

# WATSON, THOMAS E. (THOMAS EDWARD), 1856-1922.

## Thomas E. Watson collection, 1906-1923

Emory University  
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library  
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### Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Watson, Thomas E. (Thomas Edward), 1856-1922.  
**Title:** Thomas E. Watson collection, 1906-1923  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 121  
**Extent:** .5 linear foot (2 boxes)  
**Abstract:** Collection of materials relating to lawyer, editor, politician Thomas Edward Watson, including correspondence, editorials and articles by Thomas E. Watson, financial records, and clippings.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### Administrative Information

#### Restrictions on Access

Special restrictions apply: Due to preservation concerns, researchers must use photocopies of some of the originals.

#### Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Special restrictions apply: Items from the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society will not be photocopied.

#### Related Materials in This Repository

Leo Frank collection.

#### Source

Gift, L. Harmon Ziegler, 1962. Photocopies added to the collection in 1976 were purchased from the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society (Fort Lauderdale, Florida).

#### Custodial History

L. Harmon Ziegler was a professor at Emory University. Ziegler received the collection from a student, William Alton Carter, II.

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**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Thomas E. Watson collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Appraisal Note**

Acquired by Rose Library Director, Linda Matthews, as part of the Rose Library's holdings in Georgia history.

**Processing**

Processed by Barbara J. Mann, June 1993.

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**Collection Description****Biographical Note**

Thomas Edward Watson, lawyer, editor, politician, was born September 5, 1856 on his grandfather's plantation near Thomson, Georgia, in Columbia, later renamed McDuffie, County. He was the son of John Smith and Ann Eliza Maddox Watson. Watson was originally named Edward Thomas, but changed the order during his youth. He enrolled at Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, in 1872, but had to drop out after two years because of lack of funds. Watson taught school and studied law and in October 1875, he was admitted to the Georgia Bar. In November 1876, he began a law practice in Thomson. Watson was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives from McDuffie County in 1882, serving for a year. In 1890 he was elected to Congress on the Farmer's Alliance Platform. During this tenure he supported advanced labor legislation, introduced Alliance reform bills, and introduced a measure to establish the Rural Free Delivery system.

Watson was defeated in the election of 1892 due to gerrymandering in his district. He was also defeated in the election of 1894. In 1896, Watson was nominated as the vice-presidential candidate by the national Populist convention. His party lost the election and Watson retired from politics. While serving in Congress, Watson founded the *People's Party Paper* in 1891 and continued its publication until 1898. In 1892 he published *The People's Party Campaign Book* which was subtitled *Not a Revolt; It Is a Revolution*.

After retiring from political life, Watson resumed his law practice and purchased Hickory Hill, a mansion right outside Thomson. At Hickory Hill he began writing and published many books including *The Story of France* (1899), *Napoleon: A Sketch of His Life, Character, Struggles and Achievements* (The Macmillan Company, 1902), *The Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson* (D. Appleton and Company, 1903), *The Life and Times of Andrew Jackson* (publisher unidentified, 1912), *Bethany: A Story of the Old South* (D. Appleton, 1904). Watson founded *Tom Watson's Magazine* in 1905 in New York. This publication, renamed *Watson's Magazine*, continued to be published in New York until the end of 1906. *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* was published in Atlanta from 1907-1911, and then moved Thomson, Georgia. It was renamed *Watson's Magazine* in 1912 and ceased publication in 1917. He also published a weekly newsletter, *Weekly Jeffersonian*, from 1907-1917, at which time the United States Post Office permanently suspended his permit.

In his later years, Watson changed affiliation from Populist to Democrat. His views became extreme and he spoke out against Catholicism, Socialism, blacks, Jews, foreigners, U.S. Participation in World War I. Writing in his *Weekly Jeffersonian*, he editorialized about the Mary Phagan murder case and the suspected murderer, Leo Frank.

In 1920 Watson was elected to the United States Senate from Georgia, by a wide margin and served until his death. Watson died September 26, 1922 in Chevy Chase, Maryland, of complications from bronchitis. He is buried in the family plot in the Thomson, Georgia, cemetery.

