



Lester E. Cox Papers (C3596)

Collection Number: C3596

Collection Title: Lester E. Cox Papers

Dates: 1917-1968

Creator: Cox, Lester E., 1895-1968

Abstract: Personal and business papers of a Springfield, Missouri, businessman. Most of the collection deals with Cox's philanthropic activities, particularly his role as president of the Board of Trustees of Burge-Protestant Hospital. Cox's considerable business interests are less well represented, most of these records dating from 1968.

Collection Size: 7 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](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center-columbia). If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Lester E. Cox Papers* (C3596); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The papers were loaned for microfilming to the University of Missouri by Lester L. Cox on November 1, 1978 (Accession No. CA4197).

Existence and Location of Originals: The originals were returned to the donor after being microfilmed.

Processed by: Processed by Hampton Smith, November 27, 1979. Finding aid revised by Nicholas Raya, January 19, 2023.

Biographical Note:

Lester E. Cox was born in Republic, Missouri, on August 22, 1895, the son of James M. Cox and Amanda Belle Britain Cox. As a child he attended public schools and received his higher education at Southwest Missouri State College and Drury College. He served briefly in the Army Air Corps during World War I and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in August 1918.

After the war, Cox entered business, founding, among other enterprises, the Ozark Motor Supply Company and Springfield, Missouri's first radio station, KGBX, in 1932. Other business interests included radio stations in East St. Louis, Illinois, and St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri, as well as large Ford tractor dealerships in Springfield and Kansas City.

Besides his many business activities, Cox was heavily involved in civic affairs. He was an important member of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce (1936-1950) and helped found the Springfield Boy Scout band and the local Kiwanis Club. His most prominent community work, however, was his role as chairman of the board of the Burge-Protestant Hospital from 1948 to 1968. During these years he saved the institution from bankruptcy and built it into a large medical center.

Cox also served on a number of state boards and commissions. Among these were the board of curators of the University of Missouri (1951-1953), where he helped establish the university's television station, KOMU; the Missouri Commission on Higher Education (1968); and the Missouri State Board of Health (1968).

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 9 series:

Correspondence
Personal Papers
Business Records and Correspondence
Drury College
Charities and Civic Activities
Burge-Protestant Hospital
Writings
Miscellaneous
Photographs

Scope and Content Note:**Correspondence**

This series contains personal and general correspondence from 1934-1968.

Personal Papers

This series contains personal papers of Cox. Included are financial documents, patents, legal documents, trip itineraries, and military papers.

Business Records and Correspondence

This series contains Cox's business records and correspondence.

Drury College

This series contains correspondence, 1949-1960, certificates, and material on the dedication of Breech School of Business, and speeches by Cox.

Charities and Civic Activities

This series contains various material from charities and organizations.

Burge-Protestant Hospital

This series contains correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports, and brochures pertaining to the Burge-Protestant Hospital.

Writings

This series contains writings of Lester E. Cox, including songs, poems, and speeches.

Miscellaneous

This series contains biographies and blueprints.

Photographs

This series contains shots of radio station KWTO, Springfield, Missouri made in 1934. Photos include offices, studios, and transmission and recording facilities.

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| f. 1 | 1934-1944. Correspondence with children, letters from Eddy Rickenbacker, Harry Truman and Champ Clark. |
| f. 2 | 1945-1952. Letters from President and Mrs. Truman, Eddy Rickenbacker, General Omar N. Bradley, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. |
| f. 3 | 1953-1955 |
| f. 4 | 1956, 1960. Criss Award nomination. |
| f. 5 | 1961-1963. Letters of congratulation on St. Louis <i>Globe Democrat</i> article, 1961. |
| f. 6 | 1964-1966. Election to Missouri Academy of Squires. |
| f. 7 | 1967 |
| f. 8 | 1968 |
| f. 9-14 | General correspondence |

- f. 9 1958-1961
- f. 10 1963-1965
- f. 11 1967
- f. 12 January-February 1968. Letter from Stuart Symington
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- f. 13 March-June 1968. Requests for support from several
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- f. 14 July-November 1968. Wilson Creek Battlefield.

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- f. 17 Insurance papers
- f. 18 Legal documents, deeds and contracts relating to personal finances, gifts and
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- f. 19 Patents for two of Cox's inventions
- f. 20 Itineraries for trips, 1952-1968, including names of guests
- f. 21 Financial reports and documents
- f. 22 Social events and organizations, invitations, etc., 1932-1966
- f. 23 Medical reports, 1945-1963
- f. 24 U.S. Army papers, 1917-1922. Discharge papers, war veterans claims.
- f. 25 Greeting cards, messages, etc., 1937-1939
- f. 26 Tributes, 1946-1965. Speeches and broadcasts honoring Cox.
- f. 27 Notice of Cox's illness and death, August, 1968

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- f. 30 Ozarks Broadcasting Company, KWTO and KGBX, 1945-1960. Action
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- f. 31 Springfield Television Inc., KYTV, 1951-1968. Proposal to FCC for
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- f. 32 Central Steel Building Company, 1967-1968.
- f. 33 Cox-Cowan Farm, 1967-1968. Year's accounts of dairy farm, minutes of
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- f. 34 Cox-Davis Farm, 1968. Monthly accounts of dairy farm operation.
- f. 35 Implement warehousing company, 1967-1965.
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- f. 39 Kickapoo Prairie Farm, brochures, c. 1946-1948.
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- f. 48-50 Ozark Manufacture and Supply Company. Correspondence, January-December 1968, deals with strike by Upholsterer's International Union, Local 25; sale of company to Ozark Gold Label Furniture Company and sales records for 1968.
- f. 51 Ozark Motor Supply Company papers and correspondence, 1928, 1931, 1968.
- f. 52-53 Ozark Tractor and Implement Company correspondence and sales records, 1968.
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- f. 64 Dedication of Breech School of Business Administration, 1960. Plans for ceremony, speeches of Cox.

