



William Hirth Papers (C0042)

Collection Number: C0042

Collection Title: William Hirth Papers

Dates: 1925-1934

Creator: Hirth, William, 1875-1940

Abstract: The papers of William Hirth, a farm leader, organizer, and president of the Missouri Farmers Association (MFA), consist of correspondence, newspaper articles, and radio speeches. The material pertains to Missouri Farmers Association business activities, state and national politics, and *The Missouri Farmer*, official publication of the Missouri Farmers Association.

Collection Size: 3.5 cubic feet
(276 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

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Historical Note:

William Hirth was responsible for the early success of the Missouri Farmers Association. At the age of fifteen Hirth became interested in farming and started lecturing on the benefits of building a cooperative of farm clubs. He continued to advocate this idea by publishing *The Missouri Farmer and Breeder*, later called *The Missouri Farmer*, beginning in 1908; a magazine that informed subscribers on legislative issues and farm club news and later became MFA's house publication. Hirth believed that the farm clubs should capitalize not only on the economic advantages of joining together as a cooperative, but on the political and social advantages as well.

The first farm clubs were formed in 1914 and the first state association meeting was held in Sedalia in 1917. Among the MFA's cooperative enterprises were grain elevators and produce exchanges in about 400 communities, sales offices for poultry and dairy products in Chicago and New York, livestock shipping associations, the MFA Oil Company, and the handling of automobile insurance.

Arrangement:

The correspondence is arranged in chronological order.

Scope and Content Note:

The Hirth Papers are primarily correspondence of one of the country's important farm leaders and of a both business and personal nature. The correspondence is arranged in chronological order. Political correspondence includes letters to and from Clarence Cannon with regard to farm legislation, R.F.C. loans to cooperatives and suggestions for the Democratic platform. There are also letters to and from Arthur M. Hyde, Secretary of Agriculture, Ruby M. Hulen, attorney for the MFA, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Bennett C. Clark, William Green, Lloyd C. Stark, H.A. Wallace, Peter Norbeck, Ralph Lozier, Francis M. Wilson, H.E. Miles, chairman of the Fair Tariff League, and E.Y. Mitchell.

The correspondence related to the MFA includes all phases of the activities of the organization, as well as material relative to chain stores (to which Hirth was opposed), the Women's Progressive Farmers Association, the Junior Farmers Association, and letters relative to the publication of *The Missouri Farmer*.

The papers also include news clippings, radio addresses, speeches, and bulletins.

Container List:**Correspondence Series**

- f. 1-18 n.d., 1925-1928. Correspondence with farmers, business men, and others from Missouri and surrounding states pertaining to M.F.A. business activities, consolidation of Missouri farm organizations, dispute within National Live Stock Producers organization, Federal Farm Loan Act, McNary-Haugen Bill, *The Missouri Farmer* contributors, and managers for M.F.A. creameries.
- f. 19-28 1929 January. Arrangements for M.F.A. purchases of oil, salt and twine; condition of creameries; business arrangements with Farmers Live Stock Commission Company; opposition to farm policies of Hoover Administration; McNary-Haugen Bill; description of Indiana Farm Board women's organization by Verna Hatch; correspondence with rural merchants to organize chain store opposition.
- f. 29-38 1929 February. Minutes of Farmers Live Stock Commission Company meeting of February 2, 1929, and correspondence with F.B. Young and other company members; with Clarence Cannon regarding federal farm programs; with C. Eugene Meyer discussing federal financial assistance to farmers; with Charles G. Dawes on farm conditions; with F. Edson White, President of Armour and Company, about withdrawal of Armour from central livestock markets; with Julien N. Friant, A.B. Drescher, and William Green; advertising accounts of *The Missouri Farmer* and livestock sales.
- f. 39-57 1929 March-April. Correspondence with Paul Bestor, Eugene Meyer, and Peter Norbeck discussing Federal Land Bank and Intermediate Credit Bank Act; with Arthur M. Hyde and others concerning Hyde's appointment as Secretary of Agriculture under Hoover; with William Green of the American Federation of Labor; with Clarence Cannon, Peter Norbeck and George Norris discussing the passage of farm legislation during the special session of Congress called by Hoover (April, 1929); with Governor Henry S. Caulfield and state legislators regarding fair taxation of Missouri farmers; Corn Belt Committee; with H.E. Miles and Fair Tariff League; concerning creamery business and arrangements by M.F.A. for oil contract with Union Oil Company, *The Missouri Farmer* advertising accounts, livestock sales, and miscellaneous business.
- f. 58-65 1929 May. Business correspondence concerning establishment of M.F.A. Oil company, M.F.A. elevator and exchange, membership in North Missouri, advertising accounts and insurance transactions; with F.B. Young concerning agricultural tariffs, government grading of hogs; with W.C. Conden regarding direct receipts of hogs at Chicago market; with F. Edson White, President of Armour, concerning stockyards at Quincy; with Julien N. Friant, John Napier Dyer, Clarence Cannon and Peter Norbeck discussing events of special Congressional session, Hawley-Smoot Tariff Bill, Federal Farm Board, and prospects for agricultural relief; with Jewell Mayes, including summary of agriculture bills passed by 55th Missouri General Assembly.

