



John Rufi Papers (C4804)

Collection Number: C4804

Collection Title: John Rufi Papers

Dates: 1899-1983

Creator: Rufi, John Jacob, 1892-1984

Abstract: The papers of a professor of education at the University of Missouri include correspondence, academic publications and addresses, administrative materials, press, photographs, and miscellaneous personal and professional papers. Also included is one audio disc recording of a 1944 University Debaters meeting.

Collection Size: 5.8 cubic feet, 1 audio disc
(209 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Rights & Reproductions](#) on the Society's website for more information and about reproductions and permission to publish.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *John Rufi Papers* (C4804); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by John Rufi on August 28, 1973 (Accession No. CA3919). Additions were made by John Rufi on September 29, 1975, March 22, 1976, June 14, 1976, September 14, 1976, January 30, 1978, June 29, 1984, January 14, 1985, and March 31, 1986 (Accession Nos. CA3973, CA3989, CA3996, CA4010, CA4140, CA4581, CA4611, CA4706).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the John Rufi Papers can be found in:

[*University of Missouri, Graduate School, Records*](#), (C2532)

[*North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Papers*](#), (C2891)

[*University of Missouri, Graduate School Records*](#), (C3354)

[*Missouri Heartwood Records*](#), (C4209)

[*UMC; College of Education; Department of Secondary Education; Administrative and Instructional Records*](#), (University of Missouri Archives; C-RG8-S10)

Processed by: Autumn Cuddy, July 2026

Historical Note:

John Jacob Rufi was born in Urbana, Kansas, on January 22, 1892. His parents were Jacob Rufi and Anna Schmoker. He attended school through eighth grade and taught in a rural school from the age of 18 to 21, after which he returned to finish high school. In 1916, Rufi served a brief stint in the Army and participated in the Mexican Expedition in Texas, followed by two years with the U.S. Navy, 1918-1919. He married Greta Forte on July 1, 1922, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, by whom he had one daughter, Joan Elizabeth, in 1924, and three grandchildren. He was active in the Columbia Rotary Club and served as president from 1945-1946. Greta Forte Rufi died in 1962 and Rufi married Mildred Sybbelle Parks in Hannibal, Missouri, on June 20, 1963. Mildred Parks Rufi, a music teacher with Hannibal public schools and universities in Texas, Indiana, and Minnesota, died May 21, 1973. Dr. John Rufi died June 6, 1984.

John Rufi earned his bachelor's degree from Kansas State Teachers College in 1918 and master's (1921) and doctorate degrees (1927) from Columbia University. After graduating, Rufi was Director of the New York School of Vocational work for two years and taught summer courses at Columbia's Teachers College from 1923-1925. Rufi moved to Michigan and worked as a high school principal and assistant superintendent in Ironwood before accepting a position as professor and head of the education department at Michigan State College in East Lansing from 1925-1928. In 1928, Dr. Rufi was appointed a professor and head of the department of education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. During his tenure, he also served as a member of the Missouri State School Administrative Association, president of the Missouri State Teachers Association (1942), 16-year chairman of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, president of the University Club, and director of accreditation of private secondary schools.

In the summer of 1931, Rufi accepted a chair position at New York University, citing a concerning lack of funding at the University of Missouri. At the behest of University President Walter Williams and School of Education Dean T. W. H. Irion, Dr. Rufi accepted an offer of

higher salary and more substantial University backing in exchange for reversing his resignation. He remained at the University of Missouri-Columbia until his retirement in 1962. Upon the announcement of his upcoming retirement, former Mizzou students and advisees came together to attend a banquet in Rufi's honor and collected \$10,000 to establish the John Rufi Loan Fund, a financial support for graduate students aiming for careers in high school education, an area of particular concern for the retiring professor. In the years following retirement, Rufi maintained an office on campus from which he kept in contact with former students, exchanging regular correspondence, connecting them with jobs and potential new hires, and releasing annual studies of his 61 former doctoral students, complete with a directory, salary chart, and newsletter.

Rufi's teaching career was not limited to the universities in America. In the spring of 1947, The U.S. War Department enlisted him to survey the state of education in Germany for two months. In 1951, he received a Fulbright grant to spend a year lecturing and reorganizing schools in Turkey. The following year, Rufi completed another education system study on military bases in Japan and the Philippines. Rufi also wrote or collaborated on dozens of articles and six books on secondary education, including *Teachers and Secondary School Administration*, a textbook co-authored with fellow Mizzou professor W. W. Carpenter published in January 1931.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 7 series:

Correspondence
Early Work
Personal Papers
University of Missouri
Work Abroad
Writings
Audiovisual

Scope and Content Note:**Correspondence**

This series contains personal and professional letters to and from Dr. Rufi. Correspondents primarily include education sector colleagues and graduate student advisees, as well as select family and friends, 1910s-1980s. Topics include personal life updates, problems and scandals in Missouri schools, placement of graduates, and other professional issues, arranged alphabetically.

