

Hilda Moss Papers
(Benjamin Scott Magruder Collection)

Mss. 4425

Inventory

by
Luana Henderson

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

2005

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SUMMARY

Size	2.5 linear ft.
Geographic Locations	Louisiana
Inclusive Dates	1921-1975
Bulk Dates	1926-1940
Languages	English
Summary	Collection consists Federal Emergency Relief Administration procedural papers; social worker's notebooks and fieldnotes; printed items on public aid and Louisiana politics; La. Highway Commission budgets; personal correspondence. Printed material and scrapbooks also report on WPA work programs, World War II, and the LSU Board of Supervisors.
Access Restrictions	None
Copyright	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries
Citation	Benjamin Scott Magruder Collection, Hilda Moss Papers, Mss. 4425, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
Stack Locations	109:24; OS:M

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in January 1933, 15 million Americans were unemployed due to the economic collapse of the Great Depression. Businesses and banks closed; production and sales of goods and services were severely reduced. Many lost their jobs, their savings and homes, and looked to the government for aid. However, little emergency relief or direction reached the state level. As a solution, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) was created on May 22, 1933. The purpose of FERA was to work cooperatively with state government, providing federal grants for relief purposes. Hilda Moss, as a social worker for the East Baton Rouge Parish Relief Fund, worked under the direction of FERA and the Louisiana State Dept. of Public Welfare in providing social services to residents of East Baton Rouge Parish. She also served as a Commissioner of Elections, Precinct No. 9, Ward 2 in Baton Rouge. Hilda Moss was married to Ashton J. Moss of Baton Rouge, La.

The Hilda Moss Papers were donated in the name of Benjamin Scott Magruder.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Papers relate primarily to the management of relief services in Louisiana under the direction of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration during the Great Depression. The agency provided specific instructions and guidelines on procedures and policies through its bulletins (1936-1937), circulars and directives (1935-1936, undated), and manuals (1938, undated). New York, Illinois and Louisiana legislative material reflects the development and operation of state relief agencies and programs (June 18, July 5, 1935, undated). Printed material contains booklets, newspapers, clippings, handbills, broadsides, and newsletters that pertain primarily to relief services and Louisiana politics during the 1920s-1930s. Financial papers relate to budgets of the Louisiana Highway Commission (1930-1931), East Baton Rouge Parish employees (1939, undated), La. State Parks and Recreation Commission (1968; 1971), and the La. State Treasurer's annual report (1931). Legal documents [photocopies] consist of a land lease (1929) in Vermilion Parish, and a contract regarding the development of Fort Macomb, La. (undated). Correspondence of Hilda Moss relates to social work, professional development, and her appointment as Commissioner of Elections. Letters of Ashton J. Moss are of a political nature (1927, 1935), and reflect his support for O. H. Simpson. Scrapbooks (1926-1940) are comprised of newspaper reports on WPA work projects, state and local politics, LSU Board of Supervisors, and World War II.

LIST OF SERIES

- Series I.** FERA procedural papers, 1936-1937.
- Series II.** Printed items, 1927-1975.
- Series III.** Financial and legal papers, 1921-1931, 1968-1972.
- Series IV.** Personal papers, 1926-1970.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**Series I. FERA procedural papers, 1936-1937.**

This series consists of bulletins, circulars, directives, and instructional material relating to the management and distribution of funds, relief services, and employment in Louisiana under the direction of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Bulletins (1936-1937) detail eligibility requirements for children, and individuals who are elderly, unemployed, or have medical needs. They provide guidelines for instructing clients on budget management and nutrition; burial insurance; rules governing the Civilian Conservation Corps (March 20, 1937); and instructions for completing required forms. Circulars and directives (1935-1936, undated) state the policies and procedures for the preparation of proper forms; case management; eligibility; mental health and WPA employment (Oct. 17, 1936). Papers contain New York, Illinois, and Louisiana legislation related to the establishment and operation of state relief agencies and programs (June 18, July 5, 1935, undated); and Hilda Moss' fieldwork notebook (1935) and notes (undated) give insight into social work. An unbound manual for the La. Dept. of Public Welfare (Oct. 1, 1938) details all policies and procedures for administering services; another unbound volume provides step-by-step instructions for completing necessary forms, as well as explaining terminology and eligibility requirements of applicants for social services or WPA employment. **Note:** Fieldwork notes retained in original order.

