NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG3198.AM:  Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925

Papers:  1883-1980s, and undated
Lincoln, Neb.:  Statesman, orator
Size:  2.0 cu. ft., and 5 reels of microfilm

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Jennings Bryan was born in Salem, Illinois on March 19, 1860. He attended public school in Salem until the age of 15 when he entered Whipple Academy at Jacksonville, Illinois. Bryan was active in debate and declamatory oration and the valedictory address. He had become interested in politics in his later years at college, and remained active after entering law practices with a Jacksonville firm in 1883. In 1887 he was persuaded to move to Lincoln, Nebraska and enter practice with A.R. Talbot. In Nebraska he immediately became active with the activities of the Democratic Party, and was a delegate to the state Democratic convention in 1888. He was elected to Congress, serving from 1891-1895, having failed in his bid for a Senate seat in 1894.

During this period, Bryan was a leader of the silver coinage forces, and it was at the Democratic National Convention in 1896 when he made his famous “Cross of Gold” speech. Supported by the rising Populist Party, the “Boy Orator of the Platte” began his campaign for the presidency in which he was three times a candidate and three times defeated (1896, 1900, 1908). He remained a leader of the Democratic party and in 1912 led the movement that named Woodrow Wilson to be the Democratic candidate. Upon his election, Wilson made Bryan his Secretary of State. In this capacity Bryan campaigned for peace, negotiating treaties with thirty other nations. When he saw that the United States was about to enter the war, he resigned his post.

Bryan was a great showman and had a command of oratory which enabled him to hold his midwestern audiences spellbound. A true humanitarian with deep religious convictions and a dedicated advocate of temperance, he was always a champion of the common people. He was an editor, establishing the newspaper “The Commoner” at Lincoln; and an author. Bryan lived his last years in Miami, Florida, and died while attending court at Dayton, Tennessee in July 1925.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of manuscript materials, five rolls of microfilm, and sixteen items of oversize material arranged in nine series:  1) Correspondence, 1883-1930 and undated;  2) Bibliography;  3) Microfilm correspondence, speeches and articles, 1900-1920;  4) Biographical material;  5) Clippings, 1891-1980’s and undated;  6) Speeches and manuscripts by Bryan, 1892-1924 and undated;  7) Speeches and manuscripts about Bryan, 1893-1966 and undated;  8) Scrapbooks (on microfilm), 1886-1925; and  9) Miscellany.

The bulk of this material consists of clippings and scrapbooks containing addresses of and notes on William Jennings Bryan. The most valuable part of this collection consists of a microfilm
record of the Bryan material at Occidental College. Note: Permission to publish or make other substantial use of items in Series 3 must be obtained from the Special Collections Librarian, Mary Norton Clapp Library, Occidental College.

Additional unprocessed clippings have been added to the collection (see box 4).

The microfilm came as a gift from William Jennings Bryan, Jr. in 1960, who retains all literary rights during his lifetime.

For information about additional William Jennings Bryan materials, including photographs and audio recordings, please contact our Library Staff. See also the Nebraska History index and the NSHS Library Catalog for published materials by and about William Jennings Bryan.

INVENTORY

Series 1 - Correspondence, 1883-1930, n.d.
Box 1
Folder

1. 1883-1892
2. 1895-1900
3. 1901-1905
4. 1906-1908
5. 1909; 1912-1915; ca. 1920; 1925
6. 1926
7. 1929-1930, n.d.

Series 2 - Bibliography
Box 1
Folder

1. Bibliography of books, photos, and clippings on Bryan

Series 3 - Microfilm correspondence, speeches and articles, 1900-1920

Reel 1A (From Occidental College)
Folder

1. Speeches and articles not in publications
2. Speeches and articles not in publications
3. Speeches and articles not in publications
4. Speeches and articles not in publications
5. Correspondence showing political principles, personal ideals and beliefs
6. Correspondence showing political principles, personal ideals and beliefs
7. Roosevelt letters, etc.
8. Roosevelt letters, etc.
9. Champ Clark correspondence
10. Champ Clark correspondence
11. Letters written on world tour
12. Letters written on world tour
13. Personal incidents, family matters
14. Personal incidents, family matters
15. Gifts and benefactions
16. Gifts and benefactions
17. Cabinet days, Wilson etc.
18. Cabinet days, Wilson etc.
19. Personal political organization
20. Personal political organization
21. Personal family letters
22. Personal family letters
23. Personal family letters
24. Personal family letters
25. Personal family letters
26. Personal family letters
27. Personal family letters
28. Personal family letters
29. Personal family letters
30. Personal family letters
31. Personal family letters
32. Not classified
33. Not classified
34. Not classified

