



## Johnson Family Collection (SP0085)

**Collection Number:** SP0085

**Collection Title:** Johnson Family Collection

**Dates:** 1880-1971

**Creator:** Johnson Family

**Abstract:** The Johnson Family Collection consists of photographs, postcards, personal papers, and scrapbooks related to the Johnson and Wood families of Greene and Taney counties. The scrapbooks contain materials related to development sites in southwest Missouri, including the Powersite Dam, the James River Power Station, and the town of Hollister.

**Collection Size:** 12 cubic feet  
(8 folders, 15 volumes)

**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-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at [springfield@shsmo.org](mailto:springfield@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Johnson Family Collection* (SP0085); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

**Donor Information:** The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Katherine Chamberlin on November 11, 2022 (Accession No. SPA0118). An addition was made on August 23, 2023, by Katherine Chamberlin (Accession No. SPA0122). An Addition was made on September 25, 2023, by Katherine Chamberlin (Accession No. SPA0127). An addition was made on February 21, 2024, by Katherine Chamberlin (Accession No. SPA0131).

**Accruals:** Further accruals are expected. Additions to the collection will be added to the end of the container list.

**Related Materials:** Additional materials related to the Johnson Family Collection can be found in the following collections:

[Dewey Short Papers](#) (C4515)

[Lewis Elbern Meador Papers](#) (R0674)

[Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Records](#) (SP0009)

[Parnell Family Collection](#) (SP0090)

[William Maria Boedefeld Papers](#) (K1237)

**Processed by:** Processed by Haley Frizzle-Green, March 5, 2024

### **Biographical Note:**

William Howard Johnson was born on October 9, 1866, to Captain William Salathiel Johnson and Narcissa Sevier Onstott at City Point, Virginia. Johnson and his family settled in Springfield, Missouri, in 1874. After graduating from Drury College, he attended a military school at Orchard Lake, Michigan, and then Georgetown University where he studied law. Johnson practiced law in Forsyth, Missouri, between 1893 to 1899 before leaving his practice for real estate. Johnson was responsible for platting numerous neighborhood additions in Springfield, including Pickwick, Meadowmere, Phelps, Hawthorne, Aero Acres, and Eagle Heights. He was also active in the establishment of Phelps Grove Park, Fassnacht Park, and Dickerson Park Zoo. Johnson wrote for Missouri newspapers including *The Springfield News-Leader* and *The Kansas City Star* in which he promoted the beauty and value of the Ozarks. Johnson married Sarah Elizabeth Wood on February 23, 1887, and the couple had five children that included William W., Howard, Eugene, James, and Elizabeth. William H. Johnson died on April 3, 1940, and Sarah E. Johnson died on September 15, 1953. William is buried in Maple Park Cemetery and Sarah is buried in Hazelwood Cemetery.

William H. Johnson is best known for establishing the resort town of Hollister in Taney County, Missouri. After Hollister was chosen as a depot site for the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railway, Johnson bought property along the proposed route and suggested an “old English village” theme for the town. Hollister was incorporated in 1910 and the first English-style building, the Bank of Hollister, was built on Front Street. Johnson was a champion for hydroelectric power and encouraged the construction of the Powersite Dam on the White River in Taney County. Built in 1913, the Powersite Dam was the first hydroelectric dam in Missouri, which later led to the creation of Lake Taneycomo. Following dam construction, Johnson continued to grow Hollister through the creation of the Y.M.C.A camp and the establishment of the Presbyterian assembly at Presbyterian Hill.

William Wood Johnson was born on January 15, 1889, to William Howard Johnson and Sarah Elizabeth Wood in Springfield, Missouri. Johnson married Irene Nora Everett on July 24, 1910, and the couple had five children. After attending Drury College, he established the Johnson Construction Company in 1921. Johnson’s company resulted in a series of commercial projects worth \$30 million, including the remodeling of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad terminal in Springfield. His company also built Pearson’s Hall at Drury College, the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, and the Lily-Tulip plant. Johnson served as president of Springfield’s Chamber of Commerce between 1946 to 1947, during which he was awarded Springfieldian of the Year. In 1954, Johnson was elected Campaign Chairman of the power plant bond election which resulted in public approval for the construction of the James River Power Station in Greene County. In 1956, Johnson presented an award-winning speech at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual

National Conference on Government, leading Springfield to be designated as an All-American City. Following in his father's footsteps, Johnson oversaw the continued growth of Hollister and was an active supporter for Table Rock Dam in Taney County. William W. Johnson died on February 9, 1973, in Springfield, Missouri, followed by his wife Irene, who died on May 9, 1983. Both are buried in Saint Mary's Cemetery in Springfield.