Charities and Civic Activities Series

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- f. 68 "Keep America Great" pamphlet outlining youth education plan devised by Cox.
- f. 69 Missouri Commission on Higher Education, 1968. Minutes of meetings held in Kansas City on May 13th and in St. Louis on May 24th as part of a "physician manpower study" aimed at determining the desirability of a second medical school.

- f. 70 Missouri State Board of Health, minutes of meetings in January, May and June 1968 dealing with reorganization of State Division of Health.
- f. 71 Springfield Chamber of Commerce, 1936-1950. Includes minutes of board of directors meeting February 4, 1946 regarding a new city hospital.
- f. 72 Springfield Boy Scout Band, 1924, 1967-1968. History, personal accounts of former band members, Program for 1924 concert.
- f. 73 Springfield War Dad's Canteen, 1943-1946. Description of canteen and its organization, statistics on its operation and photos of staff.
- f. 74 Springfield, dedication of Dr. W.E. Handley, City Hospital, July 8, 1952. Program, text of speech by Cox.
- f. 75 University of Missouri, Board of Curators, 1951-1953. Letters and clipping regarding location of University Medical School, petition to FCC re University-run educational television station.
- f. 76 University of Missouri, KOMU-TV, 1952-1954. Missouri Attorney General decision on station's establishment, correspondence, newspaper clippings and press releases on station's opening. Letter from station director to Cox describing early operations, and advertising brochure for KOMU.
- f. 77 Wilson Creek Battlefield Memorial Park, 1961. Includes commemorative pamphlet and reissue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* for December 21, 1861.

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- f. 78 Correspondence, January 1947-June 1949, deals mostly with fund raising by the Burge Hospital Expansion Fund. Includes list of Burge employees as of December 1948.
- f. 79 Correspondence July-December 1949. Fund raising, loan arrangements, list of 1949 employees by-laws of Burge Hospital, plan for Springfield City Hospital merger with Burge, biography of Ellen Burge.
- f. 80 Correspondence, 1950-1951. Also includes list of Board members and 1950-51 report of the Burge Auxiliary.
- f. 81 Papers, 1952. Address by Cox to Burge Board of Directors, February 18, 1952, program and newspaper clippings of opening of new Burge facilities, statement of principles for cooperation between Springfield City Hospital and Burge Hospital, brochure for Burge Hospital School of Medical Technology.
- f. 82 Collected and reprinted letters of support for Burge's Crippled Children's Hospital and School of Nursing, 1953.
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- f. 85 Correspondence, 1956. Fundraising.
- f. 86 Reports and publications, 1956.
- f. 87 Correspondence and papers, 1957. Letters from Emmett McLaughlin and members of the Board of Methodist Hospitals and Homes. Board committee appointments, Burge Hospital personnel policy.
- f. 88 Correspondence and reports, 1958. Includes 1958 Service Report and 1958 Annual Report, also on "Employee Analysis" for 1957-1958.
- f. 89 Correspondence and papers, 1959. Includes amendments to by-laws and Nominating Committee Report of Board of Directors.
- f. 90 Correspondence and papers, 1960. Includes 1960 Service Report.

- f. 91 Correspondence and reports, 1961. Service report, Board elections, article on Cox and Burge Hospital from *Hospital Management* magazine.
- f. 92 Correspondence, January-September 1962.
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- f. 95 Papers and reports, 1963-1964. Management Report for 1964, list of medical staff, December 1963 and list of members of the Board of Directors, 1963-1964.
- f. 96 Dedication of the Amanda Bell Cox Memorial Wing, August 1964.
- f. 97 Papers, 1965-1966. Letters and resolution of appreciation to Cox, Bulletin of Nursing School, 1966-1967, Publications.
- f. 98 Correspondence and papers, January-November 1967.
- f. 99 Papers, 1967. Publications on the drug Questran, application to Board of Adjustment for Special Exemption, list of nursing school alumnae. Pamphlet in tribute to Cox contains brief biography and history of Burge Hospital.
- f. 100 Correspondence and Reports, January-June 1968. Request for aid to Missouri Division of Health, report of Real estate Research Corp. on proposed apartment tower for the Elderly. Memorandum outlining hospital's claims against the city of Springfield.
- f. 101 Correspondence and papers, July-November 1968. Will of Floyd W. Jones leaving large stock holding to Burge, further documentation on dispute with city of Springfield.
- f. 102 Mortgage bonds, 1962-1963. Prospectus for bond issues, contains much background information on hospital's finances.
- f. 103 Annual reports, 1960-1963, 1967.
- f. 104 Dept. of Inhalation Therapy, 1960. Brochure describing the department and its operations.
- f. 105 "A Study of Nurse Education and Resources and Needs in a Selected Region of Southwest Missouri" by Amy E. Viglione, 1949. Contains appraisals of Burge and other area hospitals.

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 - f. 107 Speeches and sayings, n.d., written for various occasions.

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- f. 109 Blueprints

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- f. 110 Shots of radio station KWTO, Springfield, Missouri made in 1934. Photos include offices, studios, and transmission and recording facilities.

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