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## **Guide to the**

### **JACK JOHNSON PAPERS 1943-1996**

**.4 linear ft.**

**Accession Numbers: 9899-27; 9900-08; and 9900-12**

**Collection Number: 21**

**Prepared by Kevin Kendro  
October 1999  
Revised April 2007**

**CITATION: The Jack Johnson Papers, Collection 21, Box number, Folder number,  
Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.**

#### **Biographical Sketch**

Ernest Jackson (Jack) Johnson was born in Windom, Texas, on June 9, 1907. In 1929, at the age of twenty-two, he moved to Irving with his wife, Maurine, and daughter Jean, where he had a contract to manage Mitchell and Norwood Feed and Grain Company. Two other Johnson children, Frances and Charles, would be born in Irving.

At the end of his contract with Mitchell and Norwood in 1933, Johnson decided to open his own store, Johnson Feed Store and Irving Ice House, which he operated until 1954. At that time he sold the business to Grady Jones. During 1931, Mr. Johnson joined the Irving Volunteer Fire Department; he served as chief from 1934-1938. In 1939, Mr. Johnson was elected to the board of the Dallas County Irving Fresh Water Supply District #5. During the later years of the depression, 1939-1940, in addition to owning the feed store, Mr. Johnson worked as an officer for the Dallas County Sheriff's Department.

In 1939, Mr. Johnson was appointed to the Irving City Commission to replace T.F. Haley, who resigned his position as commissioner. Mr. Johnson was elected to a full term on the city commission in 1941. In 1942, he was appointed to complete the term of Mayor C.P. Caldwell, who died in office. Mr. Johnson was elected to two full two-year terms as mayor in 1943 and 1945, serving as mayor of Irving until 1947. During his terms as mayor, mercury street lighting was installed in Irving, scheduled garbage pickup was begun, Senter Park was expanded, State Highway 183 opened, and the WPA street-paving project was completed. After serving as mayor, Mr. Johnson was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Irving Independent School District in 1948.

In 1953, Mr. Johnson sold his feed store and turned to full-time police work with the Dallas County Sheriff's Department. He worked as a sheriff's deputy into 1959, when he

took a position as an investigator in the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, a job he held until 1966. In addition to working for the sheriff's department during the 1950s, Johnson was also partners in Johnson and Keeling Motors, which sold new and used cars in Irving.

In June of 1966, Jack Johnson was appointed Constable in Precinct 8, which included Irving. In November of that year, he was elected to finish the term, which expired in 1968. Mr. Johnson sought and won re-election in 1968 and 1972. In 1976, the precincts were redistricted, and Irving became a part of Precinct 2. Mr. Johnson ran for office again in 1976, but was defeated. In 1977, Mr. Johnson took the position of Chief Deputy Constable for Precinct 2, a position he held until he retired in 1978.

In addition to his private and public business, Mr. Johnson was: a charter member and past president of the Irving Chamber of Commerce; a charter member of the Irving Rotary Club; a fifty-year member of the Irving Masonic Lodge #1218; a Past Patron and fifty-year member of the Irving Eastern Star, Chapter 777; and a member of the Irving Shrine Club-Hella Temple. Mr. Johnson was also a recipient of the Irving High Spirited Citizen award in 1993 and a long-time member of the First Baptist Church of Irving.

Jack Johnson died on November 19, 1996, at the age of 89.

#### **Sources:**

The Jack Johnson Papers.

Rice, Joseph. *Irving: A Texas Odyssey*. Chatsworth, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1989.

Halsey, Nancy. "Irving Heritage." The Jack Johnson Papers.

Johnson, Jack. Oral interview with Jack Johnson conducted, by Estelle Bates and Tad Howington, January 22, 1986. Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.

#### **Series Description**

The Jack Johnson Papers is arranged in five series:

Series I. Business and Political Career, 1943-1996. .2 linear ft. (7 folders, including 2 ledgers).

Arranged by subject. Newspaper clippings, correspondence, business records, business and political cards, and ledgers relating to Johnson's businesses and his political career.