John Morris Wood was born on September 19, 1836, in Rockford, Illinois, to John Wood and Elizabeth Morris. Wood's parents were born in Lancashire, England, and immigrated to America in 1826. The Wood family moved to Greene County, Missouri, in 1852, where they purchased a farm at Grand Prairie, five miles northwest of Springfield. In 1857, Wood moved to Springfield, where he worked as a store clerk at Sheppard & Kimbrough Dry Goods Company. Two years later, he and Fred Weaver established the Weaver & Wood store on the west side of the public square. Wood married Sarah Shackelford, daughter of Dr. William and Martha (Taylor) Shackelford, in 1860. John and Sarah had six children: John, James, Sarah Elizabeth, Lida, Sarah Ann, and Benjamin. In 1890, Wood left the mercantile field to work with his son, John, in the contracting business. John Morris Wood died on July 1, 1911, followed by his wife Sarah, who died on March 12, 1912. Both are buried in Hazelwood Cemetery in Springfield.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged by accession.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The collection contains fourteen scrapbooks, a 1903 edition of *The Drury Mirror*, and a 1907 yearbook for Springfield High School. The scrapbook titled "Table Rock and Water Power," includes correspondence, Congressional bills, newspaper clippings, and site dedication invitations related to Powersite Dam and Table Rock Dam in Taney County, Missouri. Most items are addressed to either William H. Johnson, or his son, William W. Johnson. The collection also includes Johnson and Wood family histories, photographs of Hollister, Missouri, as well as photographs and postcards from Johnson family trips.

The remaining scrapbooks are untitled and contain correspondence, newspaper clippings, and photographs related to the Johnson family, local history, and development sites including the 1954 power plant bond issue and the construction of the James River Power Station in Greene County; Springfield, Missouri's 1956 designation as an All-American City; the Park Central Square dedication of 1970; and the County Line Dam controversy of 1971. The Wood family scrapbook was created by John Wood, Sr., and consists of newspaper articles, correspondence, and funeral announcements related to the Wood family. Volumes 8 through 14 focus primarily on the town of Hollister and its development. Volume 15 contains postcards from various countries like United Kingdom, Spain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Jordan, and Israel. The collection is arranged by accession and kept in its original order.

**Container List:**

Box 001	f. 1	<i>The Drury Mirror</i> , 1903
	f. 2	Springfield High School yearbook, 1907
	f. 3	Johnson family history, 1979
	f. 4	Wood family history & genealogy, no date
	f. 5	Photographs, Hollister, Missouri, 1928

	f. 6	Photographs, travel, 1947, no date
	f. 7	Photographs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, no date
	f. 8	Postcards, circa 1940s
	v. 1	"Table Rock and Water Power" scrapbook, 1909-1959
Box 002	v. 2	Johnson family scrapbook #1, 1916-1958
	v. 3	Johnson family scrapbook #2, 1880-1964
Box 003	v. 4	Johnson family scrapbook #3, 1956-1958
	v. 5	Johnson family scrapbook #4, 1959-1970
Box 004	v. 6	Johnson family scrapbook #5, 1952-1971
	v. 7	Wood family scrapbook, 1880-1912
Box 005	v. 8	Johnson family scrapbook #6, 1911-1912
	v. 9	Johnson family scrapbook #7, 1912-1913
Box 006	v. 10	Johnson family scrapbook #8, 1915-1948
	v. 11	Johnson family scrapbook #9, 1910-1951
Box 007	v. 12	Johnson family scrapbook #10, 1915-1969
	v. 13	Johnson family scrapbook #11, 1911-1971
Box 008	v. 14	Johnson family scrapbook #12, 1900-1968
	v. 15	Postcard book, 1907-1908

