



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Stetson Kennedy collection**

1916-1950

Sc Micro R-3548

Processed by L. Lockhart.

## Summary

**Creator:** Kennedy, Stetson

**Title:** Stetson Kennedy collection

**Date:** 1916-1950

**Source:** Purchased from Stetson Kennedy, ca. 1952. SCM78-8

**Abstract:** Research files on organizations, individuals, and subjects collected for Kennedy's books, *I RODE WITH THE KU KLUX KLAN* (1954) and *SOUTHERN EXPOSURE* (1946), and newspaper and magazine articles. Includes correspondence, transcripts of articles, first person accounts of Klan meetings, notes, newspaper and magazine clippings, and printed material including publications. Subjects include the Klan in Georgia and Tennessee; Klan leaders such as J.B Stoner; the Columbians, a Georgia white power group; the Christian Americans and the right-to-work movement in the 1940s; and Georgia politics, including Eugene and Herman Tallmadge.

**Alternative Form Available:** Collection available on microfilm; New York Public Library; call number Sc Micro R-3548

**Preferred citation:** Stetson Kennedy collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by L. Lockhart; Machine-readable finding aid created by Apex Data Services; revised by Terry Catapano.

**Related Materials:**

Stetson Kennedy Papers are also located at the Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University.

## Creator History

Stetson Kennedy's career as an author began in the 1930's when he worked as both a writer and an editor on the Federal Writers' Project guide to Florida. The affiliations made there led to an invitation to write the Florida volume in the American Folkways series, edited by Erskine Caldwell. This volume, *Palmetto Country*(1942) established Kennedy's reputation as an authority on the traditions and culture of his home state. His next book, *Southern Exposure*(1946) was an expose of the social and political inequities of the South in the 1940's. Later, he continued his crusade with *I Rode with the Ku Klux Klan*(1954) and *Jim Crow Guide to the U.S.A.*(1959). At various times, he has contributed articles to the *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Saturday Review*, *Nation*, *New Republic*,and other periodicals in the U.S. and abroad. The author of the column *Inside Out*, syndicated by the Federated Press, from 1937 until 1950, Kennedy also wrote a column *Up Front Down South* for the *Pittsburgh Courier*in the 1960's.

Kennedy's writing career has existed, in his words, "as a tool to air human grievances." His devotion to the causes of civil rights and equality for all has been lifelong, and is the driving force behind all his books and articles. He has been affiliated with a wide variety of political and social action groups, including, among many others, the C.I.O. Political Action Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. As an agent of the Georgia government, he infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan under the pseudonym, John Perkins; both *Southern Exposure*and *I Rode with the Ku Klux Klan*are based in part on this experience.

Kennedy was born in Jacksonville, Florida, of an old southern family, on October 5, 1916. He attended the University of Florida, the New School for Social Research, and the University of Paris. As an independent candidate for the U.S. Senate from Florida in 1950, he ran on a "Total Equality" platform. From 1952 through 1960, Kennedy lived and traveled in Europe, Asia, and Africa. His interest in communism led him behind the Iron Curtain, where he lived and worked for three years, primarily in Hungary. He emerged, disenchanted, as a refugee in 1956.

Upon his return to the U.S. and Florida in 1960, Kennedy remained active in the civil rights and peace movements as a writer and lecturer. He joined the federal anti-poverty program in Miami in 1965, and later became its assistant director. He has been married several times.

## Scope and Content Note

The Stetson Kennedy Collection (1916-1950) consists of Kennedy's research files on various organizations, individuals, and subjects. Collected during the 1930's and 1940's, the material provided the basis for the books *Southern Exposure*and *I Rode with the Ku Klux Klan*and many newspaper and magazine articles. Included in the collection are correspondence; typescripts of articles; Kennedy's notes; newspaper and magazine clippings; and printed material, including publications and insignia of the organizations. Many items are photostatic copies, and numerous others are incomplete. The collection is divided into two series, the *Ku Klux Klan Research File* and the *General Research File*.

**Arrangement:** Collection organized into two series: I Ku Klux Klan Research Files; and II General Research Files

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African Americans -- Civil rights  
Civil rights -- United States

Nativism  
Racism -- United States  
White supremacy movements -- Georgia  
White supremacy movements -- Southern States

**Occupations**

Civil rights workers

**Geographic Names**

Georgia -- Politics and government -- 1865-1950  
Georgia -- Social conditions  
Southern States -- Social conditions  
Tennessee -- Social conditions  
United States -- Economic conditions -- 1918-1945  
United States -- Race relations  
United States -- Social conditions -- 1945-

**Names**

Kennedy, Stetson  
Stoner, Jesse Benjamin, 1924-2005  
Talmadge, Eugene, 1884-1946  
Talmadge, Herman E. (Herman Eugene), 1913-  
Christian Americans  
Columbians  
Ku Klux Klan (1915- )

## Container List

### Ku Klux Klan Research File

The *KU KLUX KLAN RESEARCH FILE*, 1916-1950, is comprised of material collected by Kennedy in the 1940's. Much of it seems to have been gathered through his infiltration of the Georgia Klan. The series has been organized into three subseries, Correspondence, Writings, and Printed Material.