Series 4 - Biographical material
Box 1
Folder

1. Genealogical material, research notes, biographical sketches and manuscript entitled "Personal Recollections of William Jennings Bryan" by Seymour L. Smith

Series 5 - Clippings, 1891-1980s, n.d. (see also box 4)
Box 1
Folder

1. 1891
2. 1892
3. 1893
4. 1894
5. 1895
6. 1896
7. 1896
8. 1896
9. 1896
10. 1896
11. 1896
12. 1897
13. 1898
14. 1899
15. 1900-1903 (See also OB006)
16. 1904

Box 2
Folder

17. 1906
18. 1907
19. 1908
20. 1912
21. 1913
22. 1914-1919
23. 1920s
24. 1930s-1940s
25. 1950s-1980s
26. Undated
27. Undated

Series 6 - Speeches and manuscripts by William Jennings Bryan, 1892-1924, n.d.
Box 2
Folder

1. Rules, etc., 1892
   Election of U.S. Senators by the People, 1892
2. Tariff issue speeches, 1892 and 1896
3. Speeches while in the House of Representatives, 1893-1894 (extracts from the Congressional Record):
   Duties on Wool and Woolen Goods, March 16, 1892
   The Tariff, January 13, 1894
   Income Tax, January 30, 1894
   "The Omniverous West," April 10, 1894
   The Gold and Silver Coinage of the Constitution, August 16, 1893
   Silver-Unconditional Repeal, November 1, 1894
   Coining Seigniorage, February 27, 1894
   Money, June 5, 1894
   Anti-Option Bill, June 18, 1894
   Election of U.S. Senators by the People, July 20, 1894
Sale of Property under Decrees of U.S. Courts, March 9, 1892
Free Binding-Twine, May 9, 1892
Pinkerton Detectives, May 12, 1892
Naval Appropriation Bill, July 9, 1892
Silver-Unconditional Repeal, February 9, 1893
Bonds, February 27, 1893
Counting a Quorum, April 17, 1894
Eulogy, July 14, 1894

4. Purchase of Silver and Issue of Bonds, February 9 and 27, 1893
Bryan's Currency Creed ("Accompanied by Appropriate Comments" by opponents), 1893-1894
Pacific Railroad Funding Bill, February 1, 1895

5. Speech Before Democratic National Convention ("Cross of Gold" speech), July 9, 1896
Speech of Acceptance to Populists, 1896
Speech Delivered at Notification Meeting, New York, August 12, 1896
The Currency Question: A Prophetic Utterance-published in The Arena, September 1897

6. Money, February 26. 1897
Address at Chicago Anti-Trust Conference, September 16, 1899
Imperialism, August 8, 1900
Anti-Trust Speech, September 16, 1900
The Trust Question, undated

7. Eulogy of Oliver N. Humphrey, April 30, 1901
Asiatic Immigration, undated
Imperialism, ca. 1908

8. Republican Extravagance-delivered at Minnesota State Fair, August 31, no year
Speech to Central Labor Union, July 17, 1908
Speech to students of Fremont Normal School, July 18, 1908

9. Thank-you speech, July 10, 1908
Notification speech, August 12, 1908

10. Labor

11. The Trust Question

Box 3
Folder

12. The Prince of Peace
13. The Resignation of William Jennings Bryan as Secretary of State and the Documents that Present the Issue, 1915
Food Conservation, 1917
All, 1922
Interview in Pierre, South Dakota, 1922
Is the Bible True? 1924
The Menace of Darwinism
Denominational Culture
15. Guaranteed Banks
   Foreign Influence in American Politics
   Peace Plan
   Catholic Missionaries

Series 7 - Speeches and manuscripts about William Jennings Bryan, 1892-1966, n.d.
Box 3
Folder

