

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Archives & Special Collections: Finding Aids

Library

Finding Aid for the Jamie L. Whitten Collection (MUM00732)

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/finding_aids

Recommended Citation

Jamie L. Whitten Collection, Archives and Special Collections, J.D. Williams Library, The University of Mississippi

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by the Library at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Archives & Special Collections: Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Finding Aid for the Jamie L. Whitten Collection (MUM00732)

[Questions? Contact us!](#)

Most of the Whitten Collection remains closed due to its unprocessed state. However, a grant has permitted the archive to digitize all the original recordings in the collection, and they are accessible to researchers as a [digital collection](#).

Finding Aid for the Jamie L. Whitten Collection

Table of Contents

[Descriptive Summary](#)

[Administrative Information](#)

[Subject Terms](#)

[Biographical Note](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[User Information](#)

[Related Material](#)

[Container List](#)

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Jamie L. Whitten Collection
Dates:	1941-1995
Collector:	Whitten, Jamie L.
Physical Extent:	1,971 linear feet
Repository:	University of Mississippi. Department of Archives and Special Collections. University, MS 38677, USA
Identification:	MUM00732
Location:	Modern Political Archives
Language of Material:	English
Abstract:	Jamie L. Whitten represented Mississippi in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1941 to 1995 and chaired the powerful Committee on Appropriations from 1979 through 1992.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Jamie Whitten donated his congressional papers to the University of Mississippi on 16 August 1994. In 2000, the

Committee on Appropriations contributed a box of Whitten's remarks on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2007, the Tutwiler Public Library donated one box of files and two boxes of publications that Whitten had previously transferred to the library.

Processing Information

At this time, only the collection's recordings are processed and available to researchers. University of Mississippi Media & Documentary Projects digitized the original recordings. Political Papers Archivist Leigh McWhite reviewed the recordings to compile content descriptions and wrote the introductory fields for the finding aid. Digital Initiatives Librarian Jason Kovari encoded the finding aid and created the digital collection. The finding aid was updated by Abigail Norris, March 2020.

The digitization and preservation of the recordings in this collection are the result of a project supported in part by a grant from the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#). Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed on this website do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Modern Political Archive will begin working on the collection's papers in 2012.

Additions

No further additions are expected to this collection.

Subject Terms

Whitten, Jamie L.
United States. Congress. House
United States. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations
United States -- Politics and government -- 20th century
Political campaigns -- Mississippi
Politicians -- Mississippi
Agriculture -- Mississippi

Biographical Note

Jamie L. Whitten was born in the community of Cascilla in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi on 18 April 1910. After attending public schools, he studied literature and law at the University of Mississippi. In 1930-31, Whitten served as principal of Cascilla School, and voters sent him to the Mississippi Legislature for a two-year term in 1931. Admitted to the state Bar in 1932, the young lawyer opened a practice in Charleston, Mississippi and served as District Attorney for the state's 17th District from 1933 to 1941.

In 1941, Democrat Jamie Whitten won a special election to fill a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and he remained in that chamber of Congress until his retirement on 3 January 1995. Only John Dingell of Michigan holds a longer record of service in the House.

During his reelections, Whitten rarely faced any serious opposition except for two notable exceptions. The 1960 census resulted in the loss of a Mississippi congressional district, and the resulting reapportionment forced a battle with fellow incumbent Frank Smith that Whitten won. Four years later, civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer attempted to challenge Whitten for his congressional seat. Although her name did not appear on the ballot, Hamer and other members of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party filed a formal challenge with Congress protesting the seating of the state's five white congressmen in the U.S. House of Representatives. The rationale for the charge was that whites had excluded African Americans from participating in the primary and general election. A

southern-dominated House Administration Committee dismissed the complaint, arguing that the recent passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 had made the issue moot. On 17 September 1965, the full House voted 228 to 143 to support the committee.

For a brief period in 1941-42, Whitten served on the House Post Office & Post Roads Committee. However, by 1943 he received an appointment to the powerful Appropriations Committee. Whitten became chair of its Agriculture Subcommittee in 1950, and as the decades passed the Mississippi legislator was known as the "permanent Secretary of Agriculture." In 1979, he rose via seniority to chair the entire Appropriations Committee, and his colleagues voted him "the most effective chairman in the U.S. Congress." Whitten maintained that post until 1992 when the Democratic Caucus replaced the eighty-two-year-old with William Huston Natcher.

Other committee memberships during Whitten's career include the Joint Committee on Study Budget Control (1972-74), Joint Committee on Reduction of Federal Expenditures (1970-74), and the House Budget Committee (1974-75).

Throughout his career, Whitten promoted both the protection and the development of natural resources in Mississippi and across the nation. He initiated legislation for the National Watershed and Flood Prevention Program and championed public works projects like the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. His book, *That We May Live* (1966) defended the benefits of agricultural pesticides in response to Rachel Carson's environmental bestseller *Silent Spring*.

After declining to run for a 28th term, Whitten retired to his home in Oxford, Mississippi, where he died on 9 September 1995. He was survived by his wife Rebecca Thompson Whitten of Saltillo, Mississippi and his two children: Jamie L. Whitten and Beverly Whitten Merritt. A few months before his death, Congress named the main building of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, DC the "Jamie L. Whitten Building."

Scope and Content Note

The recordings currently available in the digital collection represent only a fraction of a much larger physical collection which is not yet open to researchers.

User Information

Preferred Citation

Jamie L. Whitten Collection, Archives and Special Collections, J.D. Williams Library, The University of Mississippi

Access Restrictions

Most of the Whitten Collection remains closed due to its unprocessed state. However, a grant has permitted the archive to digitize all the original recordings in the collection, and they are accessible to researchers as a [digital collection](#).

