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William L. Dawson Papers
Collection 188-1 to 188-9

Prepared by:
Katie Salzmann
March 1998

Scope Note

The papers of Illinois Congressman, William L. Dawson (1886-1970), span the period of 1942-1972 and measure approximately 5 linear feet. Correspondence and legislative material highlighting Dawson's political career form the bulk of the collection. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically and includes such notables as Chester Bowles, Ralph J. Bunche, William Henry Huff, Ira Latimer, F.D. Patterson, and Walter White.

The legislative material is arranged chronologically by session of Congress. This series includes civil rights bills, resolutions, motions, and reports supported by Congressman Dawson.

Some of the folders include correspondence reflecting Dawson and his colleagues' opinions of the various bills. Dawson was particularly supportive of legislation concerning anti-lynching, anti-poll tax, and fair employment.

Personal papers include brief biographical sketches of Dawson, material from his retirement and funeral, and campaign flyers; both pro- and anti-Dawson. There is additional campaign material among the oversized items. The collection contains a few photographs, including Dawson with Presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson.

There is a substantial amount of material documenting the role that Christine R. Davis, his congressional secretary and later chief of staff of the House Government Operations Committee, played in Washington and Chicago politics.

Scope Note continued

Correspondence, writings, and organizational material document her activities. Davis corresponded with such notables as Mary McLeod Bethune, Jacqueline and John F. Kennedy, Adam Clayton Powell, and Arthur Spingarn. Christine Davis donated the Dawson papers to the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center in 1980.

Series Description

Series A
Box 188-1

Personal Papers

Biographical sketches, material from Dawson's retirement and funeral, and campaign material document Congressman Dawson's achievements in politics. Of note are the pro- and anti-Dawson campaign flyers and "Mississippians For Eisenhower," a paid political advertisement for the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket that includes excerpts from Truman's pro-civil rights Harlem speech.

Series B
Box 188-1
to Box 188-3

Correspondence

Arranged alphabetically, this series includes correspondence from such notables as Chester Bowles, Ralph J. Bunche, William Henry Huff, Ira Latimer, F.D. Patterson, and Walter White. Included is a series of correspondence regarding the establishment of a George Washington Carver Stamp. Included are letters of support from Crystal Bird Fauset, Henry Ford, William Hastie, Watkins Hunt, Mordecai Johnson, Louis R. Mehlinger, F.D. Patterson, Frank Walker.

Series C
Box 188-3

Writings by Dawson

This series is comprised of four speeches. Two were published in the proceedings of the Democratic National Conventions of 1952 and 1960, one in the Congressional Record. All were delivered before Congress.

Series D
Box 188-3

Writings about Dawson

Newspaper and magazine articles and radio transcripts highlight Dawson's political career. Of interest is a 1946 radio script "Democracy U.S.A. (Congressman William L. Dawson)" that dramatizes Dawson's first speech before Congress.

Series Description continued

Series E

Box 188-3
to Box 188-4

Legislative Material

This series includes civil rights bills, resolutions, motions, and reports supported by Congressman Dawson. Arranged by session of Congress, this material documents Dawson's political agenda. Correspondence from constituents and colleagues highlights the political process. Included is a history of Dawson's voting record.

Series F

Box 188-4

Subject Files

Newspaper clippings document Dawson's interest in Ralph J. Bunche, Paul Robeson, and Jackie Robinson. Of note is a transcription of Robinson's testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Series G

Box 188-4
to Box 188-5

Photographs

Photographs of Dawson addressing the House Government Operations Committee document his activities in Congress. Other photographs include Dawson with Presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson.

Series H

Box 188-5
to Box 188-7

Christine R. Davis

Personal papers, correspondence, speeches, organizational affiliations, events, and daily reminders document Davis' role as Dawson's congressional secretary and later chief of staff of the House Government Operations Committee. Personal papers include biographical sketches, newspaper articles and a diary of Davis' 1952 trip with the Bonner Subcommittee. Correspondence includes such notables as Mary McLeod Bethune, Jacqueline and John F. Kennedy, Adam Clayton Powell, and Arthur Spingarn. The sub-series, Events, includes Davis' working papers and invitation lists to various political events.

