



Finding Aid for

DEARBORN INDEPENDENT AARON SAPIRO V. HENRY FORD
LAWSUIT COLLECTION, 1919-1929
Accession 48

Finding Aid Published: November 2011



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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 48

CREATOR: Ford Motor Company. Archives.

TITLE: *Dearborn Independent* Aaron Sapiro v. Henry Ford lawsuit collection

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1919-1929

QUANTITY: 34.4 cubic ft.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: Aaron Sapiro was an agricultural cooperative advocate who initiated a libel lawsuit against Henry Ford and the *Dearborn Independent* concerning anti-Semitic articles in the paper. The collection includes correspondence and transcripts of the trial as well as information on similar cases around the country.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is open for research
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Ford Motor Company donation, 1984
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 48, *Dearborn Independent* Aaron Sapiro v. Henry Ford lawsuit collection, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Ford Motor Company Archives staff, December 1962.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared and published by Ford Motor Company Archives staff in December 1962.
- Finding aid prepared by Elyssa Bisoski, November 2011, and published in November 2011.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Aaron Sapiro, a labor and agriculture cooperative activist, spent many years organizing farming cooperatives in an attempt to protect farmers through internal price controls and collective advertising. In 1924, Sapiro initiated a libel lawsuit against Henry Ford for anti-Semitic articles that appeared in the *Dearborn Independent* newspaper. The articles, appearing over Henry Ford's signature, accused Sapiro of using the cooperative movement to seize control of American farmers for Jewish bankers and financiers. Sapiro named Henry Ford in the lawsuit as opposed to the *Dearborn Independent* claiming that as the owner of the paper, Ford had final editorial approval over the content of the paper. Ford's defense, however, centered around William Cameron and Ernest Liebold, who claimed editorial control of the newspaper over Henry Ford. Hoping to avert additional negative publicity and avoid taking the stand in court, Ford agreed to an out of court settlement with Sapiro involving a cash payment and a written apology in the *Dearborn Independent*.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of four subseries. The **Proceedings** series, 1919-1925, includes depositions, exhibits, and court transcripts from legal cases involving cooperative farming organizations across the United States. The **Correspondence and Investigators' Reports** series, 1919-1925, consists of alphabetical subject files on agriculture and the development of farming cooperatives. The subseries also includes correspondence and reports from investigators hired by the *Dearborn Independent* to report on farming cooperatives and organizers in various regions of the United States. The **Regional Reports** series, 1926-1929, consists of court documents, proceedings, copies of subpoenas, depositions, affidavits, pleas, and responses from court cases across the country involving cooperative organizations. Finally, the **Publications** series, 1919-1927, includes selected issues of the *Dearborn Independent*, 1919-1927; *Arkansas Rice News*, 1922-1925; translated copies of Hebrew newspaper articles, 1927; *American Cooperative Journal*, 1920-1925, *Cooperative Manager and Farmer*, 1924-1926; *Farmer's Elevator Guide*, 1925; *Journal of Cooperation*, 1923-1925; as well as general government pamphlets and magazines, 1919-1927.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Sapiro, Aaron, 1884-1959

Ford, Henry, 1863-1947

Dearborn independent

Arkansas rice news

American cooperative journal

Cooperative manager and farmer

Farmer's elevator guide

Journal of cooperation

Subjects

Actions and defenses

Trials (Libel)

Agriculture, Cooperative

Cooperative marketing of farm products

Agriculture

Antisemitism

Anti-Jewish propaganda

Genre and Form

Publications

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

SERIES I: PROCEEDINGS, 1919-1925

Box 1

Index to proceedings
Depositions and defendant's exhibits

Box 2

Depositions of Arthur E. Mealiff, J. C. Strong and H. M. Van Dusen
Pages 1-543
Pages 544-1170

Box 3

Pages 1172-1770
Time extension for taking depositions

Box 4

Testimony and exhibits
J. D. Douglas
Walter M. Harrison
W. F. Porter
Fred Wilmarth
American Cotton Association executive board meeting, July 23, 1919
Lonoke Chancery Court, Lee McCauley et al vs. Arkansas Growers Cooperative
Association, 1925
Volume I-III