- f. 66-71 1929 June. Correspondence with Peter Norbeck on failure of debenture plan in Congress, farm relief; with Clarence Cannon on possibility of loan from Federal Farm Board for creameries, attitudes of Congressional members on farm relief; with Arthur M. Hyde discussing appointees to Federal Farm Board; with F.B. Young on shipping of livestock; with H.E. Miles of Fair Tariff League; advertising accounts, insurance transactions and livestock sales.
- f. 72-80 1929 July. Correspondence with Clarence Cannon discussing Federal Farm Board and Intermediate Credit Bank; with Arthur M. Hyde regarding appointment of C.B. Denman to Farm Board; with Julien N. Friant concerning establishment of M.F.A. in Southeast Missouri; with F.B. Young discussing livestock railroad shipping and stockyard procedures; with F.H. Douthitt concerning creameries in Carthage and Springfield; with miscellaneous others discussing M.F.A. Oil Company and establishment of its stations, advertising accounts, insurance transactions.
- f. 81-94 1929 August-September. Correspondence with A.B. Drescher discussing M.F.A. local organization in North Missouri and anti-Hirth move there; miscellaneous correspondence with M.F.A. Insurance representatives throughout state, *The Missouri Farmer* advertisers, trucks for creameries, establishment of oil stations and competition with Union Oil Company, coal prices; with Charles Brand concerning reduction in land appraisements in Ohio by Ohio Tax Commission; with Julien N. Friant regarding establishing M.F.A. in Southeast Missouri, attitudes of congressman toward farm relief; with Alexander Legge about obtaining Federal Farm Board loans for M.F.A. creameries.
- f. 95-104 1929 October. Correspondence with Ruby M. Hulen, M.F.A. attorney, concerning Federal Farm Board Loans; with C.L. Christensen and A. Legge of Federal Farm Board; with F.B. Young discussing stock yard regulation under Federal Farm Board; with Julien N. Friant on business outlook in Cape Girardeau; with Laura Edwards of Women's Progressive Farmers Association; with Jewell Mayes and A.B. Drescher; business correspondence on advertising accounts, insurance, livestock sales.
- f. 105-120 1929 November-December. Business correspondence with A.D. Miller of M.F.A. Oil Company; minutes of State Board meeting of M.F.A., September 26-27, 1929, and M.F.A. Oil Company, October 31, 1929; report of annual stockholders meeting of M.F.A. in Northwest Missouri and anti-Hirth sentiment in Chillicothe; correspondence with Alex Legge of Federal Farm Board discussing National Livestock Marketing Association, loans for M.F.A., and factionalism of M.F.A.; with F.B. Young on National Marketing Association for live stock activities; with Clarence Cannon and George Norris discussing substitute for debenture plan in farm program and Federal Farm Board members.
- f. 121-126 1930-1931. Miscellaneous business correspondence including sales of Poland China boars and gilts, testimonials for M.F.A. flours; with A.D. Miller regarding expansion of M.F.A. Oil Company; with Francis M. Wilson discussing Missouri politics and endorsing Russell L. Dearmont; with Wilfred E. Rumble discussing establishment of national marketing associations by

