



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI RESEARCH CENTER-KANSAS CITY

K0057

Laurie Perry Cookingham (1896-1992) Papers
1932-1980
5 cubic feet

Correspondence, scrapbooks, autobiography drafts, and other materials pertaining to Cookingham's period of service as city manager of Kansas City and other cities.

BIOGRAPHY:

L. Perry Cookingham was born October 23, 1896 in Chicago, Illinois. His father, Joseph Firch Cookingham, worked for the Chicago and Eastern Railroad and his mother, Ella E. (Gardinier) Cookingham, had been a country school teacher. Cookingham spent his youth in Danville, Illinois.

After high school, Cookingham commenced work on the Chicago and Eastern Railroad, a position which was interrupted by World War I. Shortly after returning from the service, Cookingham joined the staff of the city engineer's department of Flint, Michigan with an assignment to the design division. In time, Cookingham worked his way up the ladder to become city engineer. While city engineer, he joined the International City Managers Association. In Flint, Cookingham met and married Harriet West.

Cookingham took a cut in pay in 1927 to accept the position of city manager of Clawson, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. He undertook to improve the city programs and to reduce the city budget. In 1927 Cookingham resigned to accept a similar position in Plymouth, Michigan.

While working for Plymouth, Cookingham also served on the Wayne County emergency relief commission (1933-1934) and as director of the works division for Wayne County and Detroit. He held the position as city manager of Plymouth until the end of 1935 when he resigned to become city manager for Saginaw, Michigan. In Saginaw, Cookingham furthered his reputation as an efficient city

manager. Newspapers and periodicals spoke of his success in reducing the cost of government while improving efficiency.

Cookingham, a proponent of honest, efficient government, was the man Kansas City officials sought to be manager of the city. In 1940 Cookingham assumed that position and continued to serve until 1959 when he resigned. During his nineteen year tenure as city manager of Kansas City, Cookingham counted as his accomplishments the elimination of a \$22,000,000 budget deficit, improving the city transportation network, improving and modernizing the fire department and developing a recreation and community centers program.

After leaving Kansas City, Cookingham moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where he served as city manager until 1963. He then accepted a position with Hallmark Cards and returned to Kansas City. He maintained his interest in civic affairs and currently served as Chairman of the Kansas City Parks Board.

PROVENANCE:

The Kansas City Museum of History and Science, gave accession KA0077 on April 22, 1981. L. Perry Cookingham, loaned for microfilming accession KA0078 on April 23, 1981. Additions were received from L. Perry Cookingham on December 9, 1981, as accession KA0120 and on August 6, 1986, as accession KA0374.

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PREFERRED CITATION:

Specific item; folder number; *Laurie Perry Cookingham (1896-1992) Papers (K0057)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

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DESCRIPTION:

The papers consist of correspondence and five scrapbook volumes. The correspondence files pertain to Cookingham's period of service as city manager of Kansas City. The scrapbooks include both earlier and later material.

Folders 1-49, memoranda and correspondence from Cookingham to the Mayor and City Council of Kansas City. This material deals with routine affairs of the city and such things as the city budget, city improvement projects, annexation of outlying areas and wage proposals for city employees. An index to the material is included in folder 2.

Folders 50-56, correspondence with the Board of Advisory Trustees of the Citizens Bond Committee, which consists of requests from Cookingham seeking the Board's approval to re-allocate certain bond funds for city projects. An incomplete set of minutes for the Board of Advisory Trustees is included in folder 56.

Folders 57-107, invitations, including requests for Cookingham to be present at various luncheons, dinners, open houses, movie premiers, receptions, athletic events and the like. In addition to the original invitation, Cookingham's response is indicated either in letter form or a notation of the action to be taken.

Folder 108, photographs, includes three photographs of signboard hill and proposed improvements of the area.

The additions included miscellaneous correspondence, speeches and news clippings. Five books were removed and placed in the SHSMO-KC Library Collection (K0027).

Folders 109-118 are photocopied letters written and received by Cookingham from 1938 through 1980. Cookingham referred to these letters as "letters I like to read and keep."

Folder 119-139 are his public speeches.

Folder 140-154 contain Cookingham's original manuscript, and William H. Gilbert's first revision of that manuscript, which eventually was published with Gilbert as author entitled *This City, This Man: The Cookingham Era in Kansas City* (Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association, 1978).

Folder 155-159 are magazine articles by and about Cookingham.

Volumes 1-5, scrapbooks pertaining to Cookingham's years as city manager in various communities from 1932-1963. The clippings are from several newspapers and are arranged in chronological sequence. The focus of the scrapbooks is on Cookingham's success in reducing government expenditures while increasing government services.