Series II. Printed items, 1926-1975.

Printed material contains published booklets, summaries, reports, newsletters, political handbills and broadsides, brochures, and programs. Booklets, summaries and reports relate to unemployment relief and welfare agencies during the depression of the 1930s. They include *Work Relief, a Memorandum on Work as a Means of Providing Unemployment Relief* (June 1931) and *Unemployment Relief Experience, a Monthly Summary for Public and Private Family Welfare Agencies* (July 5, 1933). *Procedures in Giving Relief to Families of the Unemployed* (May 1932), published by the Family Welfare Association of America, details procedures for assessing immediate needs and providing financial assistance and guidance. The *Handbook for Agencies Selecting Men for the Civilian Conservation Corps* (July 1, 1935) issued by the U. S. Dept. of Labor details the function of the Dept. of Labor, standards for eligibility and selection into the program, camp life and the work program, and the responsibilities of selecting agencies. The *Monthly Report of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration* (June 1935) discusses the allocation of funds, grants, work relief program, distribution of commodities, and tables showing number of cases, monthly benefits, relief to urban areas, and operating expenses. *Changes During November 1934 in Different Types of Public and Private Relief in Urban Areas* (Nov. 10, 1934; Jan. 15, 1935), issued by Dept.

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of Labor, Children's Bureau, provides tables and graphs on expenditures and number of cases. *Concerning Workers Education* (Oct. /Nov. 1934, Dec. /Jan. 1934/5) distributed by the Division of Emergency Educational Programs, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, contains news items of workers classes and resident schools nationwide, information on teaching materials, and articles contributed by individuals active in workers' education. *A Study of Social Security Bill in Louisiana* (ca. 1936) lists committees, gives the historical development of Social Security, the bill creating the Louisiana Dept. of Public Welfare, and procedures and requirements for providing aid to various groups, and providing for public health. In addition, there is the *Laws Relating to U.S. Veterans' Bureau and War Risk Insurance* (1925), compiled by the House of Representatives. **Note:** Booklets are arranged alphabetically by title.

Newsletters include issues of *Weekly Unity* (March 9, 1935), a Unity School of Christianity publication; *The Compass* (Oct. 1935) an American Association of Social Workers publication; and *The Warrington Messenger* (Jan./Feb. 1935), which contains articles on New Orleans Mardi Gras. Reprints from the Baton Rouge *State-Times* concerns the development of sulfur resources in Iberia Parish, La. (May 22, 1931), and the New Orleans *Times Picayune* (Nov. 19, 1927) report on a dispute between Huey Long and Leo Ernst. Another reprint taken from the *Management Digest* reports on the St. Francisville, La. paper mill (ca. 1950). Additionally, there are lists of publications of the Family Welfare Association of America (undated), instructions for commissioners and voters, a brochure, *Child Welfare in the Economic Security Program* (1935). Another brochure advertises the Southwest Social Service Institute at Camp Waldemar, Tex. (1935). Most newspapers (1927-1933; 1940-1941; 1960) and clippings (1926-1975, undated) reflect the political environment in Louisiana during the Huey P. Long era.

