



## **Chester Charles Davis Papers (C0014)**

**Collection Number:** C0014

**Collection Title:** Chester Charles Davis Papers

**Dates:** 1917-1953

**Creator:** Davis, Chester Charles, 1887-1975

**Abstract:** Correspondence, minutes, proceedings, literary productions, lists, printed material, financial and legal documents pertaining to the farm parity movement led by George Peek and Chester C. Davis. The photographs and the volumes, mainly newspaper clippings, deal almost exclusively with Davis' career, 1933-1953.

**Collection Size:** 6 cubic feet  
(398 folders, 17 volumes also available on 20 rolls of microfilm)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

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

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Chester Charles Davis, Papers* (C0014); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Chester Davis on 15 June 1948 (Accession No. CA2922). An addition was made on 25 February 1960 by Chester Davis (Accession No. CA3428).

**Processed by:** Processed by The State Historical Society of Missouri-Columbia, date unknown. Finding Aid revised by John C. Konzal, April 14, 2020

**Historical Note:**

Chester Davis was born near Linden, Iowa, 17 November 1887. He earned a B.A. from Grinnell College in 1911 and in 1913 married Helen Smith. His occupations were varied: newspaper work, South Dakota and Montana, 1911-1917; editor manager, *The Montana Farmer*, 1917-1921; commissioner of agriculture and labor in Montana, 1912-1925; director of grain marketing, Illinois Agricultural Association, 1925-1926; agricultural service for farm organizations, 1926-1928; executive vice president, Maizewood Products Corporation, 1929-1933; director, production division, U.S. Agricultural Adjustment Administration, 1933, and administrator, U.S. Agricultural Adjustment Administration, 1933-1936.

Later service included board of governors, Federal Reserve System, 1936-1941; president, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 1941-1945; associate director, Ford Foundation, 1951-1954; and study on rural credit in India for the Indian government, 1953-1954. In 1939 he received the distinguished service to agriculture medal from the American Farm Bureau Federation. Chester Davis died 25 September 1975.

The farm parity movement was an attempt by George Peek, Davis, and other farm leaders to maintain the price of farm products on a par with non-farm commodities. Each year from 1924 to 1928 a different McNary-Haugen bill was introduced in the U.S. Congress. In 1927 and 1928 the bills were passed and then vetoed by the president. Election of a sympathetic president was attempted in 1928 through support of Alfred E. Smith. With his defeat support for legislation akin to the bills mentioned above disintegrated.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into the following four series:

Correspondence  
Miscellaneous Material  
Printed Material and Photographs  
Scrapbooks

**Scope and Content Note:**

The Chester Davis Papers consist of correspondence, minutes, proceedings, literary productions, lists, printed material, financial and legal documents pertaining to the farm parity movement led by George Peek and Chester C. Davis. Material dated from 1925 through 1928 predominates. These papers have two major themes: George Peek's farm parity movement, 1925-1929, and scrapbooks and photographs covering Chester Davis' career from 1933 to 1953.

## Correspondence

The bulk of the collection is correspondence and the papers dealing with the farm parity movement are more than just Davis'. Most likely they represent part of the central office files of Peek's organization. With few exceptions these are business papers and deal only with the movement. Much of the correspondence is routine for agricultural lobbyists: research on farm problems, arranging meetings, plans of attack to secure legislation, and exchange of printed material. The correspondence pertaining to the election of 1928 is overall the most detailed.

## Miscellaneous Material

This series is comprised of literary productions, legal documents, minutes, lists, bulletins, and financial documents arranged chronologically under each issuing source. Reports and minutes found throughout the collection are very specific. The financial records of the Smith Independent Organization Committee and the Illinois Independent Equality for Agriculture League are extensive.

## Printed Material and Photographs

Several rare agricultural and political newspapers and newsletters are included in the series. Subjects included in the printed matter are: the farm parity movement, agricultural problems, tariffs, U.S. monetary policies, and the national election of 1928. The photographs are mostly of Davis, his family, Sioux and Blackfoot Indians, Norman Hall, and famous Americans of the 1930s.

## Scrapbooks

This series deals almost exclusively with Davis' career. All volumes are only available on microfilm except for volumes 8 and 10.

## Container List:

### Correspondence Series

- f. 1-5 1917-1925. George Peek, Frank Lowden, and Lester Dickinson on farm parity; life of Norman Hall, 1917-1924; Herbert Hoover and food production during World War I; Davis' appointment as Montana commissioner of agriculture; finances of Joseph Moore Dixon.
- f. 6-73 1926. George Peek, Chester Davis, and other farm leaders comment and work on various pieces of agricultural legislation. Includes correspondence about the North Central States Agricultural Conference Executive Committee of 22, the Corn Belt Committee, the President's Agricultural Conference, the Des Moines meetings, the Iowa State Republican Convention, the St. Paul and St. Louis farm conferences, the farm parity movement in general, introduction of the South and West into their ranks, farm leaders, and agricultural conditions. Farm parity pamphlets, Davis' research manuscripts, and a copy of the *Michigan Farm Bureau News* are included.

