

John Barber White Papers

This collection contains the papers of local prominent lumberman John Barber White. Mr. White, before his death in 1923, was well known in the historical community, serving as president of the Missouri Valley Historical Society. He also had an extensive personal genealogy collection containing books and manuscripts.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: John Barber White
Title: John Barber White papers
Dates: 1896-1929, bulk 1901-1921
Size: 2 legal size boxes, 36 folders
Location: SC95

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Related collections in other repositories: Missouri Lumber and Mining Company collections are available at Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia (C2557) and at Rolla; Louisiana Central Lumber Company, Clarks, Louisiana, Records, 1901-1956, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia (C3660); doctoral dissertation on J. B. White by John A. Galloway is held by University of Missouri-Columbia's Ellis Library ("John Barber White: Lumberman," call number D13.71961-.G3).

Acquisition information: It appears the John Barber White Papers came to the Library in 1933 when J. B. White's heirs (wife, Emma Siggins White; daughters, Arabell White Shepard and Ruth White Lowry; son Robert B. White) donated his extensive collection of genealogy books to the Kansas City Public Library.

Custodial history: List of books received with donation found in Box 1, Folders 1-5; books cataloged individually. See also SC30-2, John Barber White scrapbook. This may have been a part of the original donation.

Citation note: John Barber White papers (SC95), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

John Barber White (December 8, 1847-January 5, 1923) was a successful lumberman, pioneering conservationist, and passionate genealogist.

White was raised in New York where he began his career in the lumber industry. Seeing an opportunity in the forested regions of Missouri, he moved west in 1879 and helped organize the Missouri Lumber & Mining Company. The company's headquarters were established in Kansas City in 1892. He developed a reputation as a hard worker, square shooter and one of the most "independent and indomitable" characters in the lumber trade. An environmental conservationist "appointed by President Roosevelt as a member of the National Commission on the Conservation of Natural Resources" in 1908, he believed in

removing mature trees carefully to avoid damaging newer growth. White eventually served as president or board member of more than ten lumber and land companies.

The most enduring gift he left to Kansas City came out of his love of genealogy and American history. The Missouri Valley Historical Society was especially active during his presidency from 1912 to 1923. White also conducted much personal genealogical research and spent decades collecting the finest books on genealogy and American history. He and his wife both published works of genealogy. His library contained more than 5,000 volumes, many of them rare, including 100 books on the Civil War alone. His genealogical collection was donated to the Kansas City Public Library in 1933. Accompanying the volumes was a bronze bust of White that still watches those entering the Library's Missouri Valley Room. (Adapted from the department's online biography written by Janice Lee.)

Scope and content note

The original organization having been lost, the collection was arranged by the processor in folders by kind of material. Folders are filed alphabetically and within each category, where appropriate, papers are placed chronologically.

Items found in this collection include correspondence, genealogical notes including pedigrees, wills, and records, pamphlets, photographs, postcards, scrapbooks with newspaper and magazine clippings, a catalog of books; resolutions in memoriam, programs, speeches, and statements. The overwhelming majority of the collection deals with the genealogy of the White family. Other subjects covered at length include the genealogy collection owned by J. B. White, White's work in the lumber industry and in issues of conservation, general biographical information about White, and the family of Mrs. White, the Walkers. Subjects touched upon include the lives of Mr. and Mrs. White's children, their charitable giving, their social life and Mrs. White's volunteer work with numerous organizations, and Mr. White's death.

Of significance in this collection is the history of J. B. White's genealogical research on the White family as presented through detailed correspondence and notes and the view of the conservation movement of the early 20th Century through newspaper clippings and J. B. White's statement to Congress. Also noteworthy is the number of newspaper clippings relating to the Walker family.

Further Research

Beyond this collection, researchers can find information on John Barber White through the library's Local History Database, Online Catalog, Vertical File, Newspaper Clippings Index, and additional special collections detailed below. The Local History Database includes images of White and his residence, a biography and citations to numerous other biographies in books held by the library, and a number of newspaper and magazine citations about him and his family's genealogy. The library also holds a video, *A Place in Time*, by the Historic Kansas City Foundation describing the history of White's residence at 616 E. 36th St. and a few books by White and about the White family genealogy (locations can be found using the library's online catalog). In addition to the three scrapbooks in this collection, the library owns a John Barber White Scrapbook (SC 30-2) which concentrates primarily on newspaper clippings regarding the conservation efforts of White and his contemporaries (including the National Conservation Congress). Information related to White's genealogical work can

also be found in the library's Missouri Valley Historical Society Records collection (SC 7), which includes the time of his presidency, 1913-1923.