Series Description continued

Series I
Box 188-8

Artifacts

Artifacts include plaques presented to Dawson by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the Capital Press Club. Also included is a 1952 trophy from the Maryland State Conference, NAACP Branch, and a framed, signed, photograph of President Richard Nixon, 1970.

Series J
Item 188-9

Oversized Material

Oversized campaign material includes two broadsides, [1944], an anti- Adam C. Powell flyer, and a sample 1948 Democratic Primary ballot.

Biographical Sketch

William L. Dawson

April 26, 1886 Born in Albany, Georgia to Rebecca Kendrick and Levi Dawson.

1909 Graduated from Fisk University.

1912 Moved to Chicago.

1917-1919 Commissioned a First Lieutenant in the 365th Regiment of the 92nd Infantry. He was injured in combat.

1920 Earned his law degree from Northwestern University and became a member of the Illinois bar.

1928 Entered politics and unsuccessfully challenged veteran Congressman Martin B. Madden.

1930-1932 Served as State Central Committeeman for the First Congressional District of Illinois.

1933-1939 Running as a Republican, he was elected as an alderman to the Chicago City Council from the 2nd Ward.

1939 Joined the Democratic party.

1942-1970 Served in the House of Representatives from the 78th to the 90th Congresses.

1945 Introduced legislation (H. Res 48) to establish a special committee to investigate race relations in the United States.

1949-1970 Assumed the chair of the House Committee on Governmental Operations. He was the first African-American chairman of a congressional committee. He served in this position until his death.

June 20, 1970 Retired from Congress.

November 9, 1970 Died in Chicago. His ashes are in a Columbarium in Griffin Funeral Home, Chicago, Ill.

Container List

Box	Folder	
		A Personal Papers
188-1	1	<u>Biographical Sketches</u> , n.d.
		<u>In Memoriam</u> , 1970
	2	Condolences
	3	"William L. Dawson, Late Representative from Illinois: Memorial Addresses Delivered in Congress," 1970
		<u>Campaign Material</u>
	4	Chicago Rosters
	5	Pro-Dawson Flyers
	6	Anti-Dawson Flyers
	7	Other Flyers
	8	"Mississippians for Eisenhower" tape
	9	<u>Retirement Luncheon</u> , June 20, 1970
		B Correspondence
	10	A
	11	Alexander, William D. (Associated Producers of Negro Motion Pictures, Inc.)
	12	B
	13	Bailey, R.H., Jr.
	14	Bowles, Chester
	15	Buckmaster, Henrietta (Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs. Recy Taylor)
	16	Bunche, Ralph J.
	17	Burns, Ben
	18	C
	19	Carey, Archibald J., Jr.
	20	Cyrus, Bindley C.
	21	D
	22	Dabney, W.P.
	23	Davis, James P.
	24	Dedmon, Jesse O. (NAACP)
	25	DePriest, Oscar
	26	Dixon, E.O.
	27	Douglas, Paul H.
	28	Drewry, P.H. (Democratic National Congressional Committee)

Container List

Box	Folder	
		B Correspondence, continued
188-2	1	E
	2	F
	3	Foster, Emery M.
	4	G
		George Washington Carver Stamp
	5	A-J
	6	K-Z
	7	Gordon, Barefield
	8	H
	9	Hershey, Lewis B.
	10	Horne, Frank S.
	11	Huff, William Henry
	12	J
	13	Jernagin, Rev. W.H.
	14	Johnson, Reginald A. (National Urban League)
	15	Johnston, William S.
	16	Jones, David D.
	17	Jones, Lewis W.
	18	K
	19	L
	20	Latimer, Ira (Chicago Civil Liberties Committee)
	21	Lawson, B.V., Jr.
	22	Lee, Canada
	23	Lochard, Metz T.P.
	24	M
	25	McDermott, Barry G.
	26	McGee, Henry W. (NAACP - Chicago Branch)
	27	McGraw, B.T. (National Housing Agency)
	28	Marin, Luis Munoz (Senate of Puerto Rico)
	29	Martin, Louis E.
	30	Mbadiwe, K. Ozuomba