- f. 74-137 1927. Farm leaders, including Peek and Davis, write about legislation, the American Bankers Association, Corn Belt Committee meetings, the North Central States Agricultural Conference Executive Committee of 22, the Agricultural Service, primary elections and candidacies of Frank Lowden, Charles Dawes, and Al Smith, William Jardine's philosophy, agricultural conditions, and the farm parity movement and inclusion of other groups into it.
- f. 138-247 1928-1941. Peek, Davis, and others on agricultural conditions, 5th McNary-Haugen bill, North Central States Agricultural Conference Executive Committee of 22, Smith Independent Organizations, Smith Independent Leagues, Agricultural Service, Democratic National Committee, Des Moines Corn Belt Committee meeting, 1928, farm leaders meeting with Al Smith at Albany, 1928, the presidential campaign, the farm parity movement and its future after Smith's defeat, the John Hammill-George Peek split and Senator Smith Brookhart's attack on Peek. Also includes Peek's and Davis' research and presidential campaign literature.

### **Miscellaneous Material Series**

- f. 248-249 Agricultural Equality Voters League and Agricultural League of Nebraska financial records, 1928. Agricultural Service bulletins and finances, 1925-1928; All Agricultural Area Marketing Conference resolutions and personnel list, 1926; American Council of Agriculture financial records, 1924-1925; and American Farm Bureau Federation resolution, 1927.
- f. 250 Corn Belt Federation of Farm Organizations materials, 1927.
- f. 251-252 R.A. Cowles speech, 1927; Davis' notes, manuscripts, daily work reports, and expense accounts, 1926-1928.
- f. 253 Joseph S. Davis speech, 1927; Des Moines meeting resolution, 1925; Lester Dickinson manuscript; and Wilbert Drummond manuscript, 1926.
- f. 254-259 Farmers Independent League of Montana financial records, 1926; Farmers' Independent Political Association for Smith and Robinson organizational chart, 1928; Governor Small's Committee to Des Moines Conference minutes, 1926; Grain Belt Federation of Farm Organizations Corn Belt Committee minutes, reports, and resolutions, 1926-1928; Grange resolution, 1926; and Lynn Haines manuscript, 1928.
- f. 260-262 Verna L. Hatch itineraries and expense accounts, 1928; Illinois Agricultural Association manuscripts, reports, resolutions, and executive committee minutes, 1926 and 1928; and Illinois Bankers Association minutes, 1927.
- f. 263 Illinois Independent Equality for Agriculture League financial records, 1928.
- f. 286 Independent Equality for Agriculture Club news releases and finances, 1928, and Indiana Farm Bureau Federation manuscripts and resolutions, 1926 and 1928.
- f. 287 Benjamin Kilgore manuscript, 1926; Frank Lowden speeches, n.d.-1926; and Lowden for President Headquarters newsletters and organizational chart, 1928.
- f. 288-300 Charles McNary manuscript; Minnesota All Party Smith-Robinson Clubs financial records, 1928; Missouri Agricultural League finances, 1928; Montana State Farm Bureau resolutions, 1925; North Central States Agricultural

- Conference Executive Committee of 22 minutes, reports, bulletins, lists of members and financial records, 1926-1928; National Farmers Union resolution, 1927; North Dakota Agricultural Relief League finances, 1928; and George Peek manuscripts, speeches, and news releases, 1926.
- f. 301-302 Walton Peteet manuscript and daily work reports, 1926; Republican National Convention draft of agricultural plank, 1926; St. Louis Farm Conference resolutions, 1926 and St. Paul Agricultural Conference resolutions, 1927.
- f. 303-336 John A. Simpson and Earl C. Smith manuscripts; Smith Independent League finances, 1928; and Smith Independent Organizations Committee list of affiliates, news releases, reports, and financial records, 1928.
- f. 337 South Dakota Agricultural League report and finances, 1928; Stable Money Association annual report and financial statement, 1926; Joseph Stamp speech, 1926; Texas Farm Bureau Cotton Association reports and news releases; Henry A. Wallace speech, 1927; and Whayel-Eaton Corporation American Letter, 1928.
- f. 338 Crisp bill.
- f. 339-346 Committee bill, 1926; Chester Davis; Lester Dickinson; Dickinson bill; farm mortgages, Illinois, 1919-1925; farm parity, n.d., 1928; Federal Farm Loan Act; Flood Conference; and grain elevator companies, Illinois, 1925.
- f. 347-349 Grain Marketing Company, Illinois, 1927; Herbert Hoover, n.d., 1925; Illinois Agricultural Conference; Meyer Jacobstein, 1927; William Jardine, 1927; Jardine bill; Frank Lowden; and McLean-McFadden bill.
- f. 350-359 McNary-Haugen bills, n.d., 1926-1928.
- f. 360-361 George Peek; President's Agricultural Conference, 1925; Aaron Sapiro; William Settle; Alfred Smith; tariff, 1926; Texas Farm Bureau Cotton Association; Tincher bill; and United States Chamber of Commerce.
- f. 362-365 Miscellaneous notes, reports, and resolutions.

### Printed Material and Photographs Series

- f. 366-374 Newspapers, arranged alphabetically by title, then by date of issue.
- f. 375-396 Pamphlets, organized by date of issue.
- f. 397 Leaflets and flyers, arranged by date.
- f. 398 Photographs, arranged chronologically.

### Scrapbooks Series

- v. 1-17 Primarily newspaper clippings arranged chronologically covering Davis' career, 1917-1953. Most are post-1932.

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