- Federal Farm Board's unsound loan practices and Agriculture Marketing Act; account of Farmers Union Live Stock Commission, South St. Joseph, December, 1931.
- f. 127-138 1932 January. Correspondence with Francis M. Wilson, Bennett C. Clark and others discussing gubernatorial election of 1932, Wilson's legislative record, and Missouri politics in general; with Xenophon Caverno on farm relief program and tariff; with C.G. Dawes of Reconstruction Finance Corporation regarding loans; with W.T. Crighton of Producers Creamery Company of Springfield; *The Missouri Farmer* advertising accounts; livestock sales; Women's Progressive Farmers Association; Farmers Union Livestock Commission statement of business.
- f. 139-167 1932 February-March. Correspondence on political and governmental matters with E.Y. Mitchell; Clarence Cannon, Francis M. Wilson, Arthur M. Hyde, Charles G. Dawes, and Franklin D. Roosevelt discussing Reconstruction Finance Act and loans available from Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Democratic National Convention delegates, and support for Roosevelt. Business correspondence with F.B. Young discussing Federal Farm Board and livestock conditions in Iowa; with Joseph B. Eastman on livestock rates and Interstate Commerce Commission; with A.B. Drescher. Farmers Union Live Stock Commission Company statement of business, February, 1932.
- f. 168-179 1932 April. Correspondence with presidents and directors of U.S. Railroads supporting Interstate Commerce Commission power to regulate interstate truck and bus carriers; with F.B. Young, Farmers Live Stock Commission; with H.E. Miles of Fair Tariff League; Thad Snow article on economics; advertising accounts; Farmer's Union Live Stock Commission returns, April, 1932; with Arthur M. Hyde regarding loans by Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and rates for livestock sales at National Stockyards. Political correspondence with Clarence Cannon, Francis M. Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, E.Y. Mitchell, Joseph B. Shannon and Arthur M. Hyde discussing gubernatorial and presidential elections of 1932, and farm legislation.
- f. 180-191 1932 May. Correspondence with Clarence Cannon, Arthur M. Hyde and Ralph Lozier, discussing Reconstruction Finance Corporation legislation, cooperative loan provisions; with Francis M. Wilson, E. Y. Mitchell, Clyde Williams, Derwood E. Williams supporting Franklin D. Roosevelt, Francis M. Wilson and others in 1932 elections; with U.S. Senators and Congressmen from Missouri opposing check tax; correspondence concerning powers of Interstate Commerce Commission and development of trucking; Committee on Taxation and Governmental Reform; with F.B. Young discussing adjusted commission rates for livestock sales, National Stockyards.
- f. 192-202 1932 June. Women's Progressive Farmers Association Annual bulletin, 1931-1932, and officer lists; correspondence with E.Y. Mitchell on 1932 political campaigns, juice processing plant in Springfield; with Clarence Cannon and Ralph Lozier on progress of farm relief legislation in Congress and Reconstruction Finance Corporation; with James A. Farley and Franklin D. Roosevelt discussion campaign strategy, Democratic platform and Roosevelt's support; with farmers, business men and civic leaders throughout Missouri

