

Collection #
M 1124
OM 0561
BV 4969

LAFOLLETTE FAMILY **1849–1961**

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Processed by

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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript boxes, 1 half size manuscript box, 4 photograph folders, 4 OM folders, 2 tintypes, 2 cased images, 1 bound volume, and 3 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1849–1961

PROVENANCE: Cynthia A. Martin, Indianapolis

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0535

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The LaFollette family arrived in Indiana prior to statehood. In the early nineteenth century, John and Amy LaFollette migrated from Ohio to what is now Jay County, Indiana. Their son Jesse J.M. LaFollette (1845–1936) alternately farmed and attended Liber College, taking a break from both of these activities in 1864 to serve in the 139th Indiana Infantry during the Civil War. LaFollette was admitted to the bar in 1872 and elected to the Indiana State Senate for the years 1895–97. In 1897 he was appointed Assistant to the United States District Attorney for Indiana at a starting salary of \$2000 per year. In 1908 he joined the Indiana University faculty as a law professor.

Jesse J.M. LaFollette married Anna Wells (d. 1927) in 1875 and had two children, Mildred and Byron (1884–1929). Mildred married twice, the second time to Frank Kramer, a professor at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. Byron LaFollette was one of the founders of the LaFollette-Tarpenning Company, which manufactures sheet metal products, and as of 2014 still operates in Indianapolis. He married Hazel Osborne (1886–1973) in 1910; the couple had one son, John O. (1928–98), usually referred to as “Jack.”

Little is recorded about Jack LaFollette’s later life, but as a child he resided at 3415 Guilford Avenue in Indianapolis with his mother and his aunt Helen Rebecca Osborne, whom most people called “Becky” or “Beck.” Becky worked regularly—though it is not clear what her occupation was—and Hazel was a homemaker. The family also had a maid, Amanda O. Lewis, who worked for them in the 1930s and 1940s (if not longer). Hazel, Becky, and Jack regularly went shopping, to the theater, and on vacations, and seem to have been fairly affluent even during the Great Depression. They also socialized frequently with Hazel and Becky’s brother Clyde Osborne and his wife Florence. In 1943 during the Second World War, Jack LaFollette enlisted as a private in the U.S. Army. His military records show that he completed high school.

The Ohr family is closely associated with the LaFollettes. Aaron D. Ohr (1822–75) went to California in 1849 to mine and sell supplies to others attracted by the Gold Rush. Census records show that he returned east, and by 1860 was living in Indianapolis. He and his wife Cevene Ohr had four children, including Harry (1855–1923). Harry Ohr served as a captain’s clerk in the U.S. Navy, sailing from New York to San Francisco by way of South America in 1878. He later became a carpet salesman and wrote poetry in his spare time. He and his wife Mary W. Ohr had two daughters, Cerena (circa 1884–1970) and Elizabeth (circa 1894–1974), both of whom completed college and became librarians. The two sisters lived together and were close friends with the LaFollettes and Osbornes. Jack LaFollette managed their estates after their deaths.

Sources:

Collection Materials and Accession Notes

U.S. Census Records

U.S. Military Enlistment Records

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection primarily concerns three generations of the LaFollette family: Jesse J.M. LaFollette, his children Mildred Kramer and Byron E. LaFollette, and Byron's immediate family: wife Hazel Osborne LaFollette, son John O. "Jack" LaFollette, and sister-in-law Helen Rebecca "Becky" Osborne. Materials directly related to the LaFollettes and Osbornes comprise the first three of the collection's five series.

The first series consists of LaFollette correspondence. Most of this is written by or to Hazel LaFollette or Becky Osborne. These include letters written to Osborne from Paul Lambert White during his attendance at Bowdoin College, and correspondence between the two sisters while on various trips. There are also a few business letters written to Jesse J.M. LaFollette and a 1918 letter from then-Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Byron LaFollette thanking him for lending his binoculars to the Navy during the First World War.

The second series is made up of journals. Mildred LaFollette Kramer's travel diaries, which discuss trips to Mexico, Europe, the western United States, and Canada, make up the bulk of these. They provide an overview of what a well-off American traveler would visit and do in those locations. The remaining volumes in the series belong to Jack and Hazel LaFollette. Jack's diary, written in 1936 and 1937, contains occasional short entries that describe his activities of the day. Hazel's journals also focus on daily activities, but are somewhat more introspective. She writes about meeting friends, doing charity work, how proud she is of her son, and how much she fears losing her sister.

