

MSS. Collection #42

**James Henry Shaw Family Papers, 1895-1961 [bulk 1916-1935].
6 boxes (19 folders), ca. 415 items.**

INTRODUCTION

The James Henry Shaw Family Papers include personal and business correspondence, legal files, printed materials, two ledger books, two cased documents, one cased photograph, and three letter boxes.

About half of the materials originated with James Henry Shaw of Greensboro between 1895 and 1935. The other half, in bulk, of the collection consists of legal files, 1935-1940, of Judge Eugene Guilford Shaw, son of James Henry. Much of the personal correspondence is between James Henry Shaw and his other son, Henry Carlisle Shaw, during the son's years in medical school and residency between 1927 and 1932.

Arrangement: The James Henry Shaw Family Papers are arranged into four series, and within each series materials are arranged alphabetically or chronologically. The four series are: **Correspondence and Minutes**, 1899-1936; **Financial papers**, 1903-1935; **Printed materials**; and **Legal files**, 1935-1945.

Provenance: This collection was donated to the Greensboro Historical Museum by Miss Irmagard Shaw of Greensboro in August 1981. It was assigned accession numbers 1981.110.1-.

Processing: This collection was processed by Vickie Anway, and the finding aid was completed December 10, 1985.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Henry Shaw, born ca. 1869, was a native of Guilford County, North Carolina. He began working in 1881 at age 12 for Scott Bros. Co., a Greensboro grocer and remained with them as "right hand man" until 1896 when he left Greensboro to seek employment in the north. After living in Pittsburgh, Pa. for a few years, he returned to Greensboro around 1898 to begin a grocery business, Shaw Bros. Co., with his brother, Charles S. Shaw. After Shaw Bros. Co. closed in 1904, he became a bookkeeper for W. F. Clegg Cigar Co., later known as the Clegg Hotel. Sometime after that he became a deputy sheriff in Guilford County.

James Henry Shaw married **Lillie White**, a dressmaker, also of Guilford County. They had four children that lived to adulthood, Eugene Guilford, Henry Carlisle, Irmagard and Wilna. One child, Winnell, died in infancy. James Henry Shaw was popularly known as "Bud" Shaw and was active in area minstrel productions. He built the family home at 220 South Park Drive, Greensboro around 1907. Mr. Shaw was a member of the Knights of Pythias and Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Eugene Guilford Shaw, born ca. 1898 was the eldest son of James Henry and Lillian White Shaw. He attended Greensboro public schools, Oak Ridge Military Academy, and received undergraduate and law degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served in U.S. Navy during World War I and was admitted to the North Carolina bar in 1922. Eugene Shaw practiced law in private practice in Greensboro for 25 years. From 1922 to 1925 he was Guilford County Superior Court Clerk, and from 1942 to 1949 was Public Administrator of Guilford County. In 1949 he was appointed North Carolina Commissioner of Revenue by Governor Scott, and was reappointed in 1953 by Governor Umstead. During his years as Commissioner of Revenue (1949-1957), Shaw was noted for mechanizing the checking of North Carolina residents' state and federal tax returns and doubled the amount of taxes collected in North Carolina during his tenure. He resigned in 1957 to return to Greensboro and private law practice.

In October, 1961, he was appointed North Carolina Superior Court Judge, Guilford County, 18th Judicial District by Governor Terry Sanford. He resigned as Judge in October 1969, at age 71, due to poor health.

Eugene Shaw married **Elizabeth Lindsay** of Taylorsville. They had one son, **Eugene Guilford Shaw Jr.**, who attended Princeton and also practiced law in Greensboro. Mr. Shaw was affiliated with the Young Democratic Club; First Presbyterian Church; N.C. Bar Association; Corinthian Masonic Lodge; Greensboro Real Estate Board; and the N.C. Medical Care Association.

Henry Carlisle Shaw, born ca. 1904, was the younger son of James Henry and Lillian White Shaw. He attended Augusta Military Academy, Virginia; Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri from which he received the Doctor of Medicine degree in 1928. He later served a residency in dermatology in Rochester, New York. Henry Shaw married Dorothy Barker of Cleveland around 1932, and they had at least one son, Robert Henry.