Box 5 and 6

Volume IV-VII

Box 7

Arkansas Cotton Growers Association
Lawsuit with R. E. Brown, 1923-1942
Convention, April 1920 (stenographic reports)

Box 8

California Prune and Apricot Growers Association vs. Irving M. Brown, 1924
Aaron Sapiro vs. Henry Ford and Dearborn Publishing Company - amended plea

SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE AND INVESTIGATOR'S REPORTS

Agricultural reports (clippings on cooperative movement)
Alphabetical miscellaneous (correspondence)

Box 9

American Farm Bureau Federation file (correspondence, including copies of letters from Aaron Sapiro, literature published by the Federation, clippings).

1-21

25-100

100-150

Articles on cooperation (from magazines and newspapers)

Box 10

Barnet letter file (correspondence with Harry E. Barnet, investigator; clippings, and rough draft of a lengthy report).

Beans (correspondence, clippings, Bean Growers Association publications).

Black (correspondence of Fred Black of *Dearborn Independent*)

Box 11

Branch file (correspondence with branch managers, clippings)

Burley Tobacco file, (correspondence and clippings)

By-laws, articles, contracts - Sapiro associations

Box 12

Canadian Wheat files, (correspondence, court documents, and clippings pertaining to libel suit by Sapiro against the Leader Publishing Company, Regina, Saskatchewan)

Carlson, C. J. (telegram and correspondence concerning Carlson as a witness)

C. A. Collman file, (correspondence and reports of Charles Collman, investigator; court documents concerning cooperative trials in New York and elsewhere)

Connecticut Tobacco (correspondence)

Box 13

Contracts, articles, by-laws (of cooperatives)

A-F

G-Z

Coolidge file (clippings and correspondence relative to the President's attitude toward cooperatives)

Box 14

Cooperative associations by state (correspondence with individuals)

A-F

G-J

K

L-M

N-S

T-Z

Box 15

Cooperative laws (correspondence, clippings, pamphlets)

Cotton cooperatives (cooperative publications, clippings, correspondence)

1-25
26-70
71-81
86-132
140-171
172-200

Box 16

200-265
400-522

Box 17

523-616
Cotton cooperative laws, statutes (texts of laws by state)
Crank letters
Creech file (correspondence with F. Hunter Creech, Washington, D.C.)

Box 18

Court decision files, 1-50, 1924-1925 (primarily clippings; also includes U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics publication: "Summary of Cases and Decision on Legal Phases of Cooperative")
Dairy file (correspondence, clippings)
Dark tobacco, 1-90 (correspondence, clippings)
DePass (correspondence of W. L. De Pass, junior investigator)
Dexcar suit (correspondence on the Dexcar Pocahontas Coal Company income tax and Ford Motor Company vs. Dexter and Carpenter)

Box 19

Dunn correspondence (Photostats of correspondence Harry H. Dunn, investigator; rough draft of article on Peach and Fig Growers Association)
Farm finance (correspondence, clippings, releases, articles in business and banking magazines)
Federal Trade Commission, 1923 (clippings, releases, U. S. Federal Trade Commission reports on grain trade, and grain exporters)
Ford Motor Company branches - miscellaneous (correspondence from 21 branches, mostly to J. G. Bruce, Legal Department)
Garlick, Charles H. T. (telegrams concerning his knowledge of Sapiro activities)

Box 20

General names files, 1-225 (clippings, correspondence, rough drafts of articles)
General tobacco file, 1-125 (correspondence, reports, clippings)

Box 21

Grain Marketing Company (correspondence, clippings and pamphlets)
Hay (correspondence)

Hoover file (clippings and copies of speeches of Herbert Hoover, illustrative of his views on agriculture)

Indiana Farm Bureau (clippings and copies of *Hoosier Farmer*)

