

OVERTON BROOKS PAPERS

(Mss 2492, 2520)

Inventory or container List

Compiled by
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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2001

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Proper acknowledgement of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

SUMMARY

Size. 23.5 linear ft; 36 volumes

Inclusive dates. 1897-1961

Bulk dates. 1936-1961

Summary. Personal papers include correspondence, photographs, speeches, display items and printed materials from Brooks' service as United States Congressman from Louisiana's Fourth Congressional District. The collection reflects the Congressman's interest in military affairs, water-related issues, such as flooding and levees, and the development of America's role in aerospace. Also contained in the collection are materials from his WW I enlistment, family life and funeral.

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Citation. Overton Brooks Papers, Mss. 2492, 2520, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Stack Location. Range 35:67-76, 31:81, 50:81 P:15, OS:B, Vault:3

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Thomas Overton Brooks was born on December 21, 1897 in Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana. He attended public school and entered Louisiana State University. His education was interrupted when he volunteered for combat duty during World War I. He received an honorable discharge after serving in France, Belgium and Germany.

After leaving the military service, Brooks returned to LSU and received a B.A. on June 12, 1922 and a law degree (with honors) on June 11, 1923. He passed the bar exam and opened a law office in Shreveport, Louisiana where he was active in the Shreveport community. He was a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, the Masonic Fraternity and a number of veterans' organizations including the American Legion.

In 1936, Brooks was elected to serve his first term in Congress as representative of the Fourth Congressional District. He served in that office for twenty-five years, until his death on September 16, 1961. During his tenure, he was involved in the affairs of the Armed Services, federal flood control and aerospace programs. Brooks was the ranking chair of the Armed Services Committee. He was the first chairman of the newly created Committee on Science and Astronautics in 1959, becoming the first congressman from Louisiana to head a major committee in over 50 years. He was reappointed in 1961. His political support for the position was bipartisan. Shortly before his death, a private industrial firm named him "Space Congressman of the Year."

He was married to the former Mollie Meriwether, and they had one daughter, Laura Anne Brooks.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Brooks Papers date from 1898-1961. The bulk of the collection dates from 1936-1961. It consists of Brooks' personal and professional papers such as correspondence, speeches, printed materials, newspaper clippings and photographs reflecting his involvement with the armed services, aerospace and local Louisiana issues such as flooding. Correspondence includes letters home when Brooks served in Europe during World War I, patriotic defense of America, and his varied congressional interests and responsibilities. Photographs are comprehensive from childhood to death. The collection has many portraits of political and military figures. A large number of images depict Brooks visiting military bases in the United States, Europe and Asia during his tenure as a member of the Armed Services Committee as well as his promotion of the Space Program when he was chairman of the Science and Astronautics Committee. There are family pictures of Brooks with his wife, Mollie Meriwether, his daughter, Laura Anne, and other members of his family and friends. Manuscript volumes include travel diaries, scrapbooks and picture albums representing his work in Louisiana and Washington, D.C. The collection also includes pamphlets, certificates, memorabilia and campaign items that mirror his personal and professional life.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. Correspondence 1918-1970, undated, (3 linear feet)

Early letters consist of personal correspondence and writings. After his election to Congress in 1936, letters concern his political constituency and his congressional activities, especially his interests in the military and space programs as well as water-related issues. A number of letters pertain to the Congressman's death and funeral.

II. Speeches 1916-1961, undated, (3.5 linear feet)

Speeches include a wide variety of topics such as foreign aid, military matters, flood control, emergency preparedness, eulogies and memorials, agriculture, national defense, campaigns, water resources, wire tapping, social security, state's rights, surplus oil, American Legion, National Guard, patriotism, missile defense, the Space Program and Huey Long. Some speeches are handwritten and many have personal notes.

III. Congressional Trips 1944-1955 (1 linear feet)

Materials in Congressional Trips include such items as pamphlets, news clippings, itineraries, speeches, emblems, economic/political assessments of European countries, personal notes and reports on foreign policy. Brooks traveled to Europe, the Far East, the South Pacific, the Soviet Union and Hawaii.