- asking support in initiative campaign to reduce taxes; with F.B. Young; advertising copy for *The Missouri Farmer*; insurance correspondence.
- f. 203-212 1932 July. Political correspondence regarding candidates for state and local offices; with Ralph Lozier, E.Y. Mitchell, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and James A. Farley discussing Roosevelt's campaign plans and farm program; with Clarence Cannon discussing Garner-Wagner Bill, Hoover's opposition to certain farm programs and plans to obtain legislation authorizing facility loans; with Arthur M. Hyde discussing loans for M.F.A.; with Ruby M. Hulen evaluating candidates for U.S. Congressmen; with A.B. Drescher, James F. Fulbright, and H.E. Klinefelter on miscellaneous business, with F.B. Young discussing livestock shipping; egg marketing.
- f. 213-224 1932 August. Correspondence with Francis M. Wilson on 1932 Democratic primary issues and candidates; with Bennett C. Clark on primary victory, choice of state committeeman; with E.Y. Mitchell regarding Democratic National Convention, state committeeman, disposal of surplus produce; and J.A. Farley and Franklin D. Roosevelt regarding speaking at M.F.A. annual meeting and employment of Mitchell in campaign publicity department; with F.B. Young on loans, National Livestock Marketing Association; with H.E. Klinefelter of Franklin County M.F.A. discussing trucking of eggs, cream, etc., by M.F.A.; with A.B. Drescher regarding creamery in Kirksville.
- f. 225-233 1932 September. Correspondence with Clarence Cannon and Arthur M. Hyde regarding bank failures and Reconstruction Finance Corporation Loans; with National Progressive League; Gifford Pinchot and William Green on alliance of agriculture and William Green on alliance of agriculture and labor; with candidates in 1932 elections on reduced taxes and committee on Taxation and Governmental Reform; with Franklin D. Roosevelt and his staff; with H.E. Miles on tariff questions; with H.E. Klinefelter on M.F.A. egg and cream trucking lines in Franklin County; with F.B. Young on livestock trucking, freight tariffs on livestock by Wabash Railroad; with Elmer Donnell; list of loans needed by M.F.A. mills, creameries, exchanges, produce companies and associations throughout Missouri.
- f. 234-242 1932 October. Campaign plans and correspondence for national and statewide elections and Franklin D. Roosevelt, Democratic National Campaign Committee, Ruby M. Hulen, E.Y. Mitchell, and others. Hirth campaigned on the radio for Roosevelt, Guy B. Park, Donnelly and tax reducing constitutional amendments; also business correspondence with H.E. Klinefelter and F.B. Young discussing Franklin County M.F.A., livestock exchange; insurance transactions, miscellaneous.
- f. 243-251 1932 November. Correspondence urging Franklin D. Roosevelt's appointment of Hirth as Secretary of Agriculture by Hirth's supporters; with Roosevelt, H.A. Wallace, John Simpson, E.Y. Mitchell, Julien N. Friant, Xenophon Caverno and others on New Deal farm program; with Clarence Cannon discussing loans from Reconstruction Finance Corporation, congressional salaries, New Deal farm program; with H.E. Klinefelter; with F.B. Young regarding livestock rates and truckers; organizing Missouri fruit producers into a

- marketing association; advertisers in *The Missouri Farmer*; insurance and livestock transactions.
- f. 252-260 1932 December. Correspondence on patronage with Bennett C. Clark, Dwight H. Brown, Clarence Cannon, Forrest Smith, Herman O. Maxey, Xenophon Caverno; support for Hirth for Secretary of Agriculture, Julien N. Friant and John Stinson as Assistant Secretaries, Thad Snow on Highway Commission, E.Y. Mitchell for Ambassador to Belgium, Judge Armstrong for floor leader in Missouri House, and H.E. Miles on Tariff Commission; with Clarence Cannon and Bennett C. Clark on amending Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act, obtaining loans for M.F.A., factionalism in Missouri delegation to Congress due to redistricting, Franklin D. Roosevelt's push for farm bill in short session of Congress; with F.B. Young discussing losses of Farmers Live Stock Commission Company; miscellaneous M.F.A. business correspondence.
- f. 261-262 1933 May-1934 December. Miscellaneous correspondence with James M. Thomson discussing cotton production data and Hirth for Missouri Senator; information on corn-hog and wheat benefit payments by the federal government; with University Agricultural Extension disputing need for emergency county agents; with miscellaneous others discussing Springfield creamery, private utilities interests, Pendergast and Truman.

Miscellaneous Series

- f. 263-264 Newspaper Articles, 1932. Typewritten copies of newspaper articles by Hirth.
- f. 265-266 Radio Addresses, 1931-1932. Addresses delivered over KFRU, Columbia, Missouri, and WHO, Des Moines, Iowa.
- f. 267 Speeches, 1931-1932
- f. 268-276 Bulletins. Printed material, mostly written by Hirth, on chain stores, M.F.A. managers, contracts, policies, Women's Progressive Farmers' Association and Junior Farmers' Association, and the farm situation.