Collection Inventory

Folder Inventory

Box 1

Folders 1–5 - Book Donation Catalog

- Original catalog of J. B. White's genealogical book collection upon donation to KCPL.
- Folders 1-3 contain original pages (1-59, 60-119, and 120-193, respectively).
- Folders 4-5 contain photocopied pages (1-100, 101-193, respectively).

Folder 6 - Correspondence - Genealogy, 1900 - March 1901

- Contents: Handwritten letters to J. B. White and typewritten copies of some letters, often including handwritten copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: John Holding, Vicar of Stotfold, England; Mary E. Hall, Brookline, Mass.; Frances B. Troup, England
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, including registers of Whites of Dorchester (1600s) and Iddenden and Hosmer families of Kent (1550-1678)

Folder 7 - Correspondence - Genealogy, April - December 1901

- Contents: Handwritten letters to (and one from) J. B. White and typewritten copies of some letters, often including handwritten copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: John Holding; Mary E. Hall; John Matthews, London; Charles H. Browning, Montgomery Co., Pennsylvania; Horatio Gates, Milwaukee; Edward Scott, London; John William White, Cambridge, Mass. Includes one letter from J. B. White to cousin, Myra L. White.
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, including pedigrees drawn from the wills of members of the White family in the 1600s

Folder 8 - Correspondence - Genealogy, 1902

- Contents: Handwritten letters to J. B. White and typewritten copies of some letters, often including handwritten copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: John Holding; Mary E. Hall; Frances Rose Troup (same as Frances B. Troup)
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, including information on the Bold, Leas, and Standish families (1400s), White family (1500s-1600s)

Folder 9 - Correspondence - Genealogy, 1903

- Contents: Handwritten and typewritten letters to J. B. White and typewritten copies of some letters, often including handwritten copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: John Holding; Mary E. Hall; Frances Rose Troup

- Subject matter: White family genealogy, including wills of Whites of Worcester and Dorset (1500s), pedigree of Bulkley, Prescott, and Warren families (1200s-1700s), registers of Wedmore (1500s-1600s)

Folder 10 - Correspondence - Genealogy, 1904

- Contents: Handwritten and typewritten letters to J. B. White and typewritten copies of some letters, often including handwritten copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: John Holding; Mary E. Hall; Frances Rose Troup; Julie F. Daniels, Newton Center
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, including records of White marriages and baptisms, 1565-1650. In addition to the name White, the Prescotts of Standish (1500s-1600s) are discussed.

Folder 11 - Correspondence - Genealogy, 1907 - 1910

- Contents: Typewritten letters to J. B. White and typewritten copies of some letters, often including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: J. Henry Lea, Brookline, Mass.; Myra L. White
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, includes copies of "Chancery Proceedings before 1714" for John White of South Petherton and "Wills Read for Whites 1529-1585, 1538-1593"

Folder 12 - Correspondence - Genealogy, 1911 - 1917

- Contents: Typewritten letters to J. B. White (and one from his business) and typewritten copies of some letters, often including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Written by: J. Henry Lea; Ezra S. Stearns, Fitchburg; Myra L. White; William D. Hayes, Bellows Falls, Vt.; Lillian S. Loveland, Lincoln, Nebr.; Louis Honck, Missouri State Normal School. One letter from Mo. Lumber & Land Exchange Co. to J. Henry Lea.
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, including "De Banco Rolls, Searches for White of Somerset", "Memoranda concerning history of Rindge, N. H. and various families"; and Missouri history and development.

Folder 13 - Correspondence - Genealogy, undated

- Contents: One handwritten letter to J. B. White
- Written by: Miss Aury (?) Eleanor E. Hull
- Subject matter: Request for information about White family genealogy

Folder 14 - Correspondence - Personal, 1920 - 1921

- Contents: Typewritten letters between J. B. White and his wife
- Written by: John B. White, Emma S. White
- Subject matter: Charitable giving and philanthropy, organizational activities (historical society, etc.)