INVENTORY:

BOX 001

- Folder 1. Articles on L.P. Cookingham
These articles range in date from 1938-1976.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

- Folder 2. Contents for Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Each communication with the Mayor and City Council was assigned a sequential number. This folder contains a numerical listing of the communications with a description of each.
- Folder 3. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 1-24
- Folder 4. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 25-50
- Folder 5. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 51-75a
- Folder 6. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 76-100
- Folder 7. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 101-116
- Folder 8. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 117-135
- Folder 9. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 136-146
- Folder 10. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 147-163
- Folder 11. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 164-173
- Folder 12. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 174-182
- Folder 13. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 183-195
- Folder 14. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 196-204
- Folder 15. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 205-209
- Folder 16. Mayor and City Council Correspondence
Documents 210-222

BOX 002

- Folder 17. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 223-235
- Folder 18. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 236-250
- Folder 19. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 251-262a
- Folder 20. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 263-270
- Folder 21. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 271-280
- Folder 22. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 281-284
- Folder 23. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 285-304
- Folder 24. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 305-309
- Folder 25. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 310-315
- Folder 26. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 316-324
- Folder 27. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 325-330
- Folder 28. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 331-345
- Folder 29. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 346-350
- Folder 30. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 351-362
- Folder 31. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Document 363
- Folder 32. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 364-370
- Folder 33. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 371-385
- Folder 34. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 386-400

- Folder 35. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 401-415
- Folder 36. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 416-429
- Folder 37. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 430-445
- Folder 38. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 446-460
- Folder 39. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 461-474
- Folder 40. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 475-500
- Folder 41. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 501-517
- Folder 42. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Document 518
- Folder 43. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 519-526
- Folder 44. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 527-540
- Folder 45. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 541-549
- Folder 46. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 550-563
- Folder 47. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 564-580
- Folder 48. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 581-595
- Folder 49. Mayor and City Council Correspondence Documents 596-620

CITIZENS BOND COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

- Folder 50. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee Correspondence, December 31, 1947-September 13, 1950
- Folder 51. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee Correspondence, December 1, 1950-June 30, 1953
- Folder 52. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee Correspondence, August 7, 1953-June 24, 1955

Folder 53. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee
Correspondence, July 14, 1955-November 13, 1956

Folder 54. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee
Correspondence, January 16, 1957-January 24, 1958

BOX 003

Folder 55. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee
Correspondence, March 3, 1958-March 4, 1959

Folder 56. Board of Advisory Trustees of Citizens Bond Committee Minutes;
November 24, 1947-October 2, 1957, incomplete

INVITATIONS

Folder 57. Invitations, May 10, 1943-January 31, 1944

Folder 58. Invitations, February 2, 1944-April 28, 1944

Folder 59. Invitations, May 8, 1944-July 25, 1944

Folder 60. Invitations, August 2, 1944-December 24, 1944

Folder 61. Invitations, January 9, 1945-April 6, 1945

Folder 62. Invitations, May 15, 1945-September 26, 1945

Folder 63. Invitations, October 8, 1945-November 14, 1945

Folder 64. Invitations, January 7, 1946-March 16, 1946

Folder 65. Invitations, April 1, 1946-June 27, 1946

Folder 66. Invitations, July 1, 1946-September 9, 1946

Folder 67. Invitations, September 16, 1946-December 27, 1946

Folder 68. Invitations, January 8, 1947-March 27, 1947

Folder 69. Invitations, April 7, 1947-June 26, 1947

Folder 70. Invitations, July 3, 1947-October 15, 1947

Folder 71. Invitations, October 23, 1947-December 22, 1947

Folder 72. Invitations, January 3, 1948-March 11, 1948

Folder 73. Invitations, March 16, 1948-May 28, 1948

Folder 74. Invitations, June 3, 1948-October 8, 1948

Folder 75. Invitations, October 20, 1948-December 30, 1948

Folder 76. Invitations, January 13, 1949-May 27, 1949

Folder 77. Invitations, June 1, 1949-September 29, 1949

Folder 78. Invitations, October 3, 1949-December 29, 1949

Folder 79. Invitations, January 4, 1950-February 25, 1950

- Folder 80. Invitations, March 1, 1950-April 17, 1950
- Folder 81. Invitations, May 8, 1950-July 25, 1950
- Folder 82. Invitations, August 2, 1950-October 18, 1950
- Folder 83. Invitations, October 19, 1950-December 29, 1950
- Folder 84. Invitations, January 4, 1951-April 13, 1951
- Folder 85. Invitations, April 17, 1951-July 27, 1951
- Folder 86. Invitations, August 1, 1951-October 31, 1951
- Folder 87. Invitations, November 2, 1951-December 31, 1951
- Folder 88. Invitations, January 1, 1952-March 31, 1952
- Folder 89. Invitations, April 4, 1952-May 28, 1952
- Folder 90. Invitations, June 4, 1952-September 22, 1952
- Folder 91. Invitations, October 2, 1952-February 16, 1953
- Folder 92. Invitations, March 2, 1953-May 27, 1953
- Folder 93. Invitations, June 4, 1953-November 12, 1953