1. Bryan's Currency Creed ("Accompanied by Appropriate Comments" by opponents), 1893-1894
   Proposed Purchase of the Presidency for William J. Bryan by the Silver Trust, 1896
   The Workingman's Friends, 1896
   What Bryan Could Do
   Silver and Wheat: Bryan Argument in the Light of Experience, 1898
   Colonel Bryan's Bug-Bear
   Bryan's Power for Doing Mischief
   The False Prophecies of W.J. Bryan, 1900
   Bryan's Predictions False, 1900
   Free Silver and Some Other Things, 1896 and 1900
   Mr. Bryan and His Platform, 1900
2. Anti-Imperialism is Old Copperheadism, 1900
   The Filipinos, 1900
   Bryan's Attitude Towards the Philippines, 1900
   Bryan's "Militarism" Cry. Sulu Slavery Question. Labor and Our Colonies
   James H. Eckels Tells Why He Did Not and Will Not Support Bryan, 1900
   With Bryan's Consent
   Hughes' Reply to Bryan, 1908
   William Jennings Bryan and the Little Plot of 1894 [1908]
   Mr. Bryan Rides Behind, 1914
   Attack on and Defense of Bryan, 1917
3. Bryan on Religion
   Bryan-The Modern Elijah
   Bryan as a Soldier, 1926
   Address by Ambassador Josephus Daniels at W.J. Bryan Breakfast, 1937
   Bryan-World Citizen, 1938
   Bryan-Friend and Partner, 1939
   Bryan, The Champion of the Oppressed, 1940
4. Address by William Ritchie at Memorial Breakfast, 1940
   Speech by A.R. Talbot to the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1940
   Address by William Ritchie at Bryan's Birthday Banquet, 1941
   Bryan-The Missionary, 1942
5. Birthday Oration, 1942
   The Crown Prince of Peace, 1943
   Address by Charles H. Sloan at Memorial Banquet, 1943
Statement of I.J. Dunn Regarding 1912 Democratic National Convention, 1945
William Jennings Bryan and the Social Gospel, 1966

Series 8 - Scrapbooks (on microfilm), 1886-1925
Reel 1
Folder

1. 1891-1892
2. 1890-1896
3. 1886-1888
4. Democratic Convention at St. Louis, 1904
5. Prohibition Campaign, 1915
6. Philippines, 1905-1906
7. Canadian Prohibition Campaign, 1918
9. Campaign, 1893-entitled "Bryanism in Oklahoma"
10. Photos of Bryan's notification in 1908 (original transferred to Photo Room)

Reel 2
Folder

11. 1896
12. 1895-1925

Reels 2-4
Folder

13. Bound volumes of Newspapers, November 1-8, 1896, including: [Note: filmed in the order the issues were bound, not in alphabetical order by title or city]:

   Atlanta Constitution
   Chicago Record
   Chicago Times-Herald
   Chicago Tribune
   Denver Rocky Mountain News
   New Orleans Daily Picayune
   New York Journal
   New York Sun
   New York Tribune
   New York World
   St. Louis Globe Democrat
   St. Louis Post-Dispatch
   St. Louis Republican
   San Francisco Chronicle
Reel 4
Folder

14. Newspapers, 1925
15. Misc. newspapers and clippings
17. Bryan Family in other states; W.J. Bryan and C.W. Bryan deaths and funerals
18. Scopes trial; Bryan's death

Series 9 - Miscellany
Box 3
Folder

1. Will of Silas L. Bryan; Last Will and Testament of William Jennings Bryan (typescript)
2. Tributes
3. Bryan Statue and Memorial
4. Bryan Centennial, 1960
5. Bryan Memorial University Association
6. Programs
7. Membership cards, notes, certificate, poster, dedications
8. Bryan College material relating to the college, Bryan, & the Scopes Trial [1992, 448M]
9. Broadside for Bryan speech in Orange County, CA, Apr. 9, 1900 (See OD060)
11. Otoe County Democratic, or Bryan Volunteer, Club, Constitution and minutes, 1908-1910

OB006
2 Anti-Bryan broadsides, 1908 Presidential Campaign

Box 4
Misc. unprocessed newspaper clippings (2007.0067)

Subject headings:

- Bryan, Mary (Baird), 1861-1930
- Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925
- Political oratory -- United States
- Presidential candidates -- United States
- Silver question
- Statesmen -- United States
- United States -- Politics and government
NSHS HAS ON MICROFILM:

Reel 1A
Series 3 - Microfilm correspondence, speeches and articles, 1900-1920

Reels 1-4
Series 8 - Scrapbooks (on microfilm), 1886-1925

Reel 1
Item 1-Scrapbook, 1891-1892
tru
1366 pges.
#22,566

Reel 1
Item 9, Scrapbook entitled “Bryanism in Oklahoma”

Reel 2
Item 11, 1896
tru
#22,559

Item 13, Bound volumes of newspapers (Note: filmed in the order in
which the issues were bound, not in alphabetical order by city.

NOTE: Item 10 (unfilmed) Photos of Bryan’s notification, 1908
located in Photo Department

Reel 3
Item 13-Bound volumes of Newspapers (cont.), not in alphabetical order by title.
tru
#22,560

Item 13-Bound volumes of Newspapers, not in alphabetical order by title

NOTE: Target at end of reel stating newspapers continued on Roll
#5 incorrect, should have been Reel #4.

Reel 4
Item 13-Bound volumes of newspapers, not in alphabetical order by title

#22,563

Item 18, Clippings re; Scopes Trial and Bryan’s Death

Reels #1-#4 positives received August 30, 1988