920 (Container 113)