Indiana tobacco (clippings and correspondence)

Jardine, William M., Secretary of Agriculture (clippings and releases)

Box 22

Junior Farm clubs (correspondence, rough draft of article, clippings, National Boys and Girls Club publications)

Kansas Wheat file, 1-50 (correspondence, legal summonses against individuals for recovery of money in case of F. R. Shanks vs. National Wheat Growers Advisory Commission for back salary)

Box 23

Legislation (chiefly clippings; some correspondence)

Liebold, E.G. (Photostat of minutes of Ford Motor Company, April 21, 1920, regarding its relation to Dearborn Publishing Company)

Livestock file (clippings and correspondence)

Longley file (correspondence)

Lowden file (clippings and notes concerning ex-governor Frank Lowden of Illinois)

Maine potatoes (clippings, correspondence)

McCall

Letters (correspondence of W. T. McCall, investigator)

Idaho, 1-50 (correspondence and investigators' reports)

Box 24

McCall-Meyerett letters and report (investigations made by McCall and W. H. Meyerett)

McCall questionnaire (questionnaire returned by cooperatives on operating methods and connections with Sapiro)

McCall-Sherman letters (correspondence and reports of McCall and F. H. Sherman, advertising manager of Ford Motor Company, San Francisco)

Box 25

McCall-Sherman reports (numbered reports of investigations)

McColgin file (reports and correspondence of E. L. McColgin, investigator)

Memphis branch file (branch managers' correspondence and reports on local cooperatives' activity)

1-20

35-151

Miller, James Martin (correspondence concerning witness's veracity)

Box 27

Miscellaneous cooperative files, 1-100 (clippings and correspondence)

Miscellaneous farmers' association (pamphlets, clippings, some correspondence)

Miscellaneous fruit cooperative file (clippings and some correspondence)

Miscellaneous letters

A-L

R-Z

Box 28

National Council of Farmers Cooperative Marketing Association files, 1-50 (releases, correspondence, clippings)

News items (clippings, releases)

Box 29

Nut growers file, 1-70 (Photostats of pages from *The Peanut Grower*; some correspondence)

Nut Letters (correspondence from individuals)

Passoneau files (correspondence of Joseph Passoneau, former associate of Sapiro, including Photostats of Sapiro, Passoneau correspondence, and other cooperative correspondence)

Passoneau extras (Photostats of Passoneau correspondence)

Peanut file (correspondence, clippings, court documents)

1-20

21-23

Peteet file (correspondence, clippings, notes on Walton Feteet, cooperative organizer)

Portland branch file (correspondence, clippings, etc. on Oregon cooperatives)

Box 30

Potato file (correspondence, clippings)

Poultry file (correspondence, clippings)

Prior publications (correspondence regarding search for articles and news items on Sapiro activities)

Prune and apricot file (2 folders; correspondence, clippings)

Box 31

Raisin growers file (correspondence, clippings)

Reed, James A. (personal correspondence to and from Senator Reed of Missouri concerning cooperatives)

Rice growers file (correspondence, cooperative publications, clippings)

1-50

119-162

177-213

Box 32

Roach, J. C. (correspondence with and concerning John C. Roach, former cooperative organizer, as witness)

Sapiro File (correspondence, clippings)

1-90

100-160

161

Box 33

Sapiro case (notes on Sapiro; his education, affiliations, activities; Photostat copy of Declaration; demand for retraction signed by Aaron Sapiro Jan 6, 1925; copy of summons to answer to Sapiro April 21, 1925; outline of plan and methods)
Seattle branch file (correspondence on gathering information as to Sapiro activities in Washington, including letters of William A. Simonds advertising department in Seattle)
Simonds file (correspondence, notes, and reports of William A. Simonds)

Box 34

Thompson file (clippings, correspondence, roll of members who own stock in California Prune and Apricot Growers Association)
Tobacco cooperatives file (correspondence, clippings, pamphlets, court documents)
51-65
66-85
86-100
Tri-State Tobacco Association (correspondence, copies of reports of tobacco associations to Virginia Corporation Commission)
War Finance Corporation (correspondence)