IV. Printed Materials 1918-1970, undated (3 linear; OS 4 linear feet)

Printed materials are wide ranging. They include pamphlets, magazines, certificates, diplomas, journals, the Congressional Record, government bulletins and instructional brochures, newspaper clippings, reports, and maps. **Includes both regular and oversize materials.**

V. Photographs 1898-1961, undated (5.5 linear; OS 2 linear feet)

Photographs include personal/family pictures dating from the Congressman's youth in 1897 to his death in 1961. Many are of his wife and daughter. Congressional images relate to military matters, the space program, water-related issues and his political life. A number of pictures highlight congressional trips to Europe, Asia, the South Pacific and different parts of the United States. There are a number of portraits of important military and political figures as well as images of Mr. Brooks. [Note: Box 17 no longer exists. The photographs have been removed to OS:B]. **Includes both regular and oversize materials.**

VI. Manuscript Volumes 1918-1961, undated (36 volumes)

Manuscript Volumes contain diaries, pictures, news clippings, burial albums, correspondence, personal notes and scrapbooks. They cover politics, congressional interests such as the military, the space program, water-related issues and personal observations.

VII. Display Items 1914-1961, undated (1 linear foot)

Display Items reflect Brooks's professional and personal interests. The artifacts include such things as plaques, groundbreaking shovels, medals, a gavel, ribbon-cutting scissors, German belt buckles, Vanguard Satellite, a Chinese dagger, and White House ink pens.

VIII. Vault 1940-1961, undated (.5 linear feet)

Vault items include correspondence and signatures of U.S. Presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy, Eleanor Roosevelt, Senator Lyndon Johnson, autographs of the first American astronauts, postal covers of important military events, certificates and presidential photographs.

IX. Audio/Visual 1947-1959 (.5 linear feet)

Audio/visual items consist of a tape of a Brooks' speech on "Face the Nation" and a film of the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Shreveport Veteran's Administration Hospital.

INDEX TERMS

1. Aviation

papers of U.S. Congressman include references to military aviation during and after World War II, establishment of air bases, activities of House Armed Services Committee, and early development of U.S. space program

2. Barksdale Air Force Base

letters, newspaper clippings, imprints, photographs, and other items pertaining to establishment and development of Barksdale Air Force Base

3. civil rights 1950s-1961

speeches, clippings, correspondence, and manuscript volumes of former U.S. Congressman pertaining to integration and other civil rights programs

4. Eisenhower, Dwight D. 1956-1960

letters from and references to – see Vault

5. flood control

correspondence, speeches, newspaper clippings and other items from the papers of a former U.S. Congressman pertaining to flood control projects in Louisiana, particularly in the central and northern parts of the state.

6. Johnson, Lyndon B. 1960-1961

letters from and references to – see Vault

7. Kennedy, John F. 1960-1961

letters from and references to – see Vault

8. political campaigns 1936-1960

speeches, correspondence, clippings, photographs and other items pertaining to Louisiana and U.S. national political campaigns.

9. politics 1936-1961

papers of former Louisiana congressman pertain to his career in the U.S. House of Representatives and to various aspects of state and national politics during that time

10. Roosevelt, Eleanor

letters from – see Vault

11. Roosevelt, Franklin D. 1940

letter from October 26, 1940 (Vault); also references to Roosevelt and his policies in collection – see Vault

12. Space and Astronautics Committee 1959-1961
correspondence, speeches, newspaper clippings and photographs pertain to his congressional involvement
13. Shepard, Alan B., Jr. 1961
letter from – see Vault
14. Stephenson, Adlai E. 1956
comments on views of – Memorandum Book, Ms. Vol. #7
15. travel 1947-1957
diaries, photographs, and other items pertaining to official trips made by former U.S. Congressman in Europe, North Africa, and the Far East
16. Truman, Harry S. 1947-1959
letters from – see Vault
17. World War II
correspondence, speeches, clippings and other items pertaining to U.S. military participation in World War II, civilian mobilization, establishment of military bases, veterans' affairs, and postwar military establishment.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u># of Folder(s)</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
35:67	1a	7	Personal correspondence and writings of Brooks, World War I reminiscences, (1918-1932)
35:67	1b	5	Congressional and personal correspondence and writings of Brooks, campaign literature (1937-1951)
35:67	2a	8	Political and congressional correspondence, office memos, congressional bill introduced by Brooks, congressional resolution, invitations, ground water evaluation, press release, voting record of Brooks, campaign literature, Taiwanese postcards (1952-1959)
35:67	2b	4	Campaign correspondence, campaign announcement, congressional newsletters (1960-August 1961)
35:68	3a	7	Funeral items: address lists, sympathy cards, telegrams, correspondence (Sept. 9, 1961-Sept. 16, 1961)
35:68	3b	3	Funeral items: letter of sympathy, telegrams, sympathy cards (Sept. 17, 1961-Sept. 24, 1961)
35:68	4a	8	Funeral items: sympathy cards, letters of sympathy, MEMORIAL ADDRESS SUPREME COURT, STATE of LOUISIANA (Sept. 25, 1961-Dec. 1961)
35:68	4b	5	Correspondence, business cards, campaign literature, invitations, humor, parity formula, speech outlines, sympathy notes, Louisiana State Bar memorial speech (1962-1970, undated)
35:69	5a	12	Speeches (1916-1944)
35:69	5b	4	Speeches (1945-1946)
35:69	6a	9	Speeches (1947-1954)
35:69	6b	4	Speeches (1947-1954)
35:70	7a	8	Speeches (1956-July 1958)

