

C      Atherton, Lewis E. (1905-1989), Papers, 1919-1979  
3848      3 linear feet

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## INTRODUCTION

Papers of Lewis E. Atherton, a professor of history at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The papers consist of correspondence, notes, notebooks, photograph books, publications, and miscellaneous material.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The Lewis E. Atherton Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Lewis E. Atherton on July 25, 1979 (Accession No. 4242). Additions to the papers were made July 18, 1980 (Accession No. 4291), July 22, 1982 (Accession No. 4448) and October 22, 1987 (Accession No. 4808).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lewis Elden Atherton was born March 1, 1905, in Bosworth, Missouri, to Caleb Franklin and Ethel France Atherton. He attended the University of Oklahoma from 1923 to 1925. In 1925 he transferred to the University of Missouri in Columbia and received his A.B. in 1927. He continued at the University of Missouri and earned his M.A. in 1930 and his Ph.D. in history in 1937. Atherton taught at the New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell, New Mexico from 1928-1929, the St. Joseph Junior College, St. Joseph, Missouri from 1930-1931 and the Wentworth Military Academy Junior College, Lexington, Missouri from 1931-1936. In 1936 he became an instructor at the University of Missouri in Columbia and in 1939, a professor of history. He remained at the University until his retirement in 1973. During his career, he published four books: *Frontier Merchant in Mid-America*; *The Southern Store, 1800-1860*; *Main Street on the Middle Border*; and *The Cattle Kings*; as well as several articles on frontier history. Atherton married Mary Louise Webb on June 5, 1929 in Roswell, New Mexico and they had three children, Richard, Mary Ann and Barbara Lee. Lewis Atherton died in 1989.

For further information about Atherton, see these related collections: [Atherton, Lewis E., \(1905-1989\), Papers, 1865-1974 \(C3603\)](#) and Atherton, Lewis E., (1905-1989), Thomas Jefferson, 1971 (C3333).

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Lewis E. Atherton Papers, documenting Atherton's work as a professor and author, consist of correspondence, notebooks, notes, publications, photograph books, and miscellaneous material. The papers are arranged into two series: **Professional Papers** and **Family Papers**.

The **Professional Papers** Series is divided into four subseries: Correspondence; Notes; Publications; and Miscellaneous Material. The correspondence is arranged chronologically from 1923-1979 and includes the Atherton Fund, a doctoral scholarship in history established in 1969 for the University of Missouri-Columbia; awards; newspaper clippings; pamphlets; programs and royalty receipts. Most of the correspondence dates from the 1970s and is from his former students and colleagues.

The notes are for his publications and lectures with the notes for articles and books

arranged alphabetically by title. The notes from "Itinerant Merchandising in the Ante-Bellum South", *Main Street on the Middle Border* and "Western Merchant and Indian Trade" were probably used in other publications since some of his other publications are on similar subjects. The notes for *Main Street* contain working chapters that are different from those in the Lewis E. Atherton Papers, Manuscript Collection 3603. Also contained in the *Main Street* files are correspondence, notes and outlines sent to the Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, pertaining to the funding of the book by the library. The lecture notes are arranged alphabetically by class, and consist of course outlines, a quiz, and notes. These lecture notes are from 1935-1936 when Atherton was an instructor at the Wentworth Military Academy Junior College. The notes have remained in the order that Atherton had them.

The publications, consisting of articles by either Atherton, his students or colleagues, are arranged alphabetically by author and chronologically under the author's name. The publications date from 1937-1979.

The grant proposals are from the Kansas City Museum, Missouri, and the University of Mid-America, Lincoln, Nebraska. Both grants contain correspondence, proposals and programs with Atherton's notes written on them. The Kansas City Museum grant concerns a special exhibit on frontier history and dates from 1977-1978. The University of Mid-America grant concerns a prospective course, entitled Literature and Lore of the Heartland and dates from 1977. These institutions have Atherton as an advisor on their grant proposals. The miscellaneous material includes brochures; Department of History Newsletter; Discussion Club papers, a University of Missouri-Columbia club; a guest book; magazine; programs and a review. The material is arranged chronologically from 1927-1977.

The **Family Papers** Series is divided into four subseries: Correspondence; Notebooks; Photograph Books; and Miscellaneous Material. The correspondence, arranged chronologically from 1929-1976, is from various family members. The letters of Barbara Atherton, a nurse for six months in Vietnam as part of a University of Missouri research project in 1968, are highly informative about Vietnamese life and the Vietnamese reaction to American politics and events like the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. She also describes how the war affected the Americans and the Vietnamese working on the project. These letters are either to her parents or to her grandmother, Mrs. Claudia Webb, and her aunt, Alice Young. Often the same letter was sent to the four although the personal notes differed.

The notebooks are from the student days of Barbara and Lewis Atherton. Barbara's notebooks are from her student days at St. John's Mercy Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri, and are from 1965. Lewis Atherton's notebooks are undated, however, they are probably from his student days at the University of Missouri in the late 1920s.