Container List

Box	Folder	
		B Correspondence, continued
188-2	31	N
	32	O
	33	P
	34	Patterson, Frederick Douglass
	35	Perry, Leslie S. (NAACP)
	36	Powell, Adam Clayton, Jr.
	37	R
	38	Ray, Archibald M.
	39	Rivers, W. Napoleon
188-3	1	S
	2	Shavers, C. Mott
	3	Stewart, Sallie W. (Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association)
	4	T
	5	Talley, Cornell E.
	6	U
	7	V
	8	W
	9	Walls, W. J.
	10	Weightman, Phillip (United Packinghouse Workers of America)
	11	Welters, Edward A.
	12	White, Walter
	13	Wright, R.R., Jr.
	14	Y
	15	Young, Gordon R.
	16	Young, Vance L.
	17	Z

Container List

Box	Folder	
	B Correspondence , continued	
188-3	18	Unsigned
	19	Third Party Correspondence
	C Writings by Dawson	
	20	"Address of Honorable William L. Dawson, United States Representative from Illinois" <u>Democratic National Convention Proceedings, 1952.</u>
	21	"Nomination of the Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson Seconded by the Honorable William Dawson, U.S. Representative from Illinois," <u>Democratic National Convention Proceedings, 1960.</u>
	22	"Race Not a Limitation," <u>Congressional Record</u> , c.1945.
	23	"Speech made by Congressman Wm. L. Dawson before Congress in Support of the Price Amendment to Substitute the Winstead Amendment," April 12, 1951.
	D Writings about Dawson	
		<u>Articles</u>
	24	"Broadcast of Fulton Lewis Jr.," Nov. 5, 1948.
	25	"Congressman Dawson Talks Politics for Texas Colored Democrats," Lewis W. Jones.
	26	"Democracy U.S.A. (Congressman William L. Dawson) August 24, 1946
	27	"Negro Politics Old Style and New," <u>The Reporter</u> , August 11, 1966.
	28	<u>Newspaper Articles</u>

Container List

Box	Folder	
		E Legislative Material,
188-3	29	"History of Bills, Resolutions, Remarks, Motions, and Reports of Honorable William L. Dawson From 1942-1963, Regarding Civil Rights, Fair Employment Practices Committee, Etc"
	30	Honorable William L. Dawson's Voting History
	31-32	78th Congress, 1943-1944
	33	79th Congress, 1945-1946
188-4	1	80th Congress, 1947-1948
	2	81st Congress, 1949-1950
	3	82nd Congress, 1951-1952
	4	83rd Congress, 1953-1954
	5	84th Congress, 1955-1956
	6	85th Congress, 1957-1958
	7	86th Congress, 1959-1960
	8	87th Congress, 1961-1962
	9	88th Congress, 1963-1964
	10	91st Congress, 1969-1970
		F Subject Files
	11	Bunche, Ralph J.
	12	Robeson, Paul
	13	Robinson, Jackie
		G Photographs
	14	Dawson addressing House Government Operations Committee
	15	Dawson addressing unidentified congressional committee
	16	Dawson with unidentified congressional committee
	17	Dawson with unidentified others
	18	Dawson with unidentified others and portrait of Dawson

Container List

Box	Folder	
	E	Photographs , continued
188-5	1	Dawson with Lyndon Baines Johnson
	2	Dawson with John F. Kennedy
	3	Dawson with Harry S. Truman
	H	Christine R. Davis
		<u>Personal Papers</u>
	4	Biographical Sketches
	5	Newspaper Articles
	6	Diary, "Bonner Subcommittee Trip Overseas," 1952
		<u>Correspondence</u>
	7	A
	8	Alexander, Lois K. (National Association of Fashion and Accessory Design)
	9	Alexander, Raymond Pace
	10	B
	11	Bethune, Mary McLeod
	12	Brock, Leah I.
	13	Brown, Jeanette Welch (National Council of Negro Women, Inc.)
	14	C
	15	Campbell, Robert H.
	16	Capers, Jean Murrell
	17	Coward, Beatrice H.
	18	D
	19	Davis, Owena H.
	20	E
	21	F
	22	Falkener, Waldo
	23	Freeman, Frankie

