



Jay Linn Torrey Scrapbook Collection (R0218)

Collection Number: R0218

Collection Title: Jay Linn Torrey Scrapbook Collection

Dates: 1893-1920

Creator: Torrey, Jay Linn, 1852-1920

Abstract: The Jay Linn Torrey Scrapbook Collection contains materials compiled by Jay Torrey of Howell County, Missouri. A rancher, politician, and Spanish-American War veteran, Torrey compiled materials on the Missouri Immigration Society, the State Fruit Experiment Station, the 'Good Roads' movement, relocation of the state capital, Fruitville Farm, and the proposed village of Torreytown, and the campaign for the United States Senate in 1918.

Collection Size: 1 cubic foot
(1 oversize volume, 1 roll 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-Rolla](https://www.shsmo.org). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the Society all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Jay Linn Torrey Scrapbook Collection* (R0218); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The scrapbook was loaned for copying to the University of Missouri by Dorothea Reavis on July 17, 1985 (Accession No. RA0299). The original was donated on May 14, 2019 by David Evans (Accession No. RA1678).

Alternate Forms Available: A microfilm copy of the scrapbook is available.

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Jay Linn Torrey Scrapbook Collection can be found in the following collections:

Fruitville Farm Pamphlet (R0009)

Arch Talcott Hollenbeck Papers (R1414)

University of Wyoming. American Heritage Center, *Jay L. Torrey Papers* (00585)

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, July 30, 1985. Revised by Kathleen Seale, July 9, 2019.

Biographical Note:

Jay Linn Torrey was born on October 16, 1852, in Pittsfield, Illinois. He grew up in Louisiana, Missouri. In 1876, he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He set up a practice in commercial law in St. Louis, specializing in bankruptcy cases. Years of work in the field led him to formulate a new code, which was ultimately adopted by the United States Congress. Known as the Torrey Bankruptcy Act, it remained in effect for many years. Torrey was also involved in a play for establishing the appellate court system in Missouri. He was prominent in St. Louis civil, fraternal, and Republican Party circles, and was president of the St. Louis Mercantile Club.

At the invitation of his older brother, a retired Army captain, Torrey moved to Thermopolis, Wyoming, to manage a large cattle and cavalry horse ranch. His work there led to United States patents on improvements in branding irons and saddle blankets in 1890. He was elected to the Wyoming legislature on the Republican ticket and served as speaker of the lower house. He attracted nationwide attention at the beginning of the Spanish-American War with a proposal to enlist western cowboys and stockmen for cavalry service. His concept of 'Rough Riders' was accepted by the War Department and Torrey was commissioned Colonel of the 2nd Regiment, U.S. Cavalry Volunteers. The regiment organized and trained at Fort D.A. Russell, Wyoming, but never reached Cuba. En route to Florida, the troop train derailed at Tupelo, Mississippi, killing and injuring several Rough Riders and crushing both of Torrey's feet. As a veteran and Rough Rider, Torrey was prominently mentioned as a running mate to William McKinley on the Republican ticket in 1900. He was passed by when Theodore Roosevelt accepted the nomination.

Torrey amassed considerable wealth in Wyoming, and in 1905, he returned to Missouri. He acquired the White Farm southeast of West Plains in Howell County, adding to it to create a 10,000-acre tract, which he named Fruitville Farm. He became known in Howell County as a slightly eccentric philanthropist and civil organizer, and a tireless booster of southern Missouri and the Ozarks, particularly concerning the possibilities of fruit culture. He was very involved in progressive campaigns for civic improvements in Howell County and West Plains, and was a director of the statewide 'Good Roads' campaign in 1912-1913. Through his Republican Party connections, he was appointed to several state posts.

Torrey's most ambitious project was the 'ideal' village of Torreytown, which he hoped to establish at Fruitville Farm. Designed after the European model, residents were to be urban farmers, living in a central town surrounded by farmland. With generous purchase plans and statewide advertising, Torrey expected to attract "desirable," industrious individuals to inhabit his proposed village. Although there were a few tenant farmers at Fruitville, the ideal village never caught on and development never got underway.

Torreytown was central in a well-publicized feud between Torrey and Governor Hadley in 1910, after the state capitol in Jefferson City burned. As discussion went on concerning funding its reconstruction, Torrey offered a thousand acres and a million dollars for the capital to be relocated near Fruitville Farm. The debate grew acrimonious when Torrey alleged fraud on the part of Jefferson City's backers and the bond issue they proposed. Hadley countered that Torrey was more concerned with promoting his real estate development at Torreytown. The highly public controversy was settled when Missouri's voters approved the bond issue in favor of Jefferson City. Torrey and Hadley staged a widely reported reconciliation at the Ozark Land Congress in Springfield in 1911.

Torrey entertained lavishly at Fruitville and other locations in the state, befitting his various capacities. Politicians, educators, Rough Riders, and suffragettes were guests at his table, and a Wyoming equestrienne made headlines in 1913, as she made her circuit of Missouri riding on a mule loaned from Fruitville Farm. An active member of the United Spanish War Veterans, Torrey hosted statewide encampments at Fruitville in 1913 and 1918. Torrey's most elaborate affair was the celebration of Memorial Day in 1918. Thousands came from all over southern Missouri and northern Arkansas to attend the public events, which included a display of torpedoes by the U.S. Navy, a flyover by a U.S. Army aviator, the filming of an historical motion picture of Howell County, and music by W. C. Handy and band from Memphis.

Later in 1918, Torrey launched a whirlwind campaign in the Republican primary for U.S. Senator. He ran well in southern Missouri despite a late start and little backing from the party, but he was defeated by Selden P. Spencer. The campaign was the last great public enterprise of his career. He visited his land holdings in Wyoming and traveled to Central America, and was no longer the central figure in southern Missouri that he once had been.

A longtime bachelor, Torrey married Mrs. Frances Reiley, businesswoman and widow of a physician in West Plains, in October 1920. He lived only six weeks afterward, succumbing to Bright's disease at West Plains on December 4, 1920. After ceremonies at West Plains, Louisiana, and St. Louis, his remains were interred in his hometown of Pittsfield, Illinois. His estate, estimated at one hundred thousand dollars, was divided between his widow and his old friend, Rough Rider, and manager of Fruitville, Wallace B. Hodge.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

Jay Torrey's scrapbook consists largely of newspaper clippings and miscellaneous printed material from 1910 to 1920. Most of the clippings were extracted from newspapers in Missouri, although a few earlier items from Wyoming are included. The materials in the scrapbook touch on most aspects of Torrey's career, with the greatest coverage of his work with the Missouri Immigration Society, the Good Roads movement, the fight over restoration of the capitol at Jefferson City, and the development of Fruitville Farm. There is also a considerable amount of coverage of agricultural advancements suitable for the Ozarks, Torrey's career with the Rough Riders and involvement with the United Spanish War Veterans, civic developments in Howell County, and Torrey's futile senatorial campaign in 1918. His attempt to create the ideal village is covered only lightly, but the scrapbook does include a proposed plat of the village, and examples of several promotional brochures describing the plan for Torreytown.

Container List:

Box 001 v. 1 Jay Torrey scrapbook, 1893-1920

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