Folder 15 - Miscellaneous

- Chattel Mortgage and check from The Pageant Film Company to J. B. White regarding film *Two Girls and One Bonnet*, 1916

- Menu for dinner to Mr. Bernard N Baker, September 9, 1910 (attendants signatures on back, including J. B. White's)
- Memorial on the passing of J. B. White by the Kansas City Chapter of The Sons of the Revolution, February 21, 1923
- Resolutions of Missouri Valley Historical Society on the Death of Capt. John B. White, June 30, 1923
- Letter from Herbert S. Hadley to Nettie Thompson Grove re: Missouri Valley Historical Society Memorial Meeting in honor of J. B. White, January 25, 1922
- Resolution on the death of J. B. White by seven lumber companies, May 23, 1923
- Poem ("Miss Virginia")
- Announcement for talk by Miss Mary George White on women's role in work of Red Triangle, 1919
- Program for Dedication and Unveiling of N.S.D.A.R. Memorial to Pioneer Mothers, 1929 (from scrapbook)
- Program for Chautauqua Alumni Luncheon, February 15, 1908 (Mrs. J. B. White included on "toasts" schedule) (from scrapbook)
- John Barber White Bookplates (from scrapbook)

Folder 16 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten notes including copies of wills, records, and legal proceedings.
- Dates covered: 1500s-1700s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, mixed group of notes on the White family spanning centuries and oceans (England and America)
- Individual items: extracts of the "De Banco Plea Rolls" of County Somerset, White wills, "Chancery Proceedings before 1714, White vs. White", inventories of estate of John White and details of children.

Folder 17 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Dates covered: 1500s-1600s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, covering primarily the White family in England
- Individual items: excerpts from "The Genesis of the White Family", information on the Whites of Somerset, Robert White of Yatley's pedigree (Essex), Stephen White's will, and records from the Commissary of London.
- Other family names: Wynne of Merioneth County.

Folder 18 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees (some from J. Henry Lea and John Holding).
- Dates covered: 1500s-1600s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, covering primarily the White family in England
- Individual items: hand drawn coat of arms of John White of Dorchester, wills and pedigrees of many Whites, "Tentative Pedigree of John White of Lynn, Salem, Lancaster & Wenham."
- Other family names: Allgar of Essex, Loomis (Joseph) of Essex.

Folder 19 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Dates covered: 1600s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, covering primarily the White family in England
- Individual items: "Prerogative Court of Canterbury" records and wills and entries from the "Consistory Court, London" registers.

Box 2**Folder 1 - Notes - Genealogy**

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees.
- Dates covered: 1600s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, covering primarily the White family in England
- Individual items: White wills, excerpts from books on John White, pedigree of the Whites of South Petherton, pedigrees of John White ("the patriarch"), copies of burial registers of the Whites of Hornchurch, list from the Archdeaconry of Buckingham of wills read by for references of Stephen White and Robert Saunders, copies of the Writtle Parish Registers.

Folder 2 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Handwritten notes with some typewritten copies including copies of wills, records, and pedigrees (all by John Holding).
- Dates covered: 1600s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, covering primarily the White family in England
- Individual items: notes and wills "concerning the transportation of Stephen White", many wills and corresponding pedigrees from the Whites of Gloucester, Worcestershire, Somerset, Hampshire, Dorset, Devon, Writtle, etc., John Holding's final, 34 page report on "John White's Ancestors", and J. B. White's "Notes and corrections" on that manuscript.
- Other family names: Roberts, Dennis, Porter, Aylyffe.

Folder 3 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes including copies of records.
- Dates covered: 1600s-1700s (one item from 1800s)
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, covering primarily the White family in America
- Individual items: "Early Settlers of Maryland 1633-1680", excerpt of "Elder John White Memorial", printed copy of parchment appointing John White Lieutenant Colonel of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay (1756), analysis of deed transfer of land in Vermont.
- Other family names: Potter, Barber.

Folder 4 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes including copies of records and pedigrees.
- Dates covered: 1300s-1600s (one item from 1800s)

- Subject matter: Genealogy of family names other than White (presumably related to the Whites), including Bulkeley, Hawarden of Woolston, Rutter/Roter, Bradshaigh, Prescott, Neville of Raby, Fleming, Radcliffe, Lea, Molineux, de Villais, Delliber/Dalliber. Also includes a biography of General William Irvine "War Heroes of Warren County" (1800s)

Folder 5 - Notes - Genealogy

- White Family Directory, 1901 (typewritten, 4 p., includes family members from Alabama, California, Colorado, New York, North Dakota).

