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Title: Benjamin J. Burris published materials

Author/Creator: Burris, Benjamin J.

Collection Number: RG 03/01/07

Inclusive Dates: 1921-1927

Volume: 0.2 cubic feet

Number of Boxes: 1

Language of Materials: Materials entirely in English.

Access Restrictions: Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation:

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Subjects:

This collection is indexed under the following subject headings:

- Indiana State Normal School. Eastern Division
- Ball Teachers College
- Burris, Benjamin Jackson, 1882-1927

Provenance:

The Benjamin J. Burris Published Materials were received by Archives and Special Collection as a records transfer.

Accruals: No additions to this collection are expected.

Processing Information: Last updated 2008/11/04.

Biographical Note:

School administrator, politician, county attorney and first assistant to the state superintendent of public instruction, Benjamin Jackson Burris was born March 19, 1882, in Daviess County, Indiana. Here, with his father, mother, sister, and two brothers, he spent his early years learning the work on the farm and developing a love for the outdoors. In 1898, after America declared war against Spain, Benjamin and his brother enlisted in the Army. In his three years of service, Benjamin would see duty in China, Japan and the Philippines, developing an admiration and high regard for his superior officer, Conrad S. Babcock, a man who exerted a guiding influence throughout his life.

Following the service, Burris attended Central Normal College in Danville, Indiana. It was here that he met his later wife, Ethel Pearl Little, whom he married in 1905. During the 1904-5 term, he began his teaching career as assistant principal at Plainville. The following year he was made principal. For several years he continued in school work as teacher, administrator, or college student. In 1906, after graduating from Central Normal School, he was elected county superintendent of schools in Daviess County for a term of four years. During his term, the first consolidated school in Daviess County was built. From that time on, Mr. Burris never relaxed active work and interest in the establishment of better rural schools. Throughout this period he pursued his studies until he had earned the degree of Bachelor of Arts and, later, Master of Arts (Indiana University).

Mr. Burris also took up law as an avocation, attending the Benjamin Harrison Law School at Indianapolis and received the degree of Bachelor of Laws in 1911. In 1914, he was persuaded by Alvin Padgett, a leading attorney at Washington, to leave the teaching profession and join him in the practice of law. He became the junior member of the firm of Padgett and Burris and shortly thereafter was appointed county attorney.

In 1917, Mr. Burris was selected by Horace Ellis, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, as his assistant. He moved with his family to Indianapolis and from that time on was again actively engaged in school work. Here, Burris worked hard to expand educational opportunities for rural children and advocate for better housing, equipment and facilities for rural schools. He also helped create a more efficient system of township, county and state financing, as well as higher standards for teachers and school officials.

He continued his position of assistant state superintendent under Superintendent Linnaeus N. Himes, and in 1921, when Mr. Hines was appointed president of the Indiana State Normal School, he was selected to fill the unexpired term and was chosen at the next general election to succeed himself. In 1924, he was appointed, by the board of trustees of the Indiana State Normal School, president of Ball Teachers College, the eastern division of the Normal School.

President Burris quickly would quickly win the love, respect and cooperation of his student body, his faculty, and his fellow townspeople. Burris had a strong vision for the college and initially set two