

C Powell, John Benjamin (1886-1947), Papers, 1910-1952
3662 2.9 linear feet

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of a journalist include correspondence, literary works, printed material, photographs, and a scrapbook. Drafts for *My Twenty-Five Years in China* and Powell's articles (1941-1947) predominate. Information on China, Japan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Central Asia, India, Philippine Islands, World War II, and the Washington Conference.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Powell Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Martha P. Hensley through the University of Missouri Library Journalism Branch on 26 September 1977 (Accession No. 4107)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Benjamin Powell, an influential newspaperman in Asia, was born in Marion County, Missouri. After graduating from Gem City Business College, Quincy, Illinois, he completed a degree in journalism at the University of Missouri in 1910. He was married to Martha Hinton.

During his professional career, spent mainly in China, Powell filled many posts, including advertising manager, *Courier Post*, Hannibal, Missouri, 1910-1913; instructor, University of Missouri, 1913-1917; and managing editor, *China Weekly Review*, Shanghai, China, 1917-1941.

He was also special representative of American commercial interests in China at Washington from 1920 to 1922 (obtaining congressional enactment of the China Trade Act); editor, *China Press*, 1923-1925; *Chicago Tribune* special correspondent, 1918-1938; and correspondent, *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily Herald*, London, 1925-1936.

As a reporter he covered the Conference on Limitation of Armament and Pacific Problems, 1921-1922; Nationalist Revolution in China, 1926-1927; Sino-Russian conflict, 1929; Sino-Japanese conflict, 1931-1932; Russo-Japanese crisis, 1934-1935; Far Eastern preparations for war; and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941. As an author he published *Building a Circulation: Methods and Ideals for Small Town Newspapers* (1914), *Getting Subscribers for the Country Newspaper* (1915), *Newspaper Efficiency in the Small Town* (1915), *Who's Who in China ...* (1926), and *My Twenty-Five Years in China* (1945).

Due to his editorial hostility to Japanese aggression, Powell was imprisoned in Shanghai from December 1941 to May 1942. Neglected, his physical condition deteriorated severely. After release he participated in the war effort by denouncing the Japanese in print and through personal appearances. Consequently he became a widely known symbol of Japanese brutality. Never fully recovered from his ordeal, he died in 1947.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Powell Papers are arranged into the following series:

Correspondence

Drafts

Printed Material and Photographs, 1910-ca. 1952

The bulk of the papers consists of drafts for his book *My Twenty-Five Years in China* and his articles written during 1941 to 1947. More complete descriptions of the series are in the folder

list.

FOLDER LIST

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- f. 1-6 1917-1952. Shanghai, 1917; Twenty-one Demands; capture of Powell by Chinese bandits, 1923; imprisonment by Japanese; and literary productions.

Drafts, 1936-1947

- f. 7 Notes, n.d.--1943, on Manchuria, China, and Japan.
- f. 8-14 Speeches, 1942-1947. Powell on China, Manchuria, Shanghai, Japanese, Russians, Sino-Japanese War, World War II, and personal experiences in China, 1917-1941.
- f. 15-16 Letters to the editor, *New York Herald-Tribune* and *PM's Daily Picture Magazine*, 1942-1945.
- f. 17-19 Book reviews, 1942-1945.
- f. 20-23 Newspaper articles, 1942-1945.
- f. 24-35 Magazine articles, 1942-1945.
- f. 36 *Yearbook of American University Club*, 1936.
- f. 37 *Journalism in Wartime and The China Society Booklet*, 1943.
- f. 38-58 Funk and Wagnall's' *The New International Year Book, A Compendium of The World's Progress for the Year*. 1943-1945.
- f. 38-46 Events of 1943 in China, Japan, USSR.
- f. 47-51 Events of 1944 in China, Japan, USSR.
- f. 52-58 Events of 1945 in China, Japan, Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, Siam.
- f. 59-132 *My Twenty-Five Years in China*.
- f. 59-79 Chapters 1-10
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- f. 106-122 Chapters 21-30
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- f. 133-181 Miscellaneous Drafts, 1942-1947. Arranged alphabetically under three categories: geographical, biographical, and miscellaneous.
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- f. 133a-154 China: army, 1944; civil war period, 1917-1926; government; journalism; Nationalist revolution; Shanghai; Sian Incident; United States-China trade.
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 f. 177-179 World War II postwar plans for Asia.
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- f. 182-191 Newspaper articles, n.d., 1923-ca. 1952.
 f. 192-193 Periodical articles, n.d., 1943-1948.
 f. 194 Press releases and programs, 1937-1945.
 f. 195 Programs, announcements, certificates, and scrapbook, 1944-1945.
 f. 195-196 Scrapbook of newspaper clippings concerning Powell's visit to the University of Missouri in 1945.
 f. 196 Booklet, *Japan's War on Foreign Business in China*, ca. 1938.
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