Index:

Subject	Folders
Agriculture	1-276
Agriculture, Cooperative	1-276
Agriculture--Law and legislation, 1930s	127-260
Agriculture--Law and legislation, Missouri	41,49,65
Agriculture--Missouri, Franklin County	219-222,225,227,228,232,233,235,236,238,243-245,247,249-254
Almstedt, Hermann Benjamin (1872-1954)	32
Anti-Catholicism	179
Bales, D. L.	40,84,85,164,165
Ball, Ned J.	29,47
Beaman, Roy M.	48
Bestor, H. Paul (1882-)	39,41,42

Subject	Folders
Betts, Amos A.	249,250,256,257
Blair, James T.	234
Blanton, H. J. "Jack" (1869-1955)	81,82
Borah, William E. (1865-1940)	74,79-82,84,86,92,143,145,175,204,216
Brand, Charles	86,89
Brooks, Stratton Duluth (1869-1949)	48,54
Brown, Dwight Huber (1887-1944)	254,255
Burch, Walter	155,210
Cannon, Clarence (1879-1964)	6,28-32,42,44-46,53,54,56,57,63-66,68,69,71-75,91,97,107,108,117,119,138,139,142,143,145,155-163,165,166,171,174,177-183,185,187,189,192-196,199-201,203-208,211,212,217-219,222-224,226,227,229,236,237,243-250,253-258,260
Caraway, Thaddeus Horatius (1871-1931)	42,70,75,83,88,89,92
Caulfield, Henry Stewart (1873-1966)	56,245,246
Caverno, Xenophon (1865-1941)	23-25,130,132,133,151,197,205,206,246,247,252,257,258
Census--Missouri--Agriculture, 1919	43, 47, 48, 51, 64
Census--Missouri--Agriculture, 1919	43,47,48,51,64
Chain stores	6,24,26-29,68
Chicago Union Stock Yards	5
Clark, Bennett Champ (1890-1954)	128,137,180,182,185,192,200,202,214,217,218,219,222,225,243,247,250,251,253,255,258
Cockrell, Francis Marion (1834-1915)	17
Conden, W. C.	62,73
Cooperative Warehouse Association, Columbia, Missouri	216
Corn Belt Committee	18,20,21,32,33,36,37,42,52,60,68,72
Cowden, Howard H.	47,48,51,56
Creason, Ola F.	59,111
Cross, Guernsey T.	213
Cuno, F. L.	56,64,84,85,90,93,96,99,101,102,105,111,112,118,120,139,142,163,192,230,231,233,250
Current River	207,208
Dairy products	7-14,25
Darrow, Clarence (1857-1938)	197
Davis, Chester C. (1887-1975)	14,23,25
Dawes, Charles G. (1865-1951)	26,29,30,138,160-163,181,194,195
Dearmont, Russell L. (1891-1967)	123,129,137,151,155,190,213,218
Decker, Frank N.	95
Democratic National Convention, 1932	213
Denman, C. B. (1882-1958)	5,71-73,76,96,98,108,115
DeWitt, T. H.	8,14
Doane, D. Howard (1883-1984)	73
Donnell, Elmer	192, 193, 194, 201, 232, 233, 239, 241