Series II. Personal Papers, 1968-1991. .5 linear ft. (7 folders).

Arranged by subject. Newspaper clippings, correspondence, and membership cards relating to clubs and organizations to which Mr. Johnson belonged; also biographical information; and real estate papers.

Series III. Newspaper Clippings, 1973-1989. .1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Arranged chronologically. Clippings covering various Irving events such as the publication of an Irving history book and a dinner for past Irving mayors.

Series IV. Photographs, 1930s-1990s. .1 linear ft. (1 folder)  
Negatives and photos of Jack Johnson and related subjects.

Series V. Artifacts. .1 linear ft. (1 folder)  
Lapel buttons, campaign sign, assorted ephemera.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Jack Johnson Papers is contained in one manuscript box and space in Oversize Box 1 and Newspaper Cabinet Drawer 16. The collection is arranged in five series and consists of newspaper clippings, correspondence, business records, personal papers, business and political cards, and artifacts.

Series I, Business and Political Career, contains newspaper articles relating to Jack Johnson's terms as mayor and as constable; ledgers regarding Johnson's auto business; expense reports to Dallas County; correspondence; business cards advertising Johnson's Feed Store and Johnson and Keeling Motors; and cards and stationery relating to Johnson's terms as constable and chief deputy constable.

Series II, Personal Papers, contains material relating to Jack Johnson's involvement in the First Baptist Church of Irving, the Irving Rotary Club, the Masons, the Rotary Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. Also included are Johnson's personal real estate papers and biographical information. The real estate papers relate mainly to Johnson's property at 407 E. Irving Blvd. at the corner of Britain and Irving Blvd. He purchased the property in 1940, and moved his feed store to this location.

Series III, Newspaper Clippings, consists of several articles about events in Irving. Among these is the publication of an Irving history book, 1986, the retirement of three longtime Irving Bank & Trust executives, 1975, and a dinner for Irving's past mayors, 1987.

Series IV is made up of photographs of Jack Johnson in the Independence Day parade, July 4, 1993. The series also contains 35mm negatives of Johnson family photos, the volunteer fire department, and Masonic related groups. These negatives have been scanned and converted into positive digital images. They can be found in the Jack Johnson electronic file. Also in the file is a photocopy of a photo of the Irving Volunteer Fire Department, 1937, and an identification sheet.

Series V, Artifacts, consists of nametags from Masonic and Rotarian events, a campaign yard sign and other material. See the container list for a complete listing.

The material was in no particular order when received. The processing archivist determined the order of the collection. The Johnson family donated additional material relating to Jack Johnson to the Archives after the original donation had been processed. The new material was incorporated into the collection and the finding aid revised in April 2007.

### **Provenance Statement**

Mrs. Mattie Johnson, Mr. Charles Johnson, and Mrs. JoAnn Johnson, wife, son, and daughter-in-law of Jack Johnson, donated the Jack Johnson Papers to the Irving Archives in

January 1999. Two additional donations were made by Charles and JoAnn Johnson on November 4, 1999, and November 12, 1999. Prior to its donation to the Irving Archives, the material was in the donor's possession.

### **Literary Rights Statement**

Permission to publish from the Jack Johnson Papers must be obtained from the Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.

### **Note to Researcher**

See also:

Special Collection 1 City of Irving Commission/Council Minutes

Special Collection 2 City of Irving Ordinances

Collection 6 Irving Chamber of Commerce Scrapbooks

### **Container List**

#### **Series I. Business and Political Career, 1943-1996**

##### Box 1

##### Folder

- 1 Automobile Business and Sheriff's Deputy, 1958-59 and 1971-73  
Contains a ledger with information on automobile sales at Johnson and Keeling Motors in the late 1950s, names, addresses, and location notes on individuals regarding Johnson's police work from the late 1950s, and two entries from the 1970s regarding the feed store.
- 2 Automobile Business, 1959  
Contains a ledger of payment schedules on cars purchased at Johnson and Keeling Motors and an inventory of autos sold in the first half of 1959.
- 3 Constable, 1966-1978  
Contains an election return sheet from the 1966 general election for the office of constable; invitations to open houses at the Dallas County Government Building in Irving; a certificate of election from 1972; a Justices of the Peace and Constables Association of Texas annual convention program; correspondence from other Dallas County offices; and Justices of the Peace and Constables Association of Dallas County membership card, 1978.
- 4 Constable, 1967-1974  
Contains car allowance requests and reimbursement reports for travel expenses.
- 5 Constable, 1969-1974  
Contains newspaper articles regarding Jack Johnson and the constable's office.
- 6 Constable, 1976 and 1977