Although anyone on the internet may view the descriptions for all of the recordings, copyright may limit access to some of the material. Researchers may view restricted recordings via onsite computers in the J.D. Williams Library.

Copyright Restrictions

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other

reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use", that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

Related Material

Resources at the University of Mississippi

For other politically-related holdings at the Archives & Special Collections, see the [Politics & Government Subject Guide](#).

Capitol Cloakroom: The Honorable Jamie L. Whitten, Member of Congress. CBS Radio, [1960]. LP record. Call Number: [UA11 W45 C36 1960](#).

Coffee in Washington. New York: NBC, [1952]. Three LP records with a Bill Hearson interview of Whitten. Call Number: [JK1319 C64 1952](#).

Farm Radio Service. American Petroleum Institute Committee on Agriculture, [196-]. LP record containing radio interviews about agriculture, including "Congressman Jamie L. Whitten, Democrat of Mississippi." Call Number: [S494.5 P75 F37](#).

The Honorable Jamie L. Whitten: Representative in the United States Congress from Mississippi: Index of Legislative Activities Appearing in the Congressional Record, 1941-65. [1965]. Call Number: [E840.8 W47 H6 1965](#).

The Leading Question: The Honorable Jamie L. Whitten, Member of Congress. CBS Radio Network, [1957]. LP record. Call Number: [HJ2051 W455 1957](#).

A Message to Jamie Whitten from Averell Harriman; With Harriman in Moscow. New York: Harriman for President, [1956]. 78 rpm disc. Call Number: [E837.5 H37](#).

Anne Millet. *Jamie L. Whitten: Democratic Representative from Mississippi*. Washington, DC: Grossman, circa 1972. Part of the Ralph Nader Congress Project. Call Number: [JK1030 R3 W5 1972](#).

Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts. *Jamie L. Whitten Appreciation Day, September 16, 1985*. [Jackson, MS]: Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, 1985. Call Number: [E840.8 W47 J3 1985](#).

National Watershed Congress: [Proceedings]. Washington, DC: 1956. Includes remarks by Whitten on Soil Conservation and Agriculture. Call Number: [HD1694 A15](#).

A Proposal to Honor Congressman Jamie Whitten at the University of Mississippi, School of Law. [University of Mississippi Foundation, 1984]. Call Number: [E840.8 W47 P76 1984](#).

A Public Service for Farm Radio. Chicago: Board of Trade Radio Service, [196-]. Among these radio interviews is "Agricultural Appropriations – Basic Security for All Americans" with Jamie L. Whitten. Call Number: [S484.5 U5 P8](#).

Stand up for Our Congressman Jamie Whitten, He Stands up for Mississippi: Our Effective Chairman. [Jackson, MS: Committee to Re-elect Jamie Whitten, circa 1984]. Call Number: [F345 S73 1984](#).

Jamie L. Whitten. *Agriculture and the American Economy: Speech...Presented to the Annual Convention of the National County Agents Association, Louisville, Kentucky, October 17, 1968*. Louisville, KY: National County

Agents Association, 1968. Call Number: [HD1761 W45 1968](#).

Jamie L. Whitten. *Congressman Whitten Calls on President to Restore Soil Conservation, Rural Water, Housing and Other Programs: Address of the Honorable Jamie L. Whitten*. Washington, DC: National Limestone Institute, 1973. Call Number: [S604.6 W45 1973](#).

Jamie L. Whitten. *Southerners Unite! Address to the Democratic Party Appreciation Dinner, Gastonia, N.C., December 12, 1958*. [Greenwood, MS: Educational Fund of the Citizens' Councils, 1959]. Call Number: [JK2316 W65 1959](#).

Jamie L. Whitten. *Speech of Hon. Jamie L. Whitten, of Mississippi, at Annual Meeting of the National Agricultural Limestone Producers: Extension of Remarks*. Reprint from the Congressional Record (27 January 1955). Call Number: [S604.6 W458 1955](#).

Jamie L. Whitten. *That We May Live*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, [1966]. Call Number: [SB959 W47 1966](#).

Jamie L. Whitten. *Writ of Error Coram Nobis: An Unusual Case in the Nation's History*. [MS: 1936]. District Attorney Whitten compiles material recounting a murder trial in Mississippi. Call Number: [KF224 M48 W55 1936](#).

United States. Congress. House. *Brief of Contestants Urging the Vacating of the Contested Seats and the Holding of New Elections*. [New York: Hecla Press, 1965]. Among the Mississippi contested seats was that of Jamie Whitten. Call Number: [KF4893 B7 1965](#).

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. *A Ceremony Unveiling the Portrait of Chairman Jamie L. Whitten: A Representative in Congress from the First Congressional District of the State of Mississippi, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984. Call Number: [E840.8 W47 C468 1984](#).

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. *A Ceremony Unveiling the Portrait of Chairman Jamie L. Whitten: A Representative in Congress from the First Congressional District of the State of Mississippi, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985. Call Number: [E840.8 W47 C47 1986](#).

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Inspection Tour of Representative Jamie L. Whitten to Russia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Western Europe, in September and October 1956: Report to the Committee on Appropriations by Mr. Whitten from the Subcommittee on Department of Agriculture and Related Agencies, Eighty-fifth Congress, First Session*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1957. Call Number: [HC240 U6 1957](#).

United States. Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. *In Tribute to Jamie L. Whitten, United States Representative from Mississippi*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1995. Call Number: [E840.8 W47 I5 1995](#).

Your Stake in Agricultural Research. New Holland, PA: New Holland Machine Company, [197-]. LP record includes Jamie L. Whitten address. Call Number: [S494.5 A4 Y68](#).

Container List

The recordings in the Jamie L. Whitten Collection are available as a [digital collection](#).