Box 35

Watson file (reports, correspondence of Watson, Gage and Ess, attorneys and counselors at Jaw in Kansas City, on tobacco cooperatives, report on Sapiro vs. Barrick Publishing Company)
Wheat growers file (correspondence, clippings, reports, auditors reports for associations)
1-50
51-56
75-140
141-252

Box 36

Wing, Andrew S. (article on Henry Ford for *Farm & Fireside*, correspondence and worksheets)
Witherow, James M. (attorney at law, correspondence containing legal advice to Senator James A. Reed during the trial)
Wool file (clippings, reports, little correspondence)

SERIES III: REGIONAL REPORTS

News Releases
Witnesses for Detroit (2 folders)

Box 37

Witnesses for Detroit (2 folders)

Box 38

Witnesses for Detroit (3 folders)

Box 39

Jurors - notes on investigation
Legal notices, materials (2 folders)

Box 41

Legal notices, materials (3 folders)

Box 41

Contempt proceedings, Arkansas
W. A. Simonds notes

Box 42

Cooperative associations
Ward N. Choate notes and papers (2 folders)
Pamphlet - "Band of Jews"

Box 43

General index to correlations
Index to exhibits
Transcripts
 Preliminary motions on pleadings
 Opening statements (pages 1-337)
 W.J. Cameron (pages 338-800)

Box 44

W. J. Cameron, F. L. Black, J. M. Miller (pages 800-1143)
Aaron Sapiro (pages 1144-2105)

Box 45

Aaron Sapiro testimony (3 folders)

Box 46

W. A. Simonds
 Wheat
 Additional notes
Correlated direct reference to testimony, Sapiro plan
Correlated persons in the testimony
Digest cross examination of Sapiro

Box 47

Transcript Sapiro vs. Leader Publishing Company
Correlation New York and New Jersey

Minutes and Oregon Wheat Growers
12th Count Junior Boys and Girls Club
20th Court - Texas
Declaration
Durst file
Amended Pleas

Box 48

Arkansas Rice Growers Cooperative Association
Dexcar Pocahontas Coal Company
Legislative enactments

Box 49

Minutes
 Idaho Wheat Growers Association, May 10, 1922
 California Prune and Apricot Growers Association, March 28, 1923
Weinstock reports (2 folders)

Box 50

War Finance Corporation, loans
Exemplified copies of legislative enactments and hearings
Exhibits

Box 51

California Bean exhibits
 1-49
 50-70

Box 52

Depositions
 California Bean
 New York
 Texas

Box 53

Maine
Little Rock, Arkansas
Stuttgart, Arkansas
Kansas City, Missouri

Box 54

Blackwell, Oklahoma
Winona, Mississippi
Greenwood, Mississippi
Exhibits identified but not offered at trial

Box 55

Exhibits identified but not offered at trial
Northwestern Wheat Growers (audit)
Articles of Incorporation
Agricultural Cooperatives

Box 56

Maine and Washington
Wilmarth, Fred "Ironing Out Iron-Clad Contract"
Sapiro accounts
Lewis Cooley minutes
Victor Victor
S. G. Rubinow
Babson statistics

Box 57

Weil-Zuckerman
McCall
Charles E. Bassett
W. A. Simonds notes, (American Cotton Growers)
Eugene Meyer, Jr.
Robert W. Bingham
Ralph Merritt, California Apricot & Raisin, California Rice
Bernard Baruch
G. M. Lee - Arkansas Cotton

Box 58

Vegetable Growers of California
Depositions
Washington State (2 folders)
New Jersey

Box 59

South Carolina
South Carolina exhibits

Box 60

South Carolina exhibits (2 folders)

Box 61

South Carolina exhibits
Depositions - Albany, Georgia
Portland, Oregon and Oregon League Dairymen exhibits