Watson married Georgia Durham, October 9, 1878. This union produced three children, John Durham, Agnes Pearce, and Louise.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of correspondence, editorials and articles by Thomas E. Watson, financial records, clippings, and collected materials. The collection contains materials that were given to the Rose Library by Emory student William Carter, dating from 1906-1923. Carter is the grandson of James J. Gordy, Watson's campaign manager. Included in this gift were letters from Watson to Gordy which discuss Watson's view on Charles Crisp, U. S. Representative from the 3rd Congressional District, and particularly his stand on the Leo Frank case; typescript of an editorial by Watson dated February 13, 1913 which discusses the Commissioner of Agriculture; and clipping about the gift to Emory. The provenance for items of correspondence regarding Watson's book *The Story of France* are unknown. The fragment of a letter from Alice Louise Lytle, Watson's secretary, appears to be to Clifford Near and was given to the library by Ms. Jane Near, sister of the recipient, in 1964. Because of the fragile nature of the materials in folders 1, 2, 4, 5, they have been photocopied for research use. The original items have been restricted and are located in folders 23-26. They are not available for normal research use.

The collection also contains photocopies of correspondence, financial documents, writings by Watson, clippings, and collected material purchased from the Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Historical Society which retained the original items. These materials relate generally to Watson's real estate interests, Las Olas by the Sea, in Florida, and date from 1907 to ca. 1920. The main recipient of Watson's letters was Frank Stranahan. Also included are financial documents relating to this real estate from or to Georgia Watson.

Lastly, contain materials collected by the Rose Library about Thomas E. Watson. Included are articles from *American Mercury* (1925), *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine* (1965), *Atlanta Magazine* (1969), and the Memorial Address delivered by Gordon Lee to the United States House of Representatives (February 11, 1923).

### **Arrangement Note**

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

### Photocopies for researchers use [originals are restricted]

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Correspondence: Thomas E. Watson to James J. Gordy, 1906, 1919-1917, 1920
1	2	Writings by Thomas E. Watson: "Here is Our Man for Commissioner of Agriculture": Editorial: Typescript, February 17, 1913
1	3	Clippings re Thomas E. Watson letters at Emory, 1962
1	4	Correspondence re <i>The Story of France</i> by Thomas E. Watson, 1923
1	5	Letter fragment: Alice Louise Lytle to [Clifford Near?], ca. 1919

### Photocopies: Original materials located at Fort Lauderdale (FL) Historical Society

1	6	Correspondence: Thomas E. Watson to Frank Stranahan, 1907
1	7	Correspondence: Thomas E. Watson to Frank Stranahan, 1913-1915, no date
1	8	Memorandum of Agreement between Frank Stranahan and Thomas E. Watson, January 3, 1914
1	9	Correspondence: Miscellaneous correspondents to Frank Stranahan, 1914, 1919
1	10	Correspondence: Bank of Bay Biscayne to First National Bank, St. Augustine, May 21, 1915
1	11	Tax receipt: Dade County, Florida: Georgia Watson, April 11, 1911
1	12	Land contract: Georgia Watson and Alexander and Fine, August 8, 1913
1	13	Bank draft: Georgia Watson, [February 14, 1914?]
1	14	Receipts, 1919
1	15	Financial record: Las Olas by the Sea, no date
1	16	Writings by Thomas E. Watson: "Editorial: At Fifty," <i>Watson's Magazine</i> , October 1906
1	17	Writings by Thomas E. Watson: "The Farmers' Union and the Ocala Platform," <i>Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine</i> , September 1907
1	18	Clippings about Thomas E. Watson, 1918, 1920-1921, 1953-1954
1	19	Collected materials: "A Fish Tale" by Oscar Lee; "The Baby Show," [ March 15, 1911?]
1	20	Collected material: Clippings, no date

### Collected materials

1	21	Writings about Thomas E. Watson, [1925?], 1965, 1969
1	22	"Memorial Address of Honorable Gordon Lee upon the Life and Character of the Late Senator Thomas E. Watson," delivered in the House of Representatives, February 11, 1923

### Restricted files [Originals]

- 2 1 Correspondence: Thomas E. Watson to James J. Gordy, 1906, 1919-1917, 1920  
[RESTRICTED]
  - 2 2 Writings by Thomas E. Watson: "Here is Our Man for Commissioner of  
Agriculture": Editorial: Typescript, February 17, 1913 [RESTRICTED]
  - 2 3 Correspondence re *The Story of France* by Thomas E. Watson, 1923  
[RESTRICTED]
  - 2 4 Letter fragment: Alice Louise Lytle to [Clifford Near?], ca. 1919  
[RESTRICTED]
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