Folder 6 - Notes - Genealogy

- Contents: Typewritten and handwritten notes
- Dates covered: 1600s-1900s
- Subject matter: White family genealogy, mixed notes added to the collection August 21, 1995 when sent by Mrs. Margaret A. Roberson of Chattanooga, TN.
- Other family names: Wilder, Thomas, Bulter, Mason

Folder 7 - Pamphlets - Biographical

- "A biographical Sketch of John Barber White", from The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, 1913, 11 p.
- "John Barber White", reprint from The Independent, compiled for Missouri State News Bureau, undated, 2 p.
- "John Barber White 1847-1923", reprint of an article by Nettie Thompson Grove from The Annals of Kansas City, December 1923, 13 p.

Folder 8 - Pamphlets - Miscellaneous

- "Address of President Henry Hopkins of Williams College and Order of Exercises at the Dedication of the Doctor John Franklin White Memorial High School Building", November 2, 1906. (J. B. White had the high school built in his late son's honor.)
- "Address delivered by J. B. White to the Students of Lehigh University", November 15, 1913
- "Statement Given Before Congressional Committee at Washington, D. C., February 14, 1914, by J. B. White, Kansas City, Missouri" (regards issues of conservation in lumbering)
- "Report of the Reunion of John White's Descendents at Salem, Massachusetts on September 1, 1897", 1898.

Folder 9 - Photographs

- Mrs. J. B. White, full length portrait, standing (6" x 9 1/2", back of mount says "616 East 36 st")
- J. B. White, seated portrait, holding rolled paper (4" x 6")
- J. B. White and unidentified young man, seated portrait with young man standing at White's side (7" x 9")
- Young girl with spinning wheel, rocking chair, and table with crockery (2 slightly different images, 6" x 8", one mounted, back of mount says "Dorothy Lisle Bacon, 8 1/2 years old, The cap she wears was worn by her great, great grandmother Walker....")

Folder 10 - Photographs

- Brick building with shop windows and tombstones along front and side (5" x 3 1/2")
- J. B. White seated at desk--perhaps his work office (2 different images, 3" x 3", back of photos says "Jany 10, 1909")
- Lumber industry--high piles of boards and floating logs (2 different images, 3" x 3", back of photos says "Jany 10, 1909")
- Unidentified 4 men and 2 women standing on steps of building--J. B. White is identifiable (3" x 4", handwritten caption says "Hotel Vanlaudingham, West Eminence, Mo., January 3, 1915")
- J. B. White, head and shoulders portrait (2" x 3", oval, front of photo says "John Barber White, Aged 25", back of photo says "March 17, 1872, East Brady, Penn.")
- Handwriting in a book (5 different images, 5" x 7", identified on envelope as "photos of handwriting from So. Petherton")

Folder 11 - Photographs (book)

A homemade book with hand-painted cover and bound with ribbon entitled "Seen and Heard in Grandin." Includes typewritten amusing vignettes about people and happenings around town and a number of photographs (4 1/2" x 3 1/2") with handwritten captions:

- "East side office" (building with people in yard)
- "Road east of dairy farm"
- "'The Girls' September 1896" (ten girls sitting in a room being read to)
- "Little Black near East Grandin" (body of water with trees along sides)
- "Young Ladies Boarding House"
- "One of Grandin's 'town pumps'" (pump surrounded by children)
- "Road along Little Black"
- "Current River near entrance to Jaques Valley"
- "Cabin opposite Hood Place" (cabin with woman sitting on porch)

Folder 12 - Postcards

- Bay View Farms (2 different images, back of one says "Bayview Farms on Lake Chautauqua, Homes John B. White and Family")
- Newport Historical Society
- 5 postcards from France depicting soldiers, war memorials (for 1870s), Le Palais de Justice (all written in French and addressed to Aux Dames de Kansas City, dated 15 and 16 May 1917)
- Unidentified house
- Walker residence (from Emily Walker Stewart (?) to Mrs. White wishing merry Christmas (address provided at top of card: 833 3rd St., Ft. Madison, Iowa, dated December 21, 1908)
- Street on which the Walker residence is located ("This is our street + the last house on the right hand side is our home...")