Contains the forms deputizing Jack Johnson as Deputy Constable for Precinct 2.

7 Mayor, 1943, 1987, and undated

Contains a copy of an article and an advertisement from the October 1, 1943, Irving News-Record regarding Johnson as mayor and Johnson's Feed Store. The original newspaper that the article was in has been encapsulated and placed in the Newspaper Cabinet Drawer 16. Also included is an invitation to a dinner honoring past Irving mayors and a newspaper photograph of Johnson and several ex-mayors.

**Series II. Personal Papers**

8 Masonic Order, 1968-1991

Contains certificates, programs, and cards from various Masonic events.

9 Baptist Church Publications, 1969-1973

Contains pages from the Baptist Standard.

10 Rotary Club, 1977

Contains a section from the Irving Daily News regarding the Rotary District Conference held in Irving in 1977.

11 Irving Chamber of Commerce, 1938 and 1982

Contains a letter of invitation to attend the state of the city address, 1982; and a membership card, 1938.

12 Biographical Information, 1929-1996

Contains a brief autobiography of Mr. Johnson; an obituary for Jack Johnson's brother, and for Jack Johnson; a Texas Power & Light receipt, 1929; a picture of the Irving Board of Education, 1947; a newspaper photo of Irving's living past mayors, 1987; and an article on the film The Irving Story, 1987.

13 Business and Political Cards

Contains business and political cards from Johnson's various businesses and the constable's office. Also contains a Johnson's Feed Store envelope and Johnson's constable letterhead.

14 Real Estate Papers, 1939-1971

Contains real estate documents relating to Johnson's ownership of Lots 3, 6, and 7 in the Near-by-Irving subdivision, 1939-1971; his purchase of a lot in the Bellview Addition of Irving; a lot in Henderson County, Texas, 1970; the purchase of a lot in the Owen subdivision in Irving, 1954; property insurance policies; and a chattel mortgage on a delivery truck, 1937.

**Series III. Newspaper Clippings, 1973-1989**

15 Newspaper Clippings, 1973 and 1989

Contains the editorial page from the Dallas Morning News from February 23, 1973; an article from the Irving Daily News from June 28, 1976, concerning councilman Jim Parks; photocopies of newspaper photos of Irving Bank & Trust through the years. Also included are section from the Irving Daily News regarding the retirement of three Irving Bank & Trust officers and articles from the Irving Daily News regarding the release of the book Irving: A

Texas Odyssey.

#### **Series IV. Photographs, 1930s-1990s**

##### 16 Photographs, 1930s-1990s

Contains five photos of Jack Johnson riding in the Independence Day parade in 1993 and 19 negative images (35mm) of Jack Johnson through the years, the Johnson home, the volunteer fire department members, 1937, and Masonic groups. Also included is a sheet identifying the people in the negative of the volunteer fire department. The negatives have been scanned and converted into positive digital images and are in the Jack Johnson electronic file.

#### **Series V. Artifacts**

##### 17 Artifacts

Consists of a Chief Deputy name plate, an Irving Shrine Club name tag, two First Baptist Church 80th anniversary name tags, a Rotary International name tag, a program from Oaklawn Jockey Club, a tablet in the shape of a can promoting W.E. Garrett and Sons snuff, and a WWII savings bond book. Also included in the series is a 1963 Irving city map and an election campaign sign. The map has been placed in the Irving Archives map collection. The yard sign has been placed in Oversize Box 1.

#### **Oversize Box 1**

##### Campaign Sign

A Jack Johnson election campaign yard sign.