Early Work

This series consists of materials pertaining to Rufi's years in the armed forces and in various education teaching and administration positions at Kansas State Teachers College, Columbia University Teachers College, and Michigan State College, 1914-1928, including addresses, reports, correspondence, writings, and miscellaneous materials received through 1971.

Personal Papers

This series consists of materials pertaining to Rufi's personal life and education interests outside of his primary work. Records include family history, financial papers, awards, credentials, writing fragments, and social pursuits. Folders are arranged chronologically.

University of Missouri

This series consists of materials pertaining to Rufi's tenure as a professor of education at the University of Missouri-Columbia, 1926-1962. Records include course materials, addresses, academic research and writing, correspondence, news clippings, information on campus and local controversies, and professional details of the 61 doctorate candidates Rufi advised over his career in Columbia.

Work Abroad

This series consists of materials pertaining to military and academic service conducted in Germany, Turkey, and southeast Asia, 1946-1953. Records include travel materials, correspondence, photographs, and reports. Recollections of this trips can be found in the **Writings** series.

Writings

This series consists of autobiographical manuscript drafts and other documents written by Dr. Rufi during his education career and after retirement, arranged chronologically. Autobiography sections are organized under the working title "Professional Adventures and Rewards" and ordered chronologically by date of the subject to which they pertain. Finalized versions of these and additional Rufi publications are available in the **SHSMO reference library**.

Audiovisual

This series consists of one acetate audio disc of the University Debaters proceedings on the subject of admitting negro students to the University of Missouri-Columbia, 1944. Please note that this disc only contains the first half of the debate, as a companion recording of the remaining portion did not survive. **Due to the fragility of the medium, patron access is restricted**, however a transcript of the entire debate and accompanying paper materials are accessible in the **University of Missouri** series.

Container List:

Correspondence

Box 1	f. 1	Administrative Supervisors, 1940-1974
	f. 2	Of Amusement, 1920s-1962, undated
	f. 3	O. K. Armstrong controversy, 1940
	f. 4	Dean Harvey E. Bent, 1940-1948

	f. 5	Sister Bertha, 1940s-1960s
	f. 6-16	T. H. Briggs, 1921-1971
	f. 17	Jim Brockman, 1954-1971
	f. 18	Edwin J. Brown, 1967-1971
	f. 19-20	William S. Carlson, 1928-1969
	f. 21	Colonel Clarence Clendenen, 1964-1970
	f. 22	Clifford L. Corley, 1949-1973
	f. 23	Philip W. L. Cox, 1964-1971
	f. 24	Irving Dillard, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1955-1956
	f. 25	Daniel R. Fitzpatrick, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1955-1958
	f. 26	Former Advisees, 1931-1972
	f. 27	Letter to Bill Freeman, November 1976
	f. 28	Regarding <i>The Life and Educational Contributions of John Rufi</i> , dissertation, by William Freeman, 1978
	f. 29	Elbert K. Fretwell, 1921-1973
	f. 30-31	Ginn & Co. Publishers, regarding <i>The Teacher and Secondary School Administration</i> , 1930-1931
	f. 32	Walter L. Glass, 1971-1972
	f. 33	Dean Theo W. H. Irion, 1940-1952
	f. 34	Ironwood High School, 1921-1925
	f. 35	Ironwood High School, Superintendent D. F. Rice, 1955-1963
	f. 36	Ironwood High School, Class of 1925 40 th Reunion, 1962-1967
	f. 37-38	Kansas Master Teacher Award, 1954
	f. 39	Kansas National Guard, 2 nd Regiment, Company L, 1970-1971
Box 2	f. 40	R. Lee Martin, 1958-1973
	f. 41	Fred A. Middlebush, 1935-1946
	f. 42	North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1946-1948
	f. 43	North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Kansas City Public School Crisis, 1950
	f. 44	North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Retention of the State Chairmanship, 1948-1949
	f. 45	North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Secretary Edgar G. Johnston, 1950
	f. 46	North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Secretary George W. Rosenlof, 1950
	f. 47	North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Termination of Work in Accreditation, 1949-1950
	f. 48	North Central Association, Treasurer William E. McVey, 1949
	f. 49	Political Letters, 1955-1957
	f. 50	To Politicians, 1954-1961
	f. 51-53	Retirement, 1961-1963
	f. 54	John A Reuling, 1927-1960
	f. 55	Edna F. Russell Morgan, 1952-1972
	f. 56	John R. Searles, 1932, 1954, 1957
	f. 57	Speaking Engagements, 1933-1941