Political broadsides include a campaign poster for Gov. Oramel Hinckley Simpson; Huey P. Long's proposal for road improvements (ca.1928); and John L. Wells' criticism of Gov. Oscar K. Allen and A. P. Tugwell (ca. 1932). Handbills relate to the gubernatorial election between O. H. Simpson and Huey P. Long (1927-1928); and include Edwin Gary's open letter supporting Long (Nov. 22, 1927). Other election material contains sample ballots (1928, 1968) and instructions for commissioners and voters (undated). Printed material also has reading lists for social workers (ca. 1935), programs to the inaugural ceremonies for Gov. Sam Jones (1940) and LSU commencement (Jan. 24, 1961). Graphic material consists of a group photograph taken at the Southwest Social Service Institute, Camp Waldemar, Tex. (1934), a blueprint of the Louisiana 3rd congressional district (Sept, 24, 1935), and a state map showing illiteracy rates in Louisiana by parish (undated). Additional maps include Baton Rouge maps produced by the Holsom Bread Co. (ca. 1930s), a map fragment of Baton Rouge (undated), and maps of Louisiana paved roads (1931) and the state highway system (April 20, 1930).

Series III. Financial and legal papers, 1921-1931, 1968-1972.

Financial papers are comprised of the monthly budget statements for the Louisiana Highway Commission, showing employee job titles, salaries and expenses (May, Nov.

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1930; Jan., April, Aug. 1931); a budget statement for East Baton Rouge Parish employees (undated); salary schedule for East Baton Rouge Parish (1939). Other items in this series include poll tax receipts (Dec. 14, 1921, Dec. 27, 1924), the La. State Treasurer annual report (1931); budget estimates and requests for the La. State Parks and Recreation Commission (1968, Jan. 15, 1971); and a financial report for Grace Episcopal Church, St. Francisville, La. (1971). Payroll cards (1931) and a salary audit for two African American chauffeurs employed by the La. Highway Commission (undated) are related to a printed open letter by John L. Wells (ca. 1932) criticizing their employment. Legal papers deal with a land lease [photocopy] (Jan. 29, 1929) in Vermilion Parish to the United Oil & Gas Syndicate originally drawn up Aug. 28, 1924, its transfer to Jefferson Oil & Development Co., and a later to the Jefferson Lake Oil Co. in 1928. An incomplete contract [photocopy] between by the La. State Parks and Recreation Commission details conditions for the development of Fort Macomb, La. (undated).

Series IV. Personal papers, 1926-1970.

Correspondence and scrapbooks comprise most of this series. Letters written by Hilda Moss' husband, Aston J. Moss, are of a political nature (1927, 1935), offering suggestions for the campaign of Gov. O. H. Simpson, and commenting on its progress. He discusses "big business" and the working class (Aug. 31, 1927); the anti-Long faction and friction over Huey P. Long's pension law (Jan. 28, 1935). Letters appointing Hilda Moss to the post of Commissioner of Election for Precinct No. 9, Ward 2 in East Baton Rouge (March 7, 26, 1931). Letter states determining factors for closing cases (Sept. 4, 1935), a telegram requesting the number of musicians on relief, both white and African American (Nov. 8, 1935), salary scale for employees in the Dept. of Public Welfare, and an unsigned draft accusing Fred J. Grace, Register of State Lands, of nepotism and corruption (undated). Other correspondence concerns professional development in the social work (April 24, June 10, Oct. 9, 1935) and an anti-tax letter draft (undated). Two unbound scrapbooks (1937-1940) contain Baton Rouge newspaper reports on the construction of the Mississippi River bridge (Jan. 1938) WPA work projects, politics, political scandals, appointments to the LSU Board of Supervisors, agriculture, migrant workers, Social Security, and World War II. A third scrapbook is an issue of *The Survey* (Nov. 15, 1926) interleaved with newspaper clippings (1926-1941). Other items include Hilda Moss' class notes and notebooks for courses in social welfare (1935). **Note:** Class notes retained in original order.

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CONTAINER LIST

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109:24	2	1-21	Series IV. Personal papers, 1927-1970.
OS:M		1	Series II. Printed items and graphic material: Maps, 1927-1935, undated.
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