Folders 13-14 - Scrapbooks (#1)

- Photocopies of a 55 page scrapbook
- Includes newspaper clippings (and a few photos, postcards, caricatures, magazine articles, and announcements)
- Dated primarily November 1915 to February 1919 (with outlying dates 1899, 1903, 1905, 1909, 1913)

Subject matter includes:

- J. B. White's appointment to the Federal Shipping Board; the lumber industry (including timber tariffs and conservation, sales of timber land, competition with concrete industry, lumbermen conventions, memorials of the death of Elijah Bishop Grandin);
- J. B. White's family (including his son, Raymond B. White's career, the war work of Mary George White of Baltimore, memorials to his son, John F. White, the marriage of daughter Arabell White to Alfred T. Hemingway);
- Kansas City's proposed war memorial;
- Individual clippings on "The Scout" sculpture; teacher's salaries; and news of others including Herbert S. Hadley, Reverend Dr. Henry Hopkins, C. C. Wright, and Mrs. William Irvine

Folders 15–16 - Scrapbooks (#2)

- Photocopies of a 60 page scrapbook
- Includes newspaper clippings (and a few photos, postcards, and announcements)
- Dated primarily 1898 to 1907 and 1916 to 1919. Many clippings are undated.

Subject matter is related to Emma Siggins White (J. B. White's wife) and her family, the Walkers, and includes:

- Her genealogy, volunteer, and board work (publications, National American Woman Suffrage Association, Humane Society of Kansas City, Elizabeth Benton Chapter D.A.R.);
- Announcements of social engagements she hosted;
- Milestones in her husband and children's lives;
- News, death, and marriage notices of members of the Walker family;
- Individual clippings on hairstyle fashions in 1907; Conley sisters preventing disturbance of Huron Cemetery (1918); typewritten "Revolutionary War Record of John McCorkle, Ensign" by P. W. Banning, 1910; "Five school teachers housekeeping cooperatively;" Battle of Manila Bay.
- People mentioned in clippings include Dorothy (Walker) Bailey, Gen. Charles Allen Gilchrist, Nannie Miller Walker, Dr. Chalmers Walker, Joseph M. Walker, Caroline Coulter Gamble and Burnett N. Simpson, Dr. John F. White, Raymond B. White, Reverend Hugh K. Walker, Benjamin Baird Siggins (her father), James Hayes Walker, Reverend J. A. McKamy, Dr. B. M. Smith, Adeline Crane (daughter of Judge Matthew R. Walker), Nettie V. Walker, Mary Elizabeth Layton, Edward Walker Harden and Ruth Vanderlip, Frances E. Harden, Ruth White, Martha Beck, Mary Moore Flournoy, Martha Garland Walker Trippe, Martha Maria Walker, Judge S. P. Walker, General William Walker, Gen. James A. Walker, John M. Walker, Emma Walker Herr, Hannah Walker Sampson and Admiral Sampson, Edwin K. Walker, Elizabeth Abernathy and Oscar N. Sohlberg, Mrs. Roy Jones, General John C. Bates, Louisa Marshall, Representative John A. T. Hull, Ephraim Banning, Dr. Charles W. Dabney, Dr. A. T. Still, Sara Judd Greenman, Rev. Dr. George D. Stewart.

Folders 17–18 - Scrapbooks (#3)

- Photocopies of a 53 page scrapbook

- Newspaper clippings (and a few magazine articles, announcements, and a telegram)
- Dated primarily from 1904 to 1909 and 1914 to 1915 (with outlying dates of 1919 and 1929). Many clippings are undated.

Subject matter is related to Emma Siggins White (J. B. White's wife) and includes:

- Her work for genealogy, historical society, women's suffrage, Woman's Division of the Victory Loan Committee, and the Missouri D.A.R.;
- Her alma mater, Chautauqua;
- Her children (Ruth White's work, memorials to her son, John Franklin White);
- Mrs. John R. Walker;
- History and patriotism (U.S. flag and flag day, the Liberty Bell's final journey, the first Kansas capitol building, Betsy Ross and descendents, "Dear Old Missouri" song, Texas history, Battle of Westport, Lincoln's birthday to be made a holiday, Meriwether Lewis, Memorial Day, U. S. Mint, Battle of Yorktown, "Old time facts and fancies" of Kansas City, Napoleon);
- Individual clippings on John R. Walker, S. Emma Walker-Herr, Rachel J. Wilson Albright, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Carver, and Mrs. P. D. Ridenour.

Processed by Missouri Valley Special Collections intern, Rebecca Power, March 2005.