	f. 58	Dean L. G. Townsend, 1943-1963
	f. 59	Byron Westfall, 1938, 1953-1972
	f. 60	Hubert Wheeler, 1946-1964
	f. 61	1910s-1920s
	f. 62	1930s
	f. 63	1940s
	f. 64	1950-1956
	f. 65	1957
	f. 66	1958
	f. 67	1959
	f. 68	1960
	f. 69	1961-1969
	f. 70	Recognition Banquet, 1962
	f. 71	Illinois State University, July 1967
	f. 72	1970
	f. 73	1972
	f. 74	1973
	f. 75-76	1974
Box 3	f. 77-78	1975
	f. 79-80	1976
	f. 81	1977
	f. 82	1978
	f. 83	1979
	f. 84	1980
	f. 85	1981
	f. 86	1982
	f. 87	Robert Shaw, April 1981
	f. 88	1983
	f. 89	Undated

Early Work

	f. 90-91	Armed Forces
	f. 90	U.S. Army and National Guard, 1914-1916, 1971
	f. 91	U.S. Naval Reserve, 1918-1921
	f. 92	Documentation for "Adventures and Misadventures[...]" chapter of Military Service, 1963-1971
	f. 93	Kansas State Teachers College
	f. 93	Commencement Address, 1948
	f. 94-95	Columbia University
	f. 94	Credentials, 1938-1946
	f. 95	<i>Some Suggestions Relative to the Problems Involved in Getting a Position and in Attaining Professional Advancement</i> , 1937
	f. 96-101	Michigan State College

- f. 96 Luther L. Wright High School, Form Letters to Parents, 1921-1924
- f. 97 Luther L. Wright High School, Information for Freshmen, 1922
- f. 98 Luther L. Wright High School, Annual Report, 1924
- f. 99 Rufi Observations and Press, 1925-1927
- f. 100 Correspondence, 1925-1927, 1930, 1949, 1969
- f. 101 Reports, 1928

Personal Papers

- | | | |
|-------|------------|---|
| | f. 102-103 | Transcripts and Credentials, 1899-1946, 1955 |
| | f. 104-105 | Citations and Honors, 1917-1927, 1944-1977 |
| | f. 106 | Letters of Recommendation, 1918-1968 |
| Box 4 | f. 107 | Portraits, 1920, undated |
| | f. 108 | Thomas H. Briggs, 1921-1971 |
| | f. 109 | Summer Sessions, 1923-1962 |
| | f. 110 | Financial Records, 1923-1947 |
| | f. 111 | Outside Earnings, 1927-1948 |
| | f. 112 | Expenditures, 1929-1957 |
| | f. 113 | Financial Assets & Liabilities, 1941-1949 |
| | f. 114 | Walter E. Myer & E. E. Rich, 1946-1964 |
| | f. 115 | Walter E. Myer, Undergraduate Advisor, 1955-1963 |
| | f. 116 | Civilian Orientation Cruise, December 1954 |
| | f. 117 | Rotary Club, 1955, 1974 |
| | f. 118 | Sons of the American Revolution, Bill of Grievances, 1958 |
| | f. 119 | St. Charles School District Controversy, 1963 |
| | f. 120 | Genealogical Materials, 1970 |
| | f. 121 | Miscellaneous Writings, undated |

University of Missouri

- | | | |
|-------|------------|---|
| | f. 122-131 | Addresses, 1927-1960s, undated |
| | f. 132 | Appointment Letters, 1927-1962 |
| | f. 133 | Book, <i>The Teacher and Secondary School Administration</i> , Reviews, Rufi and Carpenter, 1932-1975 |
| | f. 134 | W. W. Carpenter, Feud, 1936-1946 |
| | f. 135 | W. W. Carpenter, 1962-1965 |
| | f. 136 | Commencement Program, 1962 |
| | f. 137 | Course Files, Secondary School Administration for Teachers, 1955-1962 |
| | f. 138 | Course Files, Seminar in Educational Administration, 1959-1960 |
| Box 5 | f. 139 | Ann Crockett/Frances Rummell, 1940 |
| | f. 140 | Declined Engagements, 1952-1953 |
| | f. 141 | Discussion Club, 1964-1968 |
| | f. 142 | George R. Edwards, Physical Education Department, 1960 |

