

The Papers of Joseph Allan Johnston (1904-1974)
An Examination and Finding Aid

In order to improve access to more of the existing holdings of Western Archives copies of a number of preliminary finding aids are being made available. These preliminary finding aids, some of which were prepared many years ago, vary in degrees of completeness, detail and accuracy. Some provide only basic box listings of the contents of a fonds or a collection, while others provide additional background material. All are intended to be the starting point for access to the records and they should not be considered a definitive source of information on the full nature and contents of the fonds or collection. Questions about the information provided in the preliminary finding aids should be directed to archives.services@uwo.ca

The Man

Joseph Allan Johnston was born at London, Ontario, 28th September 1904, the son of Joseph and Isabelle Johnston. His father was the proprietor of Johnston Brothers Bakery and a one-time London city alderman.

Johnston was a salesman and later owner and manager of a typewriter business which (in 1987) is known as Biz-Pro and is located at 97 King Street for thirty five years. He married Hazel Currie in 1944; she survived him upon his death on 13 May 1974.

Johnston was active in London city politics as an Alderman in 1934 and 1935; Mayor in 1939-1940 and 1958-1960. He was elected as London's Liberal M.P. in 1940; defeated 1945. He served 5 ½ years [in the] Canadian active army, including four years' service overseas, mostly while also an M.P. His many activities include a strong involvement in Masonic Lodge affairs.

As Mayor in 1959 Johnston led the campaign for the Lake Huron Water Pipeline, and also the major annexation of London's suburbs which took effect [in] 1960. In the election for the enlarged city of London, he was defeated as Mayor by F. Gordon Stronach of London Township, who had been the police chief of the township. He was defeated in a second run at Stronach in 1962.

Upon his passing in 1974 the London Free Press observed that "a forthright approach, diligence and the acceptance of responsibility, even in the face of controversy", were marks of Allan Johnston's career.

The Collection

The Johnston Papers consist of 17 cubic foot records storage boxes, (approximately 8 meters and 3 oversize volumes). The box numbers are B4556 to B4574 and X1624-1626 (oversize).

Of the 17 boxes; the present project was able to quick-sort 8 boxes, which resulted in the course of sorting to add 2 "temporary boxes", which will be integrated with the remainder of the collection at the end of the project with the assistance of the Regional Collection Staff.

The material, whilst clean, except for occasional dust, was completely disorganized with no "respect du fonds" apparent.

NOTE: Categories below are spread out within the boxes in no apparent order.

Based on Johnston's life and career, the following categories were evolved:

A - Early life, personal records, family letters etc., 1890-1970 (2 cubic feet)

B - Business records: A few files of bills, receipts, business ephemera, etc., ca 1930-1970 (1 cubic foot)

C - City politics and administration, ca. 1934-1970. Includes routine council proceedings, printed materials, etc, (1 cubic foot)

D - Federal politics, Liberal party material, etc., ca. 1933-1953 (3 cubic feet)

E - Military career and demobilization, 1940-1946. This portion has been analyzed in detail with a file listing prepared. (1 cubic foot)

F - Masonic Lodge materials, mostly printed ephemera, ca. 1930-1970 (1 cubic foot)