Subject	Folders
Douthitt, F. H.	74, 75, 77, 87, 88
Drescher, A. B.	24-27, 34-36, 41, 47-49, 52, 56, 58, 77, 78, 85, 86, 91-94, 100, 101, 109, 111, 112, 117, 119, 120, 131, 133, 142, 150, 152, 172, 173, 175, 177, 187, 188, 192, 206, 209, 210, 212, 219, 220, 227, 239, 242, 252, 257
Dunlap, Frederick (1881-1968)	43
Dyer, John Napier (1877-1954)	27, 29, 30, 34, 42, 62
Edwards, Laura S.	88-93, 95, 100, 101, 106
Eggs--Marketing	209, 211
Egley, Charles A.	87, 90-94, 101, 102, 105, 106, 108
Election, 1932	168-179
Election, 1932--Missouri Gubernatorial	52
Emmert, C. F.	37, 112-116, 119, 120
Fair Tariff League	46, 48, 51, 54, 70, 110, 111, 143, 158, 169, 205, 214, 215, 217-221, 224-226, 229, 233, 234, 244, 245, 247, 253, 254, 256, 257, 260
Farley, James A. (1888-1976)	170, 181, 182, 185, 195, 197, 204-206, 208, 211, 213-216, 219, 221, 222, 234, 235, 243, 245, 246, 252, 258, 259
Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America	17, 90-92
Farmers Live Stock Commission Company	12, 18, 20-22, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 37, 40, 42, 52-54, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 72, 73, 77, 83, 91, 95, 96, 103, 109, 110, 112-119, 126-128, 131, 133, 138, 140, 144, 163, 165, 169, 170, 172-175, 177-179, 181, 182, 184, 186, 187, 192, 200, 208, 211, 213, 214, 217, 221, 227, 229, 237, 239, 242, 243, 246, 251-254, 257
Farmers National Grain Corporation	123
Farmers Union Service Association	29
Farm-to-Market Roads	35, 249, 250, 257
Federal Farm Loan Act	9, 30
Franklin, Leonard	73
Franklin, Walter S.	172
Friant, Julien N. (1888-1939)	35, 36, 46, 48, 59, 61, 73-75, 77, 80, 85, 86, 92, 94, 96-100, 104, 105, 107-110, 163, 164, 194, 236, 244, 246, 258, 259
Fuis, Frank	235
Fulbright, James F. (1877-1948)	206-208, 217
Gasoline Tax	205
Godsey, Townsend	195
Goeke, Joseph G.	1-262
Goodson, John V.	127, 129
Gore, Thomas P.	123
Green, William	36, 41, 81, 171, 209, 215, 221, 225, 226, 230
Greenwade, C. W.	218, 219

Subject	Folders
Grimes, I. C.	5, 76, 77, 96, 108, 163
Grimes, J. Frank	119, 210, 222
Hall, Clarence	148, 154, 159, 166, 173, 175
Harvey, Marie Turner	41, 49
Hatch, Verna L.	21
Hawes, Harry Bartow (1869-1947)	97, 164, 175, 179, 240, 257
Hawley-Smoot Tariff	64, 65
Hay, Charles Martin (1879-1945)	169, 170, 232, 276
Haymes, Lon S.	49
Henderson, Sam	81, 82, 84, 85, 87, 93, 102
Hirth, William (1875-1940)	1-276
Hobb, George	242
Hoffman, R. W.	61, 68
Holliday, T. E., Mrs.	91, 92, 95, 107, 118, 119, 131, 134, 135, 139, 140, 155, 189
Hoover, Herbert (1874-1964)	16, 20, 24-26, 31, 51, 55, 62, 204, 232
Howe, Louis McHenry (1871-1936)	197, 231, 258
Hubbell, George H. (1878-1959)	83
Hudson, Ruby	84
Hulen, Rubey M. (1894-1956)	10, 12, 29, 63, 68, 81, 100, 111, 126, 127, 136, 180, 188, 207, 214, 222, 225, 233-235, 238-240, 245
Hyde, Arthur Mastick (1877-1947)	39-41, 43, 67-72, 161-163, 171, 177, 179-181, 190, 191, 196, 204-206, 208, 215, 220, 222, 224, 229, 232, 239, 244, 245, 258
Indiana Farm Board	21
Insurance	1
Intermediate Credit Bank Act	30, 39
Jackson, Cato	46
Johnson, Robert D. (1883-)	220
Jones, Langdon R. (1887-1963)	187
Jones, Marvin (1886-1976)	253
KFRU Radio, Columbia, Missouri	138, 139
Kile, Orville Martin (1886-)	67
Kirchner, Roger E. (1890-)	34, 36, 40, 99
League of Women Voters	1
Lee, Charles A.	113
Legge, Alexander (1866-1933)	94, 95, 97, 98, 102, 105-109, 110, 113, 114, 116, 118-120
Livestock--Marketing	12, 18, 20-22, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 37, 40, 42, 52-54, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 72, 73, 77, 83, 91, 95, 96, 105, 109, 110, 112-119, 126-128, 131, 133, 138, 140, 144, 163, 165, 169, 170, 172-175, 177-179, 181, 182, 184, 186, 187, 192, 200, 208, 211, 213, 214, 217, 221, 227, 229, 237, 239, 242, 243, 246, 251-254, 257

