Named after a famous clergyman, Edmund J. James (1855-1925) was born in Jacksonville, Illinois. His father, Colin Dew James, was a minister (and a farmer) who followed a circuit for the Illinois Methodist Conference and his family moved more than twenty times between 1834 and 1864. The family of thirteen children finally settled in 1863 in Bloomington, Illinois, the site of Illinois Normal University, which trained teachers, but which also maintained model grammar and high schools. A restlessness of wandering spirit also characterized James in his pursuit of higher education. After attending Northwestern University for a year, he transferred to Harvard, where again he remained only one year, apparently disappointed at finding the faculty less stimulating than those he had found at Normal's model high school. Traveling to the University of Halle in Germany, James earned his doctorate in 1877 in political economy after only two years. When he had completed his studies, he first served as principal in Northwestern High School (1878-79) and in the Normal Model School (1879-82).

James came to the attention of educators and politicians during the term of his leadership at the Wharton School of Economics in the University of Pennsylvania (1883-95). Like many other political economists of his time, James was a representative of the new or progressive economic view that claimed that the greatest good came not from individual initiative but from the larger social community, whether local, state or national. James became well known for his support of municipal control of utilities and of transportation. He directed extension work at the University of Chicago (1896-1901) and was president of Northwestern University (1902-04). His name was on lists for the United States presidency and senate. He was able to find support for many of his ideas and to put them into practice after he became president of the University of Illinois (1904-20), which transformed Illinois into a modern university.

Many of the earlier materials in the papers relate to Germany, a travel journal, class lecture notes and songbooks (1878, 1886) from his school years; some of the materials may have originated with his wife, Anna Margaret Lange, a German whom he met while at Halle. A manuscript James wrote on University reform in Germany also forms part of the Papers. A Civil War songbook (1883), family accounts book for 1886-1907 and notebooks of his brothers and sisters make up some of the early material (1893-94, 1903). A great proportion of James' personal correspondence was with his family members (1904-20). Notes and sermons by Rev. Elias J. Sarkis, who studied at Andover Theological Seminary are also contained in the papers. In James' diaries (1894-95, 1901-02, 1904-24) can be found notes on his correspondence and interviews with Theodore Roosevelt (1905, 1916).

Writings


Related Sources

Swanson, Richard Allen, "Edmund J. James, 1855-1925: A 'Conservative Progressive' in American


2/5/1

President
Edmund J. James

Personal Correspondence, 1987-1919

Box 1:

Unter-Harz, German mountain views, n.d.
Family accounts book, 1882-87
Woodland Echos songbook, 1878
Das Geistliche Volkslied, religious songbook notes in German, 1886
Class lecture notes in Droysen's Die Gesichle der Revoluntionzeit, 1876-77
War Songs, Civil War songbook, 1883
Sketch books and designs, n.d.
Sermon notes on prayer, Benjamin, Absolom, John, Joseph
ordination, faith, suffering, love, thanksgiving, law and other subjects, mostly by Rev. Elias J. Sarkis (2 folders), n.d.
Transcript of letter from Albert Stetson to Charles F. Adams, Jr., Jan. 14, 1884 on German Education
Municipal regulations of Philadelphia, 1885
Labor Union Scrapbook, 1886-87

Box 2:

Household account book, showing date, item purchased and amount, usually food, 1896-1907
Notes on religious readings, in German, n.d.
Helen James notebook - Latin, Bible scripture, 1903
Herman James notebook - history, Ecole Alsacienne; and drawing book, 1893-94
MSS - University Reform in Germany, n.d.
Notes on Congress and Legislation, comparative government lecture notes, University of Pennsylvania, ca. 1884-87
Scrapbook, including clippings on Wharton School, railroad rates, job offer at Harvard (1890), taxation, speeches, AAAS, municipal charters, 1886-88, 1890-94
List and Order Book, 1888, including lists of books ordered (1888); notes on German universities; financial accounts with friends and relatives (1882-84); journal of German travels (August 1888); notes on Wharton lectures (1889); list of papers published by E.J. James (1887-89); list of books on constitutional law, federal government, and civil service
Notes of Elias J. Sarkis, senior theological student at Andover Theological Seminary on homiletics and pastoral theology

Box 3:

Address Book, 1900-01
Notes on municipal administration, ca. 1901
Notes on legislation and court decisions affecting Chicago, ca. 1899
Chicago street railroads reports, 1898
Scrapbook, 1896-99, containing clippings concerning presidency of University of Cincinnati (1898), programs for social affairs and civic occasions (1896-97), Norman reunion (1897), Mansfield, Ohio Methodism, University of Chicago Teachers College (1898), presidency of University of California (1898), index on back cover.
Commercial Education, 1897
Commission to represent the United States at the Brussels Commercial Instruction Congress, 1898
"Growth of the City of Chicago" report, ca. 1899