Other materials related to the LaFollettes are included in the third series. Most prominent are household expense books, which give a good idea of the types of goods early twentieth-century families expected to buy, and how much they ended up paying for them. In addition to these, there are a few business documents, WWII ration books, and a satirical 1937 anti-Democratic booklet titled *Roosevelt for King*. This may have belonged to Hazel LaFollette, as she mentions in her diary that she did not vote for Roosevelt. There are also several formal photographic portraits of family members.

The fourth series comprises materials related to the Ohr family, such as genealogical notes, news clippings, and several tintypes. Notable are the Gold Rush letters written by Aaron D. Ohr, which describe his exhaustion selling building supplies and mining for gold in 1849–50. Perhaps most exciting is *The Hoosier Adrift's Log*, Harry Ohr's journal of his trip by sea from New York to San Francisco on the *Alaska* in 1878–79. The ship sailed around the tip of South America, stopping in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru, with a lengthy stay in Panama during an insurrection in the country. Ohr's entries are long, well-written, and often entertaining. At the very beginning he grumbles about trying to see Henry Ward Beecher preach in New York, but failing to do so since the church was too full and they were charging admission. Later, he describes the various local landscapes and towns where the ship docks, the customs of the people who live there (though not without some of the ethnic stereotypes that were prevalent at the time), the stories other sailors tell him about

shark attacks, and the attractions he visits—such as the supposed skeleton of Pissarro—while on shore leave. At one point, he tells of a practical joke: one sailor adhered a line of string to the front of another's telescope, so that when they crossed the equator, the second man looked into the telescope and believed that he could actually see it. In addition to the journal, there are several poems by Harry Ohr in the series.

Miscellaneous items that are not clearly connected with either the LaFollettes or Ohrs are part of the fifth and final series. These include a watercolor painting by Jack Bevin, a few letters, fraternity-related items, and college sports tickets. There are also several photographs with unidentified subjects, and a childhood tintype of Clara Van Camp, daughter of Gilbert C. Van Camp, who founded the Van Camp canning company. It is unclear how the Van Camps and LaFollettes are connected.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: LaFollette and Osborne Correspondence

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Letter from M. L. Collett to [G?]W. LaFollett, ca. 1861-65	Box 1, Folder 1
Jesse J.M. LaFollette Correspondence, 1897-1902	Box 1, Folder 2
Hazel Osborne LaFollette Correspondence, 1910-64 and not dated	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, Paul Lambert White to Helen Rebecca "Becky" Osborne, 1911-12	Box 1, Folder 4
Helen Rebecca "Becky" Osborne Correspondence, 1911-19 and not dated	Box 1, Folder 5
Letter from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Byron E. LaFollette	Box 1, Folder 6
John O. "Jack" LaFollette Correspondence, 1943-52	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence, Helen Rebecca "Becky" Osborne to Hazel Osborne LaFollette	Box 1, Folder 8
Helen Rebecca "Becky" Osborne Correspondence, 1952-61	Box 1, Folder 9
Correspondence, Helen Rebecca "Becky" Osborne to Hazel Osborne LaFollette, 1961 and not dated	Box 1, Folder 10

Series 2: LaFollette Journals

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Mildred LaFollette Kramer Travel Diary, Cross-Country, not dated	Box 1, Folder 11
Mildred LaFollette Kramer Travel Diary, Europe, not dated	Box 1, Folder 12

Mildred LaFollette Kramer Travel Diaries, Mexico, not dated	Box 1, Folder 13
Mildred LaFollette Kramer Travel Diaries, Western U.S. and Canada, not dated	Box 1, Folder 14
Hazel Osborne LaFollette Travel Diary, Tennessee and North Carolina, circa 1932	Box 2, Folder 1
Hazel Osborne LaFollette Journal, 1936	Box 2, Folder 2
John O. "Jack" LaFollette Journal, 1936–37	Box 2, Folder 3
Hazel Osborne LaFollette Journal, 1937	Box 2, Folder 4