BOX 004

- Folder 94. Invitations, December 2, 1953-January 26, 1954
- Folder 95. Invitations, February 4, 1954-April 28, 1954
- Folder 96. Invitations, May 3, 1954-August 31, 1954
- Folder 97. Invitations, September 3, 1954-October 28, 1954
- Folder 98. Invitations, November 1, 1954-December 30, 1954
- Folder 99. Invitations, January 12, 1955-April 28, 1955
- Folder 100. Invitations, May 4, 1955-June 22, 1955
- Folder 101. Invitations, July 11, 1955-September 30, 1955
- Folder 102. Invitations, October 11, 1955-December 16, 1955
- Folder 103. Invitations, January 6, 1956-March 30, 1956
- Folder 104. Invitations, April 3, 1956-June 28, 1956
- Folder 105. Invitations, July 12, 1956-September 18, 1956
- Folder 106. Invitations, October 10, 1956-December 27, 1956
- Folder 107. Invitations, January 3, 1957-April 27, 1957

PHOTOGRAPHS

- Folder 108. Photographs

CORRESPONDENCE

- Folder 109. Correspondence, 1938-1939
- Folder 110. Correspondence, 1940-1946
- Folder 111. Correspondence, 1947-1948
- Folder 112. Correspondence, 1950-1951
- Folder 113. Correspondence, 1952-1953
- Folder 114. Correspondence, 1954-1958
- Folder 115. Correspondence, 1959
- Folder 116. Correspondence, 1962-1965
- Folder 110. Correspondence, 1940-1946
- Folder 117. Correspondence, 1970-1979
- Folder 118. Correspondence, 1980

SPEECHES

- Folder 119. Speeches, 1940
- Folder 120. Speeches, 1943
- Folder 121. Speeches, 1948
- Folder 122. Speeches, 1949
- Folder 123. Speeches, 1950
- Folder 124. Speeches, 1951
- Folder 125. Speeches, 1952
- Folder 126. Speeches, 1953
- Folder 127. Speeches, 1954
- Folder 128. Speeches, 1955
- Folder 129. Speeches, 1956
- Folder 130. Speeches, 1957
- Folder 131. Speeches, 1958
- Folder 132. Speeches, 1959
- Folder 133. Speeches, 1960
- Folder 134. Speeches, 1961
- Folder 135. Speeches, 1962
- Folder 136. Speeches, 1963
- Folder 137. Speeches, 1964

- Folder 138. Speeches, 1967
- Folder 139. Speeches, 1970

AUTOBIOGRAPHY DRAFTS

- Folder 140. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 1-28
- Folder 141. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 29-53
- Folder 142. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 54-80
- Folder 143. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 81-110
- Folder 144. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 111-140
- Folder 145. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 141-170
- Folder 146. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 171-200
- Folder 147. *This City, This Man*; LPC draft pp. 201-227
- Folder 148. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft Index
- Folder 149. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft pp. 1-30
- Folder 150. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft pp. 31-60
- Folder 151. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft pp. 61-90
- Folder 152. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft pp. 91-120
- Folder 153. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft pp. 121-150
- Folder 154. *This City, This Man*; Gilbert draft pp. 151-175

ARTICLES AND CLIPPINGS

- Folder 155. Magazine articles, undated

BOX 005

- Folder 156. Magazine articles, 1937-1939
- Folder 157. Magazine articles, 1943-1958
- Folder 158. Magazine articles, 1958-1976
- Folder 159. Newspaper articles
Collected newspaper articles concerning Cookingham's tenure as
City Manager of Fort Worth, Texas.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Folder 160. Correspondence-Councilman Charles C. Shafer, Jr.
undated, August 17, 1956; February 23, 1959
- Folder 161. Correspondence-Fan Mail
January 17, 1963-March 6, 1961

