

MSS. Collection #215

**Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Co. Collection, ca. 1910s-1960s [bulk 1920s-1940s].
½ box (19 folders), ca. 110 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name or topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

This artificial collection centers on Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company and particularly company presidents **Julian Price** (1867-1946) and his son, **Ralph Price** (1901-1989). Items include financial information, pamphlets, receipts, photographs, advertising materials, client correspondence, and company publications. Researchers will find multiple photos of company employees, with some key figures identified, as well as examples of Jefferson Standard printed materials from the first half of the 20th century.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged in five series by document type. The series are: **Correspondence**, 1923-1930; **Financial**, 1915-1939; **Miscellaneous**, 1920-1932, undated; **Photographs**, ca. 1923-ca. 1944, undated; and **Printed Material**, 1926-1966.

Provenance: The items in this collection were donated by multiple individuals and include accession numbers 1967.255.62, 2010.26.1, 2010.27.1-4, 2012.10.1, 2017.21.1, and 2026.6.1.

The bulk of the financial and miscellaneous items (2012.10.1) were donated by Gordon M. Thomas. They include premium notices and receipts, and printed materials received by Susanna and Thompson Rogers of the Brim community in Stokes County. The donor found them in the attic of the Gordon family home in Pilot Mountain. His grandfather, Isaac Martin Gordon, was a co-founder of the Bank of Pilot Mountain in 1914 and served as its president from 1942 to 1963. Thompson Rogers and his wife were customers of the bank, and Gordon was likely involved in the settlement of Mr. Rogers' estate in 1946-1947.

The photographs and printed materials relating to Ralph Price (2010.26.1) were donated by his daughter, Louise Price Parsons. The pamphlet entitled "These Are the Men Who Lead You" (1967.255.62) was given by Mrs. William H. Callihan. Most of the newsletters (2010.27.1-4) were given by Jeanne C. Omisore. She found them among the possessions of a neighbor, Bob Anderson, who had been the Assistant Manager of Underwriting for Jefferson Standard. The letter sent in 1930 (2026.6.1) was donated by Ronda Martin, who found it in a book she purchased at Goodwill. The November 1946 newsletter (2017.21.1) was contributed by Tom Harris. It belonged to his parents, Margaret Adams and R. Kennedy Harris, who lived near Julian Price. The April 1955 newsletter was incorporated from the N.C. Vertical File at UNCG Libraries.

Processing: This collection was organized by Archivist Elise Allison in March 2013, and the finding aid was completed by intern Kate Hayworth in June 2013. The November 1946 and April

1955 newsletters were incorporated and the finding aid was updated by Archivist Elise Allison in April 2018.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company was originally organized by brothers P.D. and Charles Gold in 1907 and headquartered in Raleigh. After experiencing falling stock prices in 1912, the company merged with Greensboro Life Insurance Company and Security Life and Annuity Company, both Greensboro companies, and relocated to Greensboro.

Julian Price, former secretary of Greensboro Life Insurance Company, became the president of Jefferson Standard in 1919. Known for his wit, business instincts, and sharp personal style, which included his iconic fedora hats, Price also served on the Greensboro City Council for seven years. Additionally, he and his wife Ethel Clay Price funded parks, churches, and buildings in North Carolina.

In 1922, Price and the board of directors began building the new Jefferson Standard headquarters in downtown Greensboro. The distinctive building was the only skyscraper between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta at the time of its construction. A year later, the company began its Julian Price Club, which recognized each month's highest selling-agents, including Albert Lee Smith of Birmingham, Alabama.

Another important company figure was a woman affectionately known as "Miss Mary." Mary Taylor became Julian Price's secretary in 1912 and also managed the company newsletter, *The Jeffersonian*, for decades despite losing her eyesight due to misprescribed eye drops.

In 1931, Jefferson Standard bought Pilot Life Insurance Company (which had changed its name from Southern Life & Trust in 1924) following Pilot Life's financial problems during the Great Depression. However, the two companies continued operating separately, producing an attitude of friendly competition between them. Joseph M. Bryan, the husband of Julian Price's daughter Kathleen, was elected secretary of Jefferson Pilot in 1933.

Julian Price retired in 1944 and died in a car accident two years later. His son, Ralph C. Price, became the next president of Jefferson Standard. After just four years, the board's dissatisfaction with the younger Price's leadership led them to approve Howard Holderness to replace him as president. Jefferson Standard and Pilot Life continued their successes through the first half of the twentieth century, with Jefferson Standard reaching \$1 billion of insurance in force by 1951.

Historical Source: The main source for this historical note is the book *Jefferson Pilot Financial, 1903-2003: A Century of Excellence*, by Jeffrey L. Rodengen and Richard F. Hubbard (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Write Stuff Enterprises, Inc., 2003).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The types of materials in this collection include financial documents, photographs and printed matter. Most of the materials pertain to the company's correspondence and business relations with its customers, ranging from loan information (2:2) to insurance premiums and promotional items displaying the newly built Jefferson Standard building (5:2). Some items

pertain to Pilot Life Insurance Company (3:1) and Southern Life & Trust (3:3). This collection also contains materials relating to Jefferson Standard's employees, including monthly company newsletters (5:3-6) and group photos of company leaders and employees (4:1-4).