Box 62

Oregon Depositions

Portland

Box 63

Spokane

Box 64

Notes

Miscellaneous publications

Federal Trade Commission publications

Box 65

Magazine articles and newspaper articles received by Sapiro

Aaron Sapiro

"Little Pals" (Sapiro)

Cotton Cooperative miscellaneous

Field reports

Box 66

Miscellaneous

Depositions

Idaho (general)

Oklahoma (general)

Maine (general)

Box 67

New York and New Jersey (general)

Newspaper clippings

Georgia Peanut Growers Cooperative Association

California Bean Growers (general)

California, miscellaneous

Box 68

Canadian Pool

Extra copies of transcript of record (2 folders)

Box 69

Extra copies of transcript of record, 1927

Plea defendants - Dearborn Publishing Company

University of Kentucky publications, 1922-1923

Box 70

Prune and apricot growers, California

Robertson County Times, Springfield, Tennessee

Box 71

Printed Copies of Declaration

Virginia and Carolina cotton cooperatives
Tobacco cooperatives - Virginia and North Carolina

Box 72

Texas (general)
Tennessee
South Carolina (general)

Box 73

Virginia Peanut Association
Northwest Hay vs. J. A. Slayton
Depositions

Box 74

Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, Virginia and Carolina
Virginia and North and South Carolinas (general)
California Bean Growers Association

Box 75

Northwest Cooperative - Hay, Wheat (Goldsmith articles)
Arkansas Cotton Growers Cooperative Association
Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association

Box 76

Sapiro correspondence
1924-1925
1926 (2 folders)
1927 and undated
With Dearborn Publishing Company

Box 77

California Prune and Apricot Growers Association
Minnesota (correspondence)
Mississippi (cotton associations and correspondence)
Sapiro telegrams, 1920-1927

Box 78

Joseph Passoneau, 1922-1926 (correspondence and miscellaneous)
Reports and pamphlets
Depositions - Oklahoma
Oregon (general)

Box 79

Royal Grain Association inquiry commission
General correspondence
California (correspondence and reports)

Depositions - California
Federated Fruit and Vegetable Growers

Box 80

California Prune and Apricot Growers Cooperative Associations
California (general)
Stockman Farmer Papers and *Farmer's Guide*
Depositions - Texas (2 folders)

Box 81

Cross-examination of Sapiro, first trial
Cotton
Oklahoma Cotton Growers Association
Oklahoma Growers Warehousing Corporation
Texas Farm Bureau Cotton Association
Arkansas Cotton Growers Cooperative Association
Staple Cotton Association - Mississippi
South Carolina Cotton Growers Cooperative Association
New Jersey and New York - Julian F. Langner
New Jersey Poultry Producers
New Jersey Potato Growers
New York Maple Producers Cooperative
New York Canning Crops, Incorporated
Northwest
Oregon Growers Cooperative Association
Butler and Bergeant Incorporated
Oregon Hop Growers Association
Pacific Cooperative Wool Growers
Oregon Dairymen's Cooperative League
Oregon Apple Story
Northwest Hay Association
Eugene Meyer, Junior and the American Farm Bureau
Wheat and the American Farm Bureau Federation

Box 82

Sapiro in the South
Rio Grande Growers Exchange
East Texas Tomato Growers Exchange
Peanut Growers Association
Arkansas Rice Growers Association
Georgia Peanut Growers Cooperative Association
Texas Farm Bureau Poultry Producers Exchange
Oklahoma Broom Corn Growers Cooperative Association
C. E. Durst File - Sapiro and the Federated Fruit and Vegetable Growers Incorporated
Illinois Manufacturers Association card file of U. S. executives

Box 83

SERIES IV: PUBLICATIONS

Hebrew newspaper articles
Dearborn Independent, 1919-1927
Arkansas Rice News, 1922-1925

Box 84

American Cooperative Journal, 1920-1925

Box 85

Farmer's Elevator Guide, 1925
Leighton's Magazine and *The Journal of Cooperation*, 1923-1925
Pamphlets and magazines

Box 85

C. B. Longley
Miscellaneous