Within each folder, material is arranged chronologically. A substantial portion of the material is not dated. Dates have been approximated when possible; otherwise, undated items follow the chronological sequence. Kennedy's notes are composed largely of small strips of paper. For ease of use, these have been fastened to 8 1/2" by 11" sheets, several to a page. No intellectual relationship is implied by the presence of several of these strips on the same page.

#### Correspondence

Correspondence consists of letters to and from Kennedy as well as correspondence between other individuals. Included in the latter are a number of letters from Klan officers to members, among them summonses to meetings.

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- b. 1 f. 1 r. 1 Kennedy, Stetson 1943-1949
- b. 1 f. 2 r. 1 Other Correspondents 1921-1950

#### Writings

*Writings* range from reports and typescripts of articles to Kennedy's notes. The reports are particularly notable, as they are first-person accounts of Klan meetings in Georgia and Tennessee from 1944 through 1948. Interviews with Klan leaders such as J.B. Stoner are to be found in this file.

#### Reports

- b. 1 f. 3 r. 1 1944-1946
- b. 1 f. 4 r. 1 1947-1948
- b. 1 f. 5 r. 1 Typescripts 1944-1948, n.d.

#### Notes

- b. 1 f. 6 r. 1 1920-1950
- b. 1 f. 7 r. 1 n.d

#### Printed Material

Printed material consists of publications produced either by the Klan for the use of members or about the Klan by other organizations. Membership materials, broadsides, and pamphlets are among the Klan publications. The material published by other organizations includes legal materials and clippings.

#### By Ku Klux Klan

- b. 1 f. 8 r. 1 Publications 1916-1942, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 9 r. 1 Broadsides 1936-1948, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 10 r. 1 Membership Materials 1936-1946, n.d.

#### About Ku Klux Klan

- b. 1 f. 11 r. 1 Legal Materials 1940-1950
- b. 1 f. 12 r. 1 Clippings 1936-1948
- b. 1 f. 13 r. 1 Miscellaneous Printed Material 1940-1948

## General Research File

The *GENERAL RESEARCH FILE*, 1934-1950, consists of Kennedy's subject file of research materials, arranged alphabetically. In the majority of cases, Kennedy's own subject headings have been retained. Many of the subjects are conservative, anti-labor, or white power organizations and individuals. Some are represented by only a few items; others by several folders. In each subject file, material is arranged as follows except when otherwise noted: correspondence, typescripts, notes, clippings, printed material. Within each of these groups, arrangement is chronological, with undated items at the end. A file of miscellaneous material on a variety of subjects follows the alphabetical sequence, arranged in the same sequence as the subject files.

The final box of the collection consists of Kennedy's card file. Arranged alphabetically by subject, this file includes information about many of the same subjects as the General Research File, as well as other subjects, organizations, and individuals.

As in the Ku Klux Klan Research File, strips of Kennedy's notes have been fastened to larger sheets, for convenience only. Also, some of these strips contain so little information that no subject is apparent. In these cases, they have been retained in the subject file where they were found.

Throughout this series, material often pertains to both an organization and a prominent individual within that organization. In such cases, the file has been titled according to what appears to be the primary focus. Similarly, the organizations and individuals included in the General Research File overlap to some extent; the subject of one file may be mentioned in a subsidiary way within another. For example, there is a subject file for General George Van Horn Moseley, but he is mentioned as well in the folder for Major Frank Pease.

Some of the subjects covered most completely are: the Columbians, a shortlived Georgia white-power group; the Right-to-Work movement in the 1940's, and the Christian Americans, a group instrumental in that movement; Eugene Talmadge's death prior to his inauguration as Georgia governor in 1947 and his son Herman's subsequent, unsuccessful claim to the governorship. (The latter is filed under Georgia politics.)

- b. 2 f. 1 r. 1 American Bilbo Club 1949, n.d.  
American Plan For Action 1945
- b. 2 f. 2 r. 1 American Shores Patrol 1946-1949, n.d.  
App, Austin 1946, 1949  
Armstrong, George W 1947-1949  
Asman, Larry 1946  
Blanchard, William/The White Front
- b. 2 f. 3 r. 1 Typescripts And Notes 1938-1948, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 4 r. 1 Clippings And Printed Material 1936-1945
- b. 2 f. 5 r. 1 Byrd For President Movement 1944  
Caribbean Legion 1949  
Columbians
- b. 2 f. 6 r. 1 Correspondence 1944-1947
- b. 2 f. 7 r. 1 Typescripts 1946-1947
- b. 2 f. 8 r. 1 Notes 1946-1947
- b. 2 f. 9 r. 1 Clippings 1946-1948
- b. 2 f. 10 r. 1 Printed Material 1946-1947
- b. 2 f. 11 r. 1 Committee For Constitutional Government 1940-1948, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 12 r. 2 Commoner Party 1939-1948, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 13 r. 2 Common Sense 1948  
Commonwealth 1942-1943

General Research File (cont.)