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence. 2 folders (2 items). 1923-1930.

The mass-distributed letter to policyholders from President Julian Price (1:2) encourages them to assist in the "upbuilding of North Carolina's own insurance company" by "taking your next insurance with us," and/or providing names of possible buyers of life insurance or prospective agents. It was originally mailed with an enclosed card and envelope, along with a promotional pamphlet. The other letter was sent by J.S. Causey of the company's Roanoke office to a client detailing the status of his policy and indebtedness (1:1).

2. Financial. 4 folders (ca. 60 items). 1915-1939.

This series contains correspondence from Jefferson Standard agents to Thompson and Susanna Rogers in Brim, NC, concerning their life insurance policies and loans (2:1). Certificates of loans and life insurance policy agreements are also included. Small promotional pamphlets tell customers about the company's "Loan Reduction Plan" and contain loan payment and loan repayment cards (2:2). The series also includes premium notices and receipts (2:3-4).

3. Miscellaneous. 3 folders (8 items). 1920-1932, undated.

Materials in this series do not relate to Jefferson Standard. The first folder holds items pertaining to Pilot Life Insurance Company, including premium receipts, a business reply envelope, and a blank reinstatement form (3:1). The Southern Life & Trust folder contains a premium receipt and two business cards for A.C. Stuart, General Agent (3:3). Also included in the series is "The Rotary Club Code of Ethics" (3:2).

4. Photographs. 4 folders (20 items). ca. 1923-ca. 1944, undated.

This series consists of photographs of company leaders and employees. One includes Kathleen Price Bryan, daughter of Jefferson Standard's long-time president Julian Price and wife of Joseph M. Bryan. Many of the employee group photographs are unlabeled but one photo includes C.E. Leake, Lester Brooks, Joe Bryan, Karl Ljung (a senior vice president), and E. Frank Andrews (a field agent; 4:1). Two photos feature employees from the Albert Lee Smith Agency in Birmingham, Alabama. One shows the agents and their wives, and the other, taken in 1941, shows a thirtieth anniversary celebration for the company. Albert Lee Smith and agent Robert Hemister are present in both photos (4:2). An undated group photo includes Albert Lee Smith, Julian Price, and Miss Mary Taylor, Julian Price's secretary who was also in charge of the company newsletter, *The Jeffersonian* (4:3). Additionally, the folder includes a 1944 portrait sketch of Price by Greensboro artist Henry Rood, with a note written by Price (4:3). Ralph Price,

Julian Price's son who also served as president of Jefferson Standard, appears in several group shots at a celebration of his 34th birthday, along with Miss Mary Taylor (4:4).

5. Printed Material. 6 folders (21 items). 1926-1966.

The printed material includes certificates awarded to Ralph Price. Membership to the Julian Price Club (which recognized the highest-selling agents of the month) and certificates listing the dollar amount of Price's sales in the hundreds of thousands provide evidence of his productivity at the company from 1927 to 1929. Another certificate is from the governor of South Carolina naming Price as a Lieutenant Colonel Aide-de-Camp to the governor (5:1). Also included in this series are a calling card for Mr. and Mrs. Julian Price, a December 31, 1926, financial statement sent out to "policyholders and friends," a pamphlet with biographical sketches of Julian Price and agency manager A. Reid Perkins, and advertising material including cards depicting the new Jefferson Standard building (5:2). The last four folders contain seven monthly company newsletters dating from 1946-1948, 1955 and 1966 (5:3-6), with the November 1946 issue focusing on the death Julian Price.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Correspondence	-- Causey, J.S. to R.L. Smythe (1930)
	2	"	-- Price, Julian to North Carolina Policyholder (1923)
2	1	Financial	-- Correspondence (1915-1931)
	2	"	-- Loans (1924-1925)
	3	"	-- Premium Notices (1916-1939)
	4	"	-- Premium Receipts (1915-1939)
3	1	Miscellaneous	-- Pilot Life Insurance Co. (1927-1932)
	2	"	-- Rotary Club (undated)
	3	"	-- Southern Life & Trust (1920)
4	1	Photographs	(ca. 1923, undated)
	2	"	-- Albert Lee Smith Agency (Birmingham, AL; ca. 1941)
	3	"	-- Price, Julian (ca. 1944)
	4	"	-- Price, Ralph (ca. 1935)
5	1	Printed Material	-- Certificates -- Price, Ralph (1927-1947)
	2	"	-- Miscellaneous (1926-1928)
	3	"	-- Newsletters (1946)
	4	"	-- Newsletters (1947-1948)
	5	"	-- Newsletters (1955)
	6	"	-- Newsletters (1966)