Subject	Folders
Lowden, Frank Orren (1861-1943)	75, 80
Lozier, Ralph F. (1866-1945)	190, 191, 198, 199, 202, 203, 215, 219, 225, 245, 247, 252
Mann, Conrad H. (1871-1943)	62, 188, 189, 191-193, 197, 201, 203, 218, 230
Maxey, Herman O. (1871-1935)	254, 256
Mayes, Jewell (1873-1944)	22-24, 43, 47, 51, 54, 65, 68, 98, 100, 118, 247, 249
McAdoo, William Gibbs (1863-1941)	6, 7
McNary-Haugen Bill	2, 24, 34, 36, 44, 52, 59, 61
Meat industry and trade	12, 18, 20-22, 24, 26, 29, 30, 33, 36, 37, 40, 42, 52-54, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 72, 73, 77, 83, 91, 95, 96, 103, 108, 109, 110, 112-119, 126-128, 131, 133, 138, 140, 144, 163, 165, 169, 170, 172-175, 177-179, 181, 182, 184, 186, 187, 192, 200, 208, 211, 213, 214, 217, 221, 227, 229, 237, 239, 242, 243, 246, 251-254, 257
Meyer, Eugene	30, 37, 39
Miles, H. E.	48, 51, 54, 70, 110, 111, 143, 158, 169, 205, 214, 215, 217-221, 224-226, 229, 233, 234, 244, 245, 247, 253, 254, 256, 257, 260
Miller, A. D.	32, 33, 56, 85, 87, 111, 112, 114, 115, 117, 119, 120, 121
Missouri Agriculture Association	14
Missouri Cotton Growers Cooperative Association	23
Missouri Farm Bureau Federation	31
Missouri Farmers Association	1-276
Missouri Farmers Association Oil Company	47, 51, 57, 60, 61, 65, 84, 100, 108, 109, 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119-121, 125, 127, 140
Missouri Pacific Railroad	179-180
Missouri Truck and Terminal Association	246, 250
Missouri, Cape Girardeau, 1929	99
Missouri, Salem	56
Missouri, Sullivan County	53
Missouri, Texas County	21
Missouri, Windsor	1
Missouri. Bureau of Marketing	58
Mitchell, Ewing Y., Jr. (1873-1954)	100, 101, 141, 142, 155, 164, 170, 172, 174, 175, 177-179, 182, 184, 185, 189, 191-193, 196-200, 203-207, 208, 209, 211, 214, 215, 217-219, 221, 223, 225, 226, 229-231, 237-240, 245, 250, 252-254, 257
Morrison, Thomas M.	90, 91, 92
Mortgages	185
Mosby, Thomas Speed	5
Munkres, Klara	119
National Livestock Marketing Association	115
National Livestock Producers	5

Subject	Folders
National Progressive League	228
Nelson, William L. (1875-1946)	160
Netherland, Wood	184, 185
Norbeck, Peter (1870-1936)	9, 39, 51, 52, 64-67, 82, 92, 108, 111, 115-117, 120
Norris, George William (1861-1944)	55, 70, 72, 92, 96, 107, 110, 143
O'Mealey, John	5
Owen, H.N.	52, 53
Park, Guy Brasfield (1872-1946)	237, 239, 240, 250
Peek, George Nelson (1873-1943)	28, 30
Pendergast, Thomas J. (1872-1945)	172, 262
Pershing, John J. (1860-1948)	6
Peteet, Walton (1869-)	58
Peters, Fred G.	105, 108, 109, 119
Petroleum industry and trade	22
Pinchot, Gifford (1865-1946)	229
Politics	
Producers Creamery Company of Cabool	21
Prohibition	210
Rayburn, Sam (1882-1962)	175
Reavis, George	181
Reed, James A. (1861-1944)	195, 213, 260
Reno, Milo	30, 70
Roads	4, 179
Rogers, Will (1879-1935)	173
Romjue, M.H.	180, 248
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano (1882-1945)	127, 145, 150, 152, 155, 156, 161, 162, 164, 172, 177, 178, 183, 184, 191, 193, 196, 198, 199, 204, 205, 208, 212, 214, 220, 221, 224-227, 230, 240, 241, 243, 250, 317, 318
Rosier, R.J.	40, 55, 59, 65, 83, 90, 94, 98, 111, 163
Rumble, Wilfred E.	123, 125
Schilling, William Frank	120
Scott, Frank M.	14, 20, 22, 23, 29, 32
Shannon, Joseph B. (1867-1943)	176, 225
Shawhan, John M.	123
Shoemaker, Floyd S.	6
Shouse, W.L.	10579, 10580
Simpson, John	245
Skelton, Ike	162, 183, 207
Smith, Alfred E. (1873-1944)	179, 193
Smith, Forrest (1886-1962)	207, 254, 256
Snow, Thad	168, 173, 197, 205, 206, 252, 257
Stark, Lloyd Crow (1886-1972)	196, 203, 236, 238, 242, 243, 247, 249, 250, 252, 259