- f. 143 Former Advisees, Accomplishments, 1949-1973
- f. 144 Graduate Student, Neil Aslin, 1965-1966
- f. 145 Graduate Student, Robert Calvin Shaw, 1955-1972
- f. 146-147 Lee S. Hultzen Dismissal, 1945
- f. 148 Arthur Himes Lawsuit, 1947
- f. 149-160 Doctorate Advisee Reports, 1962-1973
- f. 161 Miscellaneous Controversies, 1935, 1947
- f. 162 Missouri State Teachers Association, Committee on Constitutional Revision, Correspondence, 1943-1944
- f. 163 Missouri State Teachers Association, Committee on Constitutional Revision, Meeting Minutes, 1943-1944
- f. 164 Missouri State Teachers Association, Committee on Constitutional Revision, Reports and Publications, 1943-1944
- f. 165 North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Complaints, 1948-1949
- f. 166 Outlines, undated
- f. 167 Radio Talks, undated
- f. 168 Recognition Banquet, Correspondence, 1962
- f. 169 Recognition Banquet, Photo Album, 1962
- f. 170 Recognition Banquet, Scrapbook, 1962
- f. 171 Recognition Banquet, Slides, 1962
- f. 172 Springfield Public School System, Problems, 1956-1960
- f. 173-175 Summer Sessions, 1944-1950
- f. 176 University Debaters, Admission of Negro Students to the University of Missouri, Arguments and Remarks, 1944-1945
- f. 177 Webster Groves Controversy, 1931-1947
- f. 178 John C. Weaver, 1966-1967

Work Abroad

- Box 6 f. 179-180 Germany
 - f. 179 1943-1946
 - f. 180 Photographs, Notable Places in Berlin Before and After the War, 1947
- f. 181-188 Turkey
 - f. 181 Fulbright Grant Year, 1948-1951
 - f. 182 Travel Records, 1951-1952
 - f. 183 Letters & Travel Records, 1951-1952
 - f. 184-185 Correspondence, 1951-1957, 1967
 - f. 186 First Report to the U.S. Educational Commission Secretary, January 1951
 - f. 187 Final Recommendations to Turkish Ministry of Education, May 1952 (English and Turkish translation)
 - f. 188 *Secondary Education in Turkey: Observations, Problems, and Recommendations*, 1952
- f. 189-192 Southeast Asia

- f. 189 1953
- f. 190 Correspondence and Plans, 1953-1954
- f. 191 Japan, Photographs, 1953
- f. 192 Philippine Islands, Photographs, 1953

Writings

- f. 193 "My Correspondence with Professor Thomas H. Briggs, 1921-1971," undated
- f. 194 Published Articles, 1931, 1935, 1948
- f. 195 "Intercollegiate Athletics and Physical Education at the University of Missouri: A Confidential Report to President Walter Williams," 1933
- f. 196 Book Chapter, "Teacher Participation in the School's Pre-Session Activities," undated
- f. 197 "The Good, Bad, but Never Indifferent: Sir Richard Francis Burton," undated
- f. 198 Relationships with Administrative Superiors, 1970
- f. 199 "My Boyhood in Neosho County, Kansas," 1972
- f. 200-209 *Professional Adventures & Rewards* series, 1976
 - f. 200 *My Years at Kansas State Normal, 1913-1918*, draft
 - f. 201 *My Years at Teachers College Columbia University, 1919-1925*
 - f. 202 *My Years at Teachers College Columbia University, 1919-1925*, drafts
 - f. 203 *My Years as Principal of a High School, 1921-1924*, Reactions To
 - f. 204 *My Years at the University of Missouri, 1928-1962*
 - f. 205 *Professional Assignments Abroad, Assignment to Germany, 1947*
 - f. 206 *Professional Assignments Abroad, Assignment to the New Republic of Turkey, 1951-1952*
 - f. 207 *Professional Assignments Abroad, Assignment to the Far Pacific, 1953*
 - f. 208 *Other Adventures, Mis-Adventures, and Rewards*
 - f. 209 *Other Adventures, Mis-Adventures, and Rewards*, draft

Audiovisual **[RESTRICTED]**

- a.d. 1 Lacquered acetate, University Debaters, "Admission of Negro Students to the University of Missouri-Columbia," Part 1, 1944

Index:

Index Terms	Folder	Medium	Image
Dalton, John Montgomery, 1900-1972	50		
Douglas, Paul Howard, 1892-1976	50		
Education	93-101, 109, 119, 122-131, 137-140, 149-167, 173-177, 179-192, 194-196	a.d. 1	
Eisenhower, Dwight David, 1890 -1969	50		
Fulbright, James William, 1905-1995	50		
Hennings, Thomas C., Jr., 1903-1960	50		
Kansas National Guard, 2 nd Regiment, Company L	21, 39, 90, 92		
Kefauver, Estes, 1903-1963	50		
Morse, Wayne Lyman, 1900-1974	50		
Rufi, John Jacob, 1892-1983	107, 116, 169, 171, 191, 192		Yes
Symington III, William Stuart, 1901-1988	50		
Teaching	3, 30-31, 37-38, 43, 51-53, 57, 70-71, 94- 106, 109, 111-112, 114-115, 119, 122- 140, 142-143, 146- 147, 149-177, 181- 190, 196, 198, 200- 209		
University of Missouri-Columbia	1-33, 40-41, 51-89, 103, 105-107, 112- 113, 122-178, 194- 195, 198, 204	a.d. 1	