Container List

Box	Folder	
		H Christine R. Davis, continued
		<u>Correspondence</u> continued
188-5	24	G
	25	H
	26	I
	27	Inerarity, Jose Garcia
	28	J
	29	Jackson, Mazzilee
	30	Johnson, Henry C.
	31	K
	32	Kennedy, Jacqueline
	33	Kennedy, John F.
	34	L
	35	Lecomte, Marcelle
	36	Lee, George W.
	37	Mc
	38	M
188-6	1	McCormack, John W.
	2	Miller, E.E. (Rip)
	3	Miller, Robert H.
	4	N
	5	O
	6	P
	7	Poland, Orville S.
	8	Powell, Adam Clayton, Jr.
	9	Q
	10	R
	11	Rawlings, Jewell W.
	12	Reed, William A.
	13	Rowe, Naomi
	14	S
	15	Sengstacks, Myrtle

Container List

Box	Folder
	H Christine R. Davis, continued
	<u>Correspondence continued</u>
188-6	16 Spellman, Mitchell W.
	17 Spingarn, Arthur B.
	18 Stone, Julius
	19 T
	20 V
	21 W
	22 Walker, William O.
	23 Wallace, Mildred J.
	24 Wise, Harry H.
	25 Y
	26 Young, Hortense
	27 One Name Only
	28 Third Party Correspondence
	<u>Writings by Davis, 1961, 1970, n.d.</u>
	29 "Speech at Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, North Carolina on February 24, 1961."
	30 "Tribute to Congressman William L. Dawson," c. 1970
	31 Untitled Speech, [Democratic Women of Ohio...], n.d.
	32 Bogucki, Angelina M., "Qualifications of Congressional Administrative Assistants."
	33 Whitney, Doris S., "Notes Relative to the Duties of a Congressional Secretary."
	<u>Events, 1955-1956, n.d.</u>
	34 Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in Honor of Honorable Sam Rayburn, April 16, 1955

Container List

Box	Folder
	H Christine R. Davis, continued
188-6	35 <u>Events, 1955-1956, n.d. continued</u> Kennedy-Johnson Strategy for Victory Luncheon, n.d.
	36 Woodrow Wilson Centennial Dinner, April 21, 1956
	<u>Organizational Affiliations, 1952-1970</u>
	37 Bethune-Cookman College, 1952
	38 Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., 1970
	39 Democratic National Committee, Office of Women's Activities, 1961
	40 Iota Phi Lambda, 1965
	41 Jack and Jill of America, Inc., 1966
	42 <u>Programs, 1949-1963</u>
188-7	<u>Daily Reminders, 1954-1972</u>
188-8	I Artifacts, 1950-1970
	March 26, 1950 plaque from Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Beta Mu-Lambda Chapters Awards for Outstanding Service to Humanity presented at Howard University.
	1952 trophy: "In appreciation to William L. Dawson for Meritorious Service in the Congress of the United States, MD State Conference, NAACP Branch"
	1956 plaque: "Capital Press Club Award to Congressman William L. Dawson for his incisive political acumen and effective leadership which have contributed greatly to the stature of his race and to the improved operation of his government."

Container List

Box	Folder
188-8	<p>I Artifacts, 1950-1970 January 22, 1961 plaque: "To Congressman William L. Dawson the Greatest Political Leader of All Times Presented by National Beauty Culturists League, Inc. Dr. Katie E. Wicham, President. Washington, D.C."</p> <p>1970 framed, signed photograph of Richard M. Nixon.</p>
188-9	<p>J Oversized Material, 1928-1944, n.d. "Negroes Strike! : The Call," March 19, 1928</p> <p>"You Must Resister to Vote! Beat the Nazis on the Home Front!" c. 1944</p> <p>"Specimen Democratic Primary Ballot," 1948</p> <p>"The Truthful Answer: Double-Crossing, Double-Dealing, Back-Stabbing Adam C. Powell, The 'Last and Greatest' 1956 'Uncle Tom.'"</p>