Irmagard Shaw was the elder daughter of James Henry and Lillian White Shaw. She attended Greensboro College for Women, where she studied music. She worked as a school teacher, never married, and currently resides in Greensboro.

Wilna Shaw was the younger daughter of James Henry and Lillian White Shaw. She attended Salem Academy and married Archie Thompson in Boston in December 1932.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The James Henry Shaw Family Papers include correspondence, financial and legal documents, and printed materials dating from 1895 until 1935. Ledger books from the family business and legal papers from the son's law practice are also included. The papers were donated to the Museum after being found by a nephew of Irmagard Shaw in the family home on South Park Drive.

The collection documents the formation and closure of the family grocery business and the building of the family home in Greensboro. Together they document the cost of domestic goods just before World War I. The minute book of the Ladies Circle at First Presbyterian Church documents various charitable and missionary activities during the Depression years of 1935-37. The personal correspondence between father and son documents medical education and related costs around 1930. The legal files document the growth of the city of Greensboro between 1935

and 1940 with documents related to land transactions in and around downtown Greensboro.

In general, the collection documents the lifestyle of a southern middle class family at the beginning of the 20th century. There is helpful material regarding the cost of living, from the grocery store accounts and the financial papers related to the construction of the family home. The details of cost and general practices of medical school education could be helpful to medical social historians. The collection would also be useful to research on the development of downtown Greensboro.

There is very little about the two daughters, mostly references in letters regarding their education, which their mother seems to have financed from her dressmaking business. There is no personal information regarding Judge Eugene Shaw in the collection. His activities in the N.C. Democratic Party are partially documented in one legal file.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence and Minutes, 1899-1936. Arranged chronologically. 32 items.

This series includes personal and business correspondence to and from James Henry Shaw relating to the grocery business and to his son, Henry Carlisle. Also a minute book of the Ladies Circle of the First Presbyterian Church chronicling the meetings and activities of that group during the 1930s.

2. Financial papers, 1903-1935. Arranged alphabetically. 75 items plus letter box contents (about 200 items).

This series consists primarily of bills and receipts relating to building and maintenance of family home. The bulk of these materials were removed from three wooden letter boxes and kept together as Groups A, B, and C. They fall roughly into three time periods: Group A - 1903-1912; Group B - 1916-1917; and Group C - 1927-1932. Some correspondence between James Henry and Henry Carlisle Shaw are in Group C. Two ledger books from the Shaw Bros. Co. are included here: one contains mostly unused receipts and the other contains the credit accounts, listing goods purchased, of various customers.

3. Printed materials. Unarranged. 26 items.

This series includes programs of minstrel shows that "Bud" Shaw appeared in; cipher books; illustrated booklets about Greensboro; other illustrated pamphlets of sights around the United States. Also three cased items: Certificate admitting Eugene Guilford Shaw to the North Carolina Bar in 1922; Certificate of Recognition to Eugene Shaw from Oak Ridge Military Academy; and photograph of Eugene Shaw in judge's robe.

4. Legal files, 1935-1945. Arranged alphabetically. 81 items.

This series contains the legal files, in original envelopes and folders, from the law practice of Eugene Shaw. Most are title searches for real estate transactions. Transactions are primarily Greensboro property in downtown, including the Last Will and Testament, dated 1856, of Levi

Houston who owned the property that is now College Park in Greensboro; and a few subdivision projects including Kirkwood Subdivision and Sunset Hills. Also included are Eugene Shaw's papers regarding the North Carolina Democratic Executive Committee of which he was General Chairman in 1944.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Correspondence, 1899-1936, Business
1	2	Correspondence, 1899-1936, Personal
1	3	Minute Book, Ladies Circle
2	1	Financial papers, 1903-1935
2	2	Ledger book, Shaw Bros Co.
2	3	Group A: A-G
2	4	Group A: H-Z
2	5	Group B: A-N
2	6	Group B: O-Z
2	7	Group C: A-C
2	8	Group C: D-L
2	9	Group C: M-Z
2	10	Group C: Correspondence
2	--	Ledger book, credit accounts (oversize)
2	--	Letter boxes (3)
3	1	Printed materials
3	2	Printed materials
3	--	Cased documents and photograph
4	A-F	Legal files
4	G-L	Legal files
4	M-Sears	Legal files
4	Sergeant-Z	Legal files