**Index:**

Index Terms	Folder	Medium	Image
African Americans		v. 8	Yes
Arizona	6, 8		Yes
All-American City Award		v. 4	
Automobile Club of Missouri		v. 2, 4, 10-11, 13-14	Yes
Baird Mountain (Branson, Mo.)		v. 3	Yes
Bissett, Emma Weaver, 1871-1974		v. 6	Yes
Boats and boating		v. 8, 12, 15	Yes
Bonds--Taxation		v. 2, 4	
California	6, 8		Yes
Camping		v. 10-12	Yes
Chamber of Commerce, Branson, Missouri		v. 1	
Chamber of Commerce, Springfield, Missouri		v. 2, 4	
Churches--Missouri		v. 13-14	
City Utilities of Springfield (Springfield, Mo.)		v. 2, 4	
College of the Ozarks (Point Lookout, Mo.)		v. 1, 4-5, 9, 13	Yes
Colleges and universities--Missouri	1	v. 1, 4-5, 12-13	Yes
Dams--Missouri		v. 1-2, 5-6, 8-13	Yes
Drury University (Springfield, Mo.)	1	v. 6, 12	
Elections		v. 2, 4	
Electric power distribution--Missouri		v. 1-2, 5-6	
Farm life--Missouri		v. 8	Yes
Fishing		v. 10-12	Yes

Index Terms	Folder	Medium	Image
Flood control--Missouri		v. 1, 11	
Forsyth (Mo.)		v. 3, 5, 8-14	Yes
Fruit-culture--Missouri		v. 8-9	Yes
Galena (Mo.)		v. 12	Yes
Greene County (Mo.)	1-2	v. 2-7, 9-14	Yes
Hollister (Mo.)	5	v. 1, 8-14	Yes
Hotel Seville (Harrison, Ark.)		v. 2	Yes
Hotels--Missouri	5-6, 8	v. 2, 8-12, 15	Yes
Hydroelectric power plants--Missouri		v. 1, 8-13	
Indians of North America--United States	6, 8		Yes
Indigenous peoples--United States	6, 8		Yes
James River (Mo.)		v. 2, 5-6, 12	
James River Power Station (Springfield, Mo.)		v. 2	Yes
Jasper County (Mo.)		v. 9	
Johnson Construction Company		v. 2-6, 11-14	Yes
Johnson family	2-4	v. 1-15	Yes
Johnson, William Howard, 1866-1940	3	v. 1-6, 8-14	
Johnson, William Wood, 1889-1973	2-3	v. 1-7, 9-14	Yes
Joplin (Mo.)		v. 9	
Lily-Tulip Cup Corporation (Springfield, Mo.)		v. 14	Yes
Meador, Lewis Elbern, 1881-1975		v. 1-2, 4, 12, 14	Yes
Missouri. Highway Commission		v. 13	
Missouri. Legislature		v. 1	
Missouri Pacific Railway Company		v. 2, 9, 11-12	Yes
Nevada	6, 8		Yes
New Mexico	6, 8		Yes
O'Neill, Rose Cecil, 1874-1944		v. 9, 14	
Ozarks Women's Press Club		v. 9	
Phelps Grove Park (Springfield, Mo.)		v. 9-10	Yes
Powersite (Mo.)		v. 1, 3, 8-12	Yes
Presbyterian Hill (Hollister, Mo.)		v. 9	Yes
Saint John's Hospital (Springfield, Mo.)		v. 2, 4-6, 11-14	Yes
Shackelford family	4	v. 7	Yes
Short, Dewey Jackson, 1898-1979		v. 1	
Springfield (Mo.)	1-2	v. 2-7, 9-14	Yes
Springfield High School (Springfield, Mo.)	2	v. 13	Yes
Stone County (Mo.)		v. 12	Yes
Table Rock Dam (Mo.)		v. 1-2, 10	Yes
Table Rock Lake (Ark. and Mo.)		v. 1-3, 6, 10	Yes
Taney County (Mo.)	5	v. 1-6, 8-14	Yes

Index Terms	Folder	Medium	Image
Taneycomo, Lake (Mo.)		v. 1, 9-10, 12	Yes
Tiernan, L. Curtis, 1884-1960		v. 14	
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972		v. 14	
Turkey Creek (Ark. and Mo.)		v. 8-11	Yes
United States. Army. Corps of Engineers	7		Yes
U.S. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works		v. 1	
Webster County (Mo.)		v. 5-6	
White River (Ark. and Mo.)		v. 1-2, 8-12	Yes
White River Valley (Mo.)		v. 1	
White Star Line		v. 15	Yes
Wood family	4	v. 7, 5	
Wood, John Morris, 1836-1911		v. 7	
Ye Olde English Inn (Hollister, Mo.)	5	v. 8-12	Yes
Yearbooks	2		
Young Men's Christian Association		v. 8-9	Yes