Series 3: Miscellaneous Osborne and LaFollette Materials

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Hazel Osborne LaFollette Calling Card, not dated	Box 2, Folder 5
Life Insurance Documents for Jesse J.M. LaFollette, 1898	OM 0561 Folder 3 of 4
Protestant Episcopal Church of Moravia Mortgage Document, 1900	Box 2, Folder 6
LaFollette and Osborne Family Photographs, circa 1900–10	Photographs Folder 2 of 4
Indiana Loan and Title Co. Stock Certificate for Jesse J.M. LaFollette, 1905	Box 2, Folder 7
M.L. Osborne Receipt, 1910	Box 2, Folder 8
Hazel Osborne LaFollette Expense Book, 1912	Box 2, Folder 9
Annie Wells LaFollette and Jesse J.M. LaFollette Account Book, 1912–40	Box 2, Folder 10
Byron E. LaFollette Address and Expense Book, 1917	Box 3, Folder 1
U.S. Navy Binoculars Loaned by Byron E. LaFollette, circa 1918	Artifacts: 2006.0535
Robert Caldwell Patton, <i>Roosevelt for King</i> Satirical Booklet, 1937	Box 3, Folder 2

Amanda O. Lewis WWII Ration Books, 1941–44	Box 3, Folder 3
LaFollette and Osborne WWII Ration Books, 1941–44	Box 3, Folder 4
WWII Ration Book Cover and Ration Tokens, circa 1941–44	Artifacts: 2006.0535
WWII Ration Book Cover, circa 1941–44	Artifacts: 2006.0535
Helen Rebecca “Becky” Osborne WWII Mileage Rationing Records, circa 1943	Box 3, Folder 5
Helen Rebecca “Becky” Osborne, San Angel Tour Script, 1952	Box 3, Folder 6

Series 4: Ohr Family Materials

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Harry Ohr, “Forty Years Ago,” not dated

Notes Regarding Ohr and Taylor Genealogies, not dated

Letters from Aaron D. Ohr to John W. Ray, 1849–50

Letter from Aaron D. Ohr to John W. Ray, circa 1849–50

Harry Ohr News Clippings, 1878

Harry Ohr, *The Hoosier Adrift’s Log*, 1878–79

Elizabeth “Betty” Ohr, circa 1895

Ohr Child, circa 1890s

Ohr Child, circa 1890s

Ohr Child, circa 1890s

CONTAINER

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Folder 1 of 4

Box 3, Folder 7

OM 0561
Folder 2 of 4

Box 3, Folder 8

Box 3, Folder 9

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Photographs
Folder 1 of 4

Tintypes
1 of 2

Tintypes
2 of 2

Cased Images
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Harry Ohr Poems, circa 1900–07	Box 3, Folder 10
Harry Ohr Society of Indiana Pioneers Application, 1920	OM 0561 Folder 4 of 4
Correspondence Regarding Ohr Burial Plot, 1951	Box 3, Folder 11

Series 5: Miscellaneous Materials

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Women’s Rotary Club of Indianapolis Stationery, not dated	Box 3, Folder 12
Capitol Theatre Promotional Fan for <i>Abie’s Irish Rose</i> , not dated	Box 3, Folder 13
Clara Van Camp, circa 1862–66	Cased Images 1 of 2
Missionary Packet Contribution Receipt for Ida Wallingford, 1866	Box 3, Folder 14
Clara Van Camp Receipts, 1886–88	Box 3, Folder 15
Ritzinger Correspondence, 1888	Box 3, Folder 16
Unidentified Photographs, circa 1903–1920s	Box , Folder
Miscellaneous Receipts and Checks, 1910s–20s	Box 3, Folder 17
Purdue Phi Gamma Delta Directory, 1920–21	Box 3, Folder 18
Catherine Rogers Greif Wedding Photograph, 1921	Photographs Folder 4 of 4
Illinois Versus Butler Tickets, 1928	Box 3, Folder 19
Purdue University Basketball Season Ticket Application, 1928–29	Box 3, Folder 20
Decorated Letters from Beta Theta Pi to Other Fraternities, 1939	Box 3, Folder 21
Household Budget for “Ruth,” 1944	Box 3, Folder 22

Grenfell Association Calendar Book from Marge
Flickinger, 1951

Box 3, Folder 23

Jack Bevin, *Untitled (Perry K Steam Plant,
Indianapolis)*, 1959

OVC Graphics Box 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 1124).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.