- Congress Of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) 1937-1944
- Congressmen And Senators
- b. 2 f. 14 r. 2 B-H 1943-1948
- b. 2 f. 15 r. 2 O-W 1943-1947, n.d.
- b. 3 f. 1 r. 2 Constitutional Education League 1940-1946, n.d.
- b. 3 f. 2 r. 2 Deatherage, George 1942-1944
- Durholz, Otto 1949
- b. 3 f. 3 r. 2 Fight For Free Enterprise 1945-1946
- b. 3 f. 4 r. 2 Fleckenstein, Edward A. 1949
- Flynn, John T. 1947
- Georgia Politics
- b. 3 f. 5 r. 2 Correspondence, Typescripts, Notes, Printed Material 1935-1948, n.d.
- Clippings
- b. 3 f. 6 r. 2 1941-1946
- b. 3 f. 7 r. 2 1947
- b. 3 f. 8 r. 2 1948-1950
- b. 3 f. 9 r. 2 German Industrial Fair 1938, 1948-1949
- b. 3 f. 10 r. 2 Individualist 1946
- Intelligent American Voters' League 1947
- b. 3 f. 11 r. 2 Johnston, Parson Jack 1946-1947
- b. 4 f. 1 r. 2 Keeling, R. F. 1949
- Linder, Tom 1944-1949, n.d.
- Mertig, Kurt 1947
- Moral Re-Armament
- b. 4 f. 2 r. 2 Correspondence, Typescripts, Notes 1944-1945, n.d.
- b. 4 f. 3 r. 2 Clippings And Printed Material 1939-1949
- b. 4 f. 4 r. 2 Moseley, General George Van Horn 1946-1948
- Mosley, Sir Oswald 1948
- b. 4 f. 5 r. 2 Murray, Alfalfa Bill 1948-1949
- National Association Of Manufacturers 1945
- b. 4 f. 6 r. 2 Nationalist Party/American Nationalist Committee 1943-1946
- b. 4 f. 7 r. 2 Order Of American Patriots 1945
- Patrick Henrys 1945-1946
- b. 4 f. 8 r. 3 Pease, Major Frank 1934-1946
- b. 4 f. 9 r. 3 The Press 1944-1946, n.d.
- b. 4 f. 10 r. 3 Protestant War Veterans 1939-1946
- Religion
- b. 4 f. 11 r. 3 Typescripts And Notes 1942-1948, n.d.
- b. 4 f. 12 r. 3 Clippings And Printed Material 1937-1947
- Right To Work Movement/Christian Americans
- b. 5 f. 1 r. 3 Correspondence 1942-1945

General Research File (cont.)  
Right To Work Movement/Christian Americans (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 2 r. 3     Typescripts 1944-1945
- b. 5 f. 3 r. 3     Notes 1942-1946, n.d.
- b. 5 f. 4 r. 3     Clippings 1942-1946
- b. 5 f. 5 r. 3     Printed Material 1940-1945, n.d.
- b. 5 f. 6 r. 3     Schweitzer Case 1943  
                    Shoemaker Case 1935-1936
- b. 5 f. 7 r. 3     Smith, Gerald L. K. 1940-1949
- b. 5 f. 8 r. 3     Smith, Reverend J. Harold 1946  
                    Terminiello, Reverend A. W.
- b. 5 f. 9 r. 3     Correspondence, Typescripts, Notes 1945-1946
- b. 5 f. 10 r. 3    Clippings And Printed Material 1942-1946, n.d.
- b. 5 f. 11 r. 3    United Sons Of Dixie n.d.  
                    Vigilantes Inc. 1942, 1946, n.d  
                    West End Cooperative 1946-1947
- b. 5 f. 12 r. 3    Miscellaneous Subjects 1939-1948, n.d.  
                    Card File
- b. 6 f. 1 r. 4     Adams - Byerley 1940'S
- b. 6 f. 2 r. 4     Byrnes - Girl 1940'S
- b. 6 f. 3 r. 4     Goff - Mcgoy 1940'S
- b. 6 f. 4 r. 4     Mcwilliams - Russell 1940'S
- b. 6 f. 5 r. 4     Sanctuary - Yellow 1940'S