- Folder 162. Correspondence-Fort Worth
May 22-December 28, 1959
- Folder 163. Correspondence-Fort Worth
January 6, 1962-June 7, 1963
- Folder 164. Correspondence-Houston Offer
November 29- December 12, 1942
- Folder 165. Correspondence-Joint Center for Urban Studies Meeting
June 28, 1963-January 27, 1966
- Folder 166. Correspondence-L.P. Cookingham Career Development Award
Recipients, Articles, etc.
September 1969-September 1983
- Folder 167. Correspondence-Letter of Resignation
April 16, 1959
- Folder 168. Correspondence-Miscellaneous
January 9, 1952, April 1962-April 12, 1972
- Folder 169. Correspondence-People To People
undated, 1961-March 12, 1968
- Folder 170. Correspondence-Town Meeting of the Air
December 1952
- Folder 171. Correspondence-Yale University, Bureau of Highway Traffic
April 6, 1959-February 20, 1962
- Folder 172. Dallas-"The Story of the Dallas Attempt to Lure Cookingham from
Kansas City, October 6 to December 11, 1949."
- Folder 173. Dallas-Correspondence and Personal Notes
undated, October 14, 1949-January 25, 1950
- Folder 174. Memorandums-Inter-Departmental Communication, Kansas City
August 18, 1958-July 1940

PUBLICITY

- Folder 175. Publicity-Correspondence, Award, Miscellaneous
Undated, November 8, 1938-August 1, 1957
oversize item 9
- Folder 176. Publicity-Magazine Articles
undated, November 1938-December 1963
- Folder 177. Publicity-Newspapers Articles
undated, November 7, 1938-March 30, 1985
- Folder 178. Report-Honolulu
Correspondence and Reports
undated, January 19-July 6, 1961

SPEECHES

- Folder 179. Speech-"Career Opportunities in Planning, Developing and Managing Cities", undated
- Folder 180. Speech-"The Council-Manager Plan of Local Government," undated
- Folder 181. Speech-Presentation to Citizen's Services Commission, March 1955
- Folder 182. Speech-"The Next Four Years," April 21, 1955
- Folder 183. Speech-"Planning-Key to Accomplishment," February 6, 1958
- Folder 184. Speech-"Downtown: A Star Reborn," October 3, 1958
- Folder 185. Speech-Statement to Department Head's and Their Budget Officers, November 18, 1958
- Folder 186. Speech-"Municipal Budgeting," February 12, 1959
- Folder 187. Speech-"Politics and City Management in Kansas City," April 20-22, 1959
- Folder 188. Speech-"The Philosophy Makes A Difference," November 21, 1959 & April 28, 1976 (revised)
- Folder 189. Speech-"Are Cities Wearing Out? Is Urban Renewal the Answer?" July 7, 1961
- Folder 190. Speech-"Available Alternatives," January 14, 1970
- Folder 191. Speech-"If I Had to Do It Over Again, I'd Do It," April 1976
- Folder 192. Speech-"Texas Young Professionals," March 11, 1977
- Folder 193. Speech-"So You Want to Be a City Manager," April 21, 1977
- Folder 194. Speech-"Change in City Manager Position in Past Fifty Years," November 15, 1979
- Folder 195. Speech-"Parks & Recreation in Kansas City: History, Facilities and Program," November 20, 1980
- Folder 196. Speech-"Career Opportunities in Local Government," September 8, 1982
- Folder 197. Speech-Notes for Rotary Talk, January 8, 1985
- Folder 198. Speech-Notes for Kiwanis Club Talk, August 13, 1985
- Folder 199. Speech-"The Past is Prologue," December 19, 1985
- Folder 200. Statement-Attempted Bribery Incident
October 1947
- Folder 201. Statement-Liquor Incident, July 1, 1944

- Folder 202. Texas Gridiron Dinner, 1960
- Folder 203. Miscellaneous
Correspondence, Reports, Resolutions, Etc.
- Folder 204. News clippings-Memphis Speech Publicity
October 7-4, 1954
- Folder 205. News clippings-Statements of Council Candidates Prior to 1955
City Election
- Folder 206. Newspapers
Republican, Kansas City, Missouri, December 22, 1947
Yellow Jaundice, Texas, April 1, 1960, May 5, 1961, April 6, 1962
oversize items 10-13
- Folder 207. Scrapbook-News clips
1927-1934

MICROFILM

- Volume 1. Scrapbook, February 1932-March, 1942
- Volume 2. Scrapbook, March, 1942-December, 1949
- Volume 3. Scrapbook, January, 1950-December, 1957
- Volume 4. Scrapbook, January, 1958-July 1959
- Volume 5. Scrapbook, April, 1959-March, 1963