Box 4:
Correspondence, 1889, 1891-93, 1896-97, 1901-04, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/16/91</td>
<td>William Pepper</td>
<td>Extension work and Wharton School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/30/91</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/14/91</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/16/91</td>
<td>William B. Harper</td>
<td>Chicago offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/19/92</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/21/92 to</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot; and faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/25/01</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/22/96</td>
<td>John W. Hoyt</td>
<td>National University Committee of One Hundred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/7/01</td>
<td>J. F. Snyder</td>
<td>Belleville and McKendree history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/02</td>
<td>William R. Harper</td>
<td>courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/24/02 to</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>salary due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/02</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/4/02</td>
<td>James B. Angell</td>
<td>Greetings - inauguration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/28/02</td>
<td>Charles W. Eliot</td>
<td>Regret - inauguration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/22/02</td>
<td>Cyrus Northrop</td>
<td>inauguration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25/02</td>
<td>Frank W. Gunsaulus</td>
<td>universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16/02</td>
<td>W. H. Hickman</td>
<td>Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/21/03</td>
<td>William Deering</td>
<td>declines to give 1 1/2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2/03</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Methodist support of Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4/03</td>
<td>N. W. Harris</td>
<td>support of Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/29/04</td>
<td>William R. Harper</td>
<td>friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/04</td>
<td>Stephen A. Forbes</td>
<td>Presidency at Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/16/04</td>
<td>James A. Patten</td>
<td>leaving Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/23/04</td>
<td>N. W. Harris</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Undated miscellany
Receipts, 1901-1910

Box 5:

Personal - Miscellaneous, 1911-13
American Civic Association, 1907-13 (Personal)
Clubs - University of Chicago, 1910-14
  University and others (arranged by town), 1910-13
  University and others (arranged by city), 1910-13
Charles DeGarmo (personal), 1911-12

Box 6:

Personal Correspondence, A-E, August 1904-June 1906
University of Illinois Presidency
Personal Correspondence, F-J, August 1904-June 1906
Ray E. Fuller, 1904-05
Personal, K-N, August 1904-05
A. F. Nightengale - Cook County Superintendent of Schools, 1901-06
Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1904

Box 7:

Personal, A-I, September 1906-January 1907
James J.Breasted, 1906
Lisi Cipriani, September-December 1906
Victor Alderson (State Mining School)
Archaeological Institute of America, 1906-07
September 1906-January 1907, J-K
Marcus Hitch (Gregory Lawson), November-December 1906
Johannes Conrad, September-December 1906
Joseph F. Johnson
Charles W. Needham - Personal
John Martin, June 26, 1906
Ben James
Anthony James
Geroge James
Herman James
John James
Y.M.C.A. Building Fund, 1906-07
Box 8:

Personal, O-W, August 1904-June 1906
, K-Z, January-August 1907
William Ashbrook
Lisi Capriani
James H. Ballard
Else Conrad - Personal, January-August 1907
Charles W. Eliot, Feb. 7, 1907
Anthony James, February-September 1907
Ben James, February-August 1907
Herman James, February-August 1907
George James, June-August 1907
D. S. Lindsay, February-August 1907
Samuel Lindsay
G. H. Longard et.al, newspaper misquote, Feb./March, 1907
Albion B. Small - Presidential Tenure, March 1907
Charles Veronica Brickbat
C. W. A. Veditz
William G. Webster
Richard Waterman

Box 9:

James Personal, A-J, September 1907-January 1908
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Clark Braden
James Bryce, Dec. 9, 1907
Lisi Cipriani
Hamlin Garland
Anthony James
George James
Herman James
Joseph Johnson
Edwin Sparks
Wallace N. Stearns
Simon Patten
Frank Tisdell - University of Wyoming
Taylor & Son - Philadelphia attorneys for James
Charlemagne Tower - Ambassador to Germany
C. W. A. Veditz - George Washington University
Richard Waterman - Boston
Box 10:

James Personal, A-J, January-August 1908
German Book List, 1908
James Personal, K-Z, January-August 1908
Amos Ballin (Sonora Mines)
Rev. Joseph Beech
Lisi Cipriani
Albert Draper
Eastern Trip 1908 (March)
European Junket, 1908
Photo Album of European Trip, 1908
Frank Hamilton - American University
David Hill - U.S. Ambassador to Germany
Anthony J. James
George F. James
John James
M. E. Church - General Conference in Baltimore, May 1908
Lt. Col. W. W. Robinson
Wallace N. Stearns
E. J. James Travel Expenses, 2/1/06 - 6/15/08
C. W. A. Veditz
Miscellaneous, 1908
Prof. George T. Kemp, 1908
University Business

Box 11:

James Personal, A-I, September 1908-January 1909
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Cheesman A. Herrick
Anthony James
George James
Herman James
Eleanor Karsten (A. Booth Co.)
Theodore Roosevelt
Elihu Root
Sonora Central Mines
Copper Mt. Mining and Milling, 1908-11
Box 12:

Personal, A-J, February-November, 1909  
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Boston Trip, October 1909  
New York Trip, August 1909  
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John Harman  
N. W. Harris  
Hingham, Mass. Memorial  
Insurance  
Anthony James  
Herman James  
Joseph Johnson  
Taylor & Son - Philadelphia attorneys  
Raymond Weeks  

Box 13:

Personal, A-J, November 1909-April 1910  
  , K-Z  
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Ralph Bickle  
Edith B. Brown  
Charles L. Burke  
Lisi Capriani  
Charles DeGarmo  
Ben James  
George James  
Helen James  
David Kinley  
Albert Mason  
Pan American Congress  
Simon N. Patten - Society for the Study of National Economy (1885)  
Leo Rowe  
Sonora Mines  
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Francis Thorpe  

Box 14:
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   Mary Casad
   Johannes Conrad
   Charles Deneen
   George F. James
   Herman G. James
   John James
   Joseph Johnson
   Marie Krukenberge
   Col. Ephraim Martin genealogy
   Ella Noel
   Sonora Mines

Box 15:

Miscellaneous Family, 1910-13
Colin D. James - biography, 1910
Helen James, 1910-12
Louise James, 1911-13
George James, 1910-13
Mrs. E. J. James, January 1911-September 1911
Frances James, 1910-12
Ben James, 1911-13
Anthony James, 1911-13
Herman James - job hunt, 1912
Herman James, 1912-13
Genevieve Kuhe (James), 1912
Herman James, 1910-11

Box 16:

James Personal, A, 1912-13
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Edith Brown, 1911-12
Lisi Cipriani, 1911-13
J. Conrad, 1911-13
Signora Clorinda Conte, 1910
John W. Cook - Northern Illinois Normal School, 1911
Thomas Cook & Son (travel), 1911
Thomas H. Cook, 1912-13
Copper Mt. Mining and Milling, 1913
Cozart, James A., 1911-13
Mrs. Harold Ickes (marriage), 1911
James Personal, G-H, 1911-13

Box 17:

Kankakee and Urbana Traction Co., 1912
Marie Krukenberg, 1911-13
James Personal, L-M, 1911-13
Col. E. Martin, 1911-13
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Box 18:

Taylor & Son, Philadelphia
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Mrs. Frances Ten Eick, 1911-13
B. H. Tillotson - Olathe, Kansas (genealogist), 1911-12
R. M. Tingley, 1911
Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, 1911-13
U.S. Geological Survey, 1911
Personal - Union League Club, 1910-13
Blanche Van Kuran, 1910
Virginia Commonwealth, 1911
Clinton Woodruff, 1911-12
Wade Rawson, 1911
Talcott Williams, 1911-12
Graham Taylor, 1905-12
Miscellaneous Personal, 1911-13
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A. Booth Co., 1910-11
William A. Dycke, 1911
Henry M. Echlen, 1911
John W. Barrett, 1910
George Henderson, 1910-11

**Box 19:**

Mrs. Helen Hartley, 1916  
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Louis James, November 1914, October 1915  
Ben James, 10/2/13 - 8/30/16  
George James, 10/24/13 - 8/16/16  
Helen James Wedding, 1915  
Helen J. Frazer, 6/29/14 - 8/23/16  
Emma James, 6/14/14 - 8/29/16  
North Shore Health Resort, 1914  
George E. Frazer, 5/21/15 - 7/15/16  
Ida James, 1914-16

**Box 20:**

Anthony James, January 1914-September 1916  
Herman James - Personal, 10/14/13 - 8/6/16  
Margaret James - Illness and Death, 1914  
Letters of Sympathy, Nov. 13-16, 1914

**Box 21:**

Hingham, Mass., 1916-17  
Illinois State Normal University, 1916-18 - personal  
Illinois Womans College, 1917  
Personal, 1915-16, J-P  
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Edith Brown, 5/1/13 - 7/13/16  
Amelia Bryant, 1/14/14 - 6/26/16  
Charles L. Burke, 9/11/13 - 3/25/16
Mary Casad, 8/20/14 - 6/6/16
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Box 23:

William D. Lewis - Politics, 1915-16
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Martha Herdman, 1914
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Box 24:

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H. H. Rellam, 1914-16
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Box 25:
Mrs. Margaret James, 1916-18
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Box 26:

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Edith B. Brown, 1916-18
George James, 1916-18

Box 27:

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Mary E. Casad, 1916-18
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Chicago Club, 1917-18
Lisi Cipriani, 1917-18
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H. A. Du Pont, 1916-17
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Box 28:

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Box 29:

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Correspondence, D, 1919-20
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Correspondence, E-F, 1918-19
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Goldthwaite, N. E., 1918-19
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Box 30:

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James Registration, 1918-19
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University Club, Chicago, 1918-19
University Club, Champaign, 1918-19
War Work, September-December, 1918
Photocopy of Edmund James' Will, Nov. 12, 1920 - Received from Ohio University Archives, October 16, 1973