Subject	Folders
Stark, Paul C. (1891-1974)	245, 252, 253, 254, 259
Stark, Paul C. (1891-1974)	245, 252, 253, 254, 259
Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri	23, 1929
Stewart, Charles A.	5
Sutherlin, Ralph	29
Talbert, Thomas J. (1880-1967)	260
Talmadge, Eugene (1884-1946)	233, 257, 258
Tariff	183, 184, 187, 260
The Missouri Farmer	1-276
Thomson, James M. (1878-1959)	251-254, 261, 262
Traller, Mae	262
Traylor, Melvin A. (1848-1934)	210, 216
Trucking	180, 181, 183, 186, 191, 193, 211, 212, 219, 228, 231, 250
Tugwell, Rexford G. (1891-1979)	220
U.S. Federal Farm Board	55, 66-80, 94-98, 100, 102, 105-115, 117, 120, 123, 125, 128, 129, 132, 140, 143, 161, 171, 190, 237
U.S. Federal Farm Loan Board	37
U.S. Federal Land and Intermediate Credit Banks	39
U.S. Federal Land Bank	39, 41
U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission	179
U.S. Post Office Department, Rural Service	195
U.S. Reconstruction Finance Corporation	156, 160-163, 171, 180, 187, 190, 194, 211, 228, 229, 231, 232, 235, 245, 251, 255, 258
Union Oil Company	55, 56, 78
University of Missouri, Agricultural Extension Service	236, 237
University of Missouri, Department of Horticulture, Appropriations, 1933	260
Wabash Railroad Company	172, 181, 182
Wallace, Henry A.	60, 220, 221, 225, 236, 245-247
Walsh, Frank P.	228
Watson, Edward M.	162
Weis, Frank J.	8, 9
White, Edward J.	5, 151, 174, 200, 203
White, F. Edson	33, 64
Whitecotton, James H.	200, 204, 204
Whitecotton, W.E.	4, 174, 224
Whitney, Simon Newcomb	260
Wilfley, Xenophon P. (1871-1931)	5, 6
Williams, Clyde	169, 180, 183, 217, 219
Williams, Derwood E.	186, 190
Williams, George H.	2
Wilson, Francis M.	4, 6, 123, 126, 129-132, 135, 137-139, 151, 155, 156, 159, 163, 172, 173, 176, 177, 179-182, 184,

Subject	Folders
	185, 187, 188, 190-192, 197-199, 203, 206, 207, 213, 214, 218-220, 222, 226
Wilson, M.L.	223, 227, 236
Winter, E.H.	3, 4
Women's Progressive Farmers Assn. of Missouri	88-92, 95, 100, 107, 114, 118, 119, 130-132, 134, 135, 139, 155, 192, 193, 195
Women--Societies	20, 23, 88-92, 95, 100, 107, 114, 118, 119, 130-135, 139, 155, 192-195
Woods, Harry	87
Young, Frank B.	29, 30, 33, 43, 46, 47, 52, 55, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 67-69, 73, 75, 83, 84, 86, 89, 92, 96, 102, 103, 106, 109, 111, 116, 117, 127, 131, 133, 136, 140, 144, 147, 156, 158, 163, 165, 169, 170, 172-175, 177-179, 181, 182, 184, 186, 188, 195, 200, 201, 208, 211-217, 220, 221, 223, 225-227, 229, 232, 233, 235, 236, 238, 239, 242-244, 246, 248, 251, 253, 254, 257