**BROOKS (OVERTON) PAPERS
1897-1961**

**Mss. # 2492, 2520
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LSU LIBRARIES**

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u># of Folder(s)</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
35:70	7b	4	Speeches (August 1958-March 1959)
35:70	8a	7	Speeches (April 1959-c.1960)
35:70	8b	3	Speeches (1960)
35:71	9	8	Speeches (July 1960-1961, undated)
35:71	10	7	Speeches (undated)
35:71	11a	10	Congressional trips: newspaper clippings, programs, speeches, itinerary, reports, badges (1944-1952)
35:71	11b	5	Congressional trips: notes, press release, post cards (1952-1955)
35:72	12a	9	Congressional Record (1945-1955)
35:72	12b	4	Congressional Record (1956-1957)
35:72	13a	10	Congressional Record (1958-1960)
35:72	13b	3	Congressional Record (1961)
35:73	14a	7	Newspaper clippings, magazine articles (1919-1959)
35:73	14b	4	Newspaper clippings, printed materials (1960-1965, undated)
35:73	15a	5	Pamphlets (1917-1959)
35:73	15b	2	Pamphlets (1960-1962, undated)
35:74	16	2	Periodicals (1920-1961) Certificates (1919-1961, undated)
	17		This box no longer exists. The photographs have been removed to OS:B
35:74	18a	15	Photographs: portraits, WW I, LSU cadets, family, Congressional, WW II (1898-1939)

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35:74	18b	14	Photographs: congressional, WW II, family, travel, military (1940-1947)
35:74	18c	28	Photographs: congressional, ground- breaking, travel, military (1948-August 1952)
35:74	18d	24	Photographs: congressional, travel, military, flooding (September 1952-June 1957)
35:75	18e	23	Photographs: congressional, military, VA hospital dedication, conventions, meetings (July 1957-1958)
35:75	18f	21	Photographs: congressional, military, travel, meetings, portrait (1959, 1950s)
35:75	18g	8	Miscellaneous (photographs and other items removed from Boxes 18A-F): military and congressional pictures, X-15 budget
35:75	19a	28	Photographs: congressional, military, meetings, NASA, portraits, KKK, awards (1960)
35:75	19b	41	Photographs: congressional, military, awards, photographic plate, parade float, NASA, banquets, funeral (July 1960-1961, undated)
35:75	19c	27	Photographs: congressional, military, meetings, banquet, travel, family (undated)
35:75	19d	35	Photographs: congressional, military, portraits, awards, meetings, NASA (undated)
35:76	19e	22	Photographs: (photographs removed from Boxes 19A-D): congressional, military, family, portraits (undated)
35:76	20		22 items, Medals (1924-1960, undated)
35:76	21		7 items, Maps (1918-1945, undated)
35:76	22		31, items Display items (1914-1961, undated)
31:81	23		Film: "Face the Nation," (March 1, 1959)

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31:81	24		Sound recording, (December 10, 1947)
31:81	25		3, items Plaques, (1950-1961)
31:81	26		3, items Plaques, (1959, undated) 8, items Shovels, pick axe, key (1948-1960)
P:15		36 volumes	Volumes: scrapbooks, diaries, photos, personal notes, news clippings (1918-1961, undated)
Vault-3	1		Autographed presidential photographs, Harry Truman (2). (1949, undated)
Vault-3	2	4	Correspondence (1940-1961, undated), postal covers (1959-1961), certificate (1951), presidential signature (undated)
OS:B	1a		Oversize photographs: presidential class; National Convention of the National Rivers and Harbors Congress (1944-1961)
OS:B	1b		Oversize photographs: state and national government, military, and portraits (1936-1961, undated)
OS:B	2	6	Oversize materials: certificates, newspaper, maps and other printed materials (1915-1961, undated)