Overview of the Collection

Jonathan Bourne papers was a politician in Oregon at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1885 and 1897, he was a member of the Oregon House of Representatives, and was elected U. S. Senator in 1906. Considered a progressive, Bourne was a founder and president of the National Progressive Republican League in 1911 and organized the Republican Publicity Association in 1912. Most of the collection consists of U. S. Senate correspondence and case files. The Senate case files relate to topics which arose during Bourne's term of office, ranging from problems with the apple crop, through management of Indian affairs and reservations, to construction of public buildings, bridges and other projects in Oregon. There are folders on such issues as child labor, conservation, Chinese exclusion, and land law.

Repository

University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.
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Eugene OR
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Access Restrictions

Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room. Collection or parts of collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives in advance of your visit to allow for transportation time. Glass plate negatives and lantern slides are restricted due to the fragility of the format. All decisions regarding use will be at the discretion of the curator for visual materials.

Additional Reference

See the Current Collection Guide for detailed description and requesting options.

Languages

English

Sponsor

Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
Jonathan Bourne was a native of New Bedford, Massachusetts, and was educated at Harvard University. He came to Portland, Oregon in 1878 and practiced law for eight years. He then became active in mine and real estate speculation and Republican politics. In 1885 and 1897, he was a member of the Oregon House of Representatives from Multnomah County, and from 1888 to 1892, a member of the Republican National Committee. An ardent free silver proponent, Bourne supported Bryan in 1896 presidential race. He favored direct election of senators, and was himself elected U. S. Senator in 1906, but was not re-elected in 1912. He led the movement for a presidential preference primary in Oregon; a system adopted in 1910. Considered a progressive, Bourne was a founder and president of the National Progressive Republican League in 1911 and organized the Republican Publicity Association in 1912.


Content Description

The Senate case files contain correspondence, memoranda and data on topics which arose during Bourne’s term of office, ranging from problems with the apple crop, through management of Indian affairs and reservations, to construction of public buildings, bridges and other projects in Oregon. There are folders on such issues as child labor, conservation, Chinese exclusion, and land law. The case files are divided, roughly, into 1907-1910 and 1911-1913 periods, with alphabetical arrangement by subject. They are followed by five folders containing the 1912 (unsuccessful) campaign papers.

The Senate appointment files include requests for appointment to federal jobs in Oregon, most often the post office. The files, divided into two sections, for 1910-1912 and 1907-1909, are alphabetical by name of the Oregon post office, or by the position sought (i.e. National Bank examiner).

Both the Senate case and appointment files are in their original office folders, arranged and described by Bourne’s staff members.

The "miscellany" section probably comprises material added to the collection at a date later than the original gift. It includes a variety of materials (letters, memoranda and printed matter) regarding legislative issues in which Bourne was deeply involved during his political career, such as direct primaries and election of senators, the initiative and referendum process and the parcel post program. There are also political brochures and pamphlets, tearsheets, clippings and speeches, mainly from Bourne’s active political years.

Some biographical material is included, most notably contained in the correspondence and research of Albert H. Pike (box 34). The collection ends with miscellaneous volumes, including the National Republican League cash book for 1911-1913 and 15 scrapbooks of national and state press news clippings regarding Bourne’s political activities and events of the time. (There are, in addition, three unbound portions of scrapbooks.)

The bulk of this collection is comprised of correspondence and case files. Incoming correspondence appears first, with individual files for each major correspondent and several folders at the beginning of each letter of the alphabet for minor correspondents for that section. Box 15 contains files from Bourne’s office for the period 1893-1935, plus 1906 campaign correspondence and a variety of business materials.

There are two cartons of outgoing correspondence from Bourne, arranged chronologically, but most of the outgoing correspondence is contained in the 61 letterpress volumes. These volumes have a general chronological order, but some overlap each other, a few focus on specific subjects (politics).
and several contain the letters of member of Bourne's staff, i.e. Herbert E. Thompson and Ida M. Arneson.

A wealth of information is available in the correspondence files; the letters are often long and detailed account of events in the political and business worlds of the time. Bourne's mining interests are intertwined with this material; a glance at the incoming major correspondents section will provide names such as First Thought Silver Mining Company, Bunker Hill and Sullivan Mining and Concentrating Company and Eureka and Excelsior Consolidated Gold Mining Company, supplying the keys to other correspondence in the field. (Bourne's mining interests and records comprise another collection, BX 187, the Bourne Mining Papers.)

The letterpress volumes of outgoing correspondence are followed by the Senate correspondence files, from the periods 1907-1910 and 1911-1913. These letters deal mainly with request for federal appointments, presidential pardons, pension claims, etc., but reveal some interesting aspects of life of the period. There are, for example, a number of request for salary raises for women working in the federal agencies; the correspondents charge that even though the women were capable, they were paid less than men at comparable jobs.

The one microfilm in Box 26, of materials from the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley, contains correspondence, basically on Republican party activities, between Bourne and John D. Works and Chester H. Rowell. Works provided Bourne with memoranda on politics in California and activities of the Democratic party from a Republican standpoint.

The photographs include negatives and prints, many by the Angelus Studio, circa 1910-1940s.

Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

Description

Guide to the Jonathan Bourne Papers

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
- Campaign literature--United States
- Legislators--Oregon
- Legislators--United States
- Mineral industries--United States
- Progressivism (United States politics)
- Referendum--United States

Personal Names:
- Bourne, Jonathan, 1855-1940

Corporate Names:
- Republican Party (U.S. : 1854- )
Geographical Names:
Oregon--Politics and government--1859-1950
United States--Politics and government--20th century

Form or Genre Terms:
Correspondence
Glass negatives
Negatives
Nitrate negatives

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