The photograph books contain photographs, art work, newspaper clippings and notes pertaining to Mary Ann, known as Ann, and Barbara Lee. Ann's book begins in 1938 and ends during her adolescence. Barbara's book begins when she was about two and does not extend past her childhood. The miscellaneous material consists of church bulletins, grade cards, note cards, pamphlets, photographs and programs, chronologically from 1919 to 1965.

## FOLDER LIST

### Professional Papers Series

f. 1	Correspondence, 1923-1964
f. 2-5	Correspondence, Atherton Fund, 1966-1969
f. 6	Correspondence, 1970-1972
f. 7	Correspondence, 1973
f. 8-9	Correspondence, 1974
f. 10-16	Correspondence, 1975
f. 17-20	Correspondence, 1976 January-October, 1976
f. 21-27	Correspondence, 1976 November-1977 December
f. 28-31	Correspondence, 1978 January-1979 June
f. 32-41	Notes, <i>The Cattle Kings</i>
f. 42-62	Notes, "Itinerant Merchandising in the Ante-Bellum South"
f. 63-64	Notes, <i>Main Street on the Middle Border</i> , Chapter 1
f. 65-66	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 2
f. 67-68	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 3
f. 69-70	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 4
f. 71-72	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 5
f. 73-74	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 6
f. 75	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 7
f. 76-77	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 8
f. 78-79	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 9
f. 80-81	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Chapter 10
f. 82-85	Notes, <i>Main Street</i> , Application
f. 86-106	Notes, <i>Main Street</i>
f. 107-108	Notes, "Western Merchant and Indian Trade"
f. 109-116	Notes, European History, 1935-1936
f. 117-122	Notes, Modern European History, 1935-1936
f. 123	Publications, Atherton, 1937-1938
f. 124	Publications, Atherton, 1939
f. 125	Publications, Atherton, 1943-1944
f. 126	Publications, Atherton, 1944
f. 127	Publications, Atherton, 1945-1947
f. 128	Publications, Atherton, 1956-1957
f. 129	Publications, Atherton, 1968-1974
f. 130-131	Publications, Benson, 1956
f. 132	Publications, Benson-Bryant, 1956-1976
f. 133	Publications, Bryant-Christenson, 1974-1978
f. 134	Publications, Curtis, 1955
f. 135	Publications, Curtis-Goodrich, 1955-1976
f. 136	Publications, Mering-Murphy, 1977
f. 137	Publications, Nauert-Saum, 1974-1979
f. 138	Publications, Socolofsky-Spitz, 1954-1961
f. 139-145	Grant Proposals, Kansas City Museum, 1977-1978

- f. 146-147 Grant Proposals, University of Mid-America, 1977
- f. 148 Miscellaneous, 1927-1955
- f. 149 Miscellaneous, 1955-1960
- f. 150 Miscellaneous, 1960-1966
- f. 151 Miscellaneous, 1970-1977
- f. 152 Miscellaneous, 1977

### Family Papers Series

- f. 153 Correspondence, 1929-1950
- f. 154 Correspondence, 1950-1968
- f. 155 Correspondence, 1968
- f. 156 Correspondence, 1968-1975
- f. 157 Correspondence, 1975-1976
- f. 158-161 Notebook, Barbara Atherton, 1965
- f. 162-170 Notebook, Barbara Atherton, n.d.
- f. 171 Notebook, Lewis Atherton, n.d.
- f. 172-174 Photograph Book, Ann Atherton, 1938-1950
- f. 175 Photograph Book, Barbara Atherton, 1944-1949
- f. 176 Miscellaneous, 1919-1965

### INDEX TERMS

Subject	Folders
Atherton family	153-176
Atherton, Barbara Lee	153-170,172-176
Atherton, Lewis E. (1905-1989)	1-129,139-176
Benson, Lee	130-132
Bryant, Keith L., Jr. (1937- )	15,20,29,132
Buddhism--Vietnam	154-156
Christensen, Lawrence O. (1937- )	18,25,133
Cookery--Vietnamese	154,155
Curtis, Winterton Conway (1875-1966)	134,135
Ellis, Elmer (1901-1989)	2, 16, 17, 19, 22, 27, 28, 154, 155
France, 1968	155
Goodrich, James W. (1939-2007)	21, 28, 135
History, Midwest	32-108, 123-138
Kansas City Museum, Kansas City, Missouri	139, 145
Kennedy, Robert F. (1925-1968)	154, 155
King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929-1968)	154, 155
Mering, John Vollmer (1931- )	8, 136
Mott, Frank Luther (1886-1964)	8, 135
Murphy, William J., Jr.	136

Subject	Folders
Nauert, Charles G., Jr. (1928- )	137
Nursing, Education, Curricula	158-170
Politics, 1968	154-156
Reilly, Timothy Frank	14, 17, 28, 29, 137
Saum, Lewis O.	17, 137
Socolofsky, Homer E.	138
Spitz, Lewis W.	138
University of Mid-America, Lincoln, Nebraska	146-147
University of Missouri-Columbia	1-31, 123-129, 148-152, 171
Vietnam War, 1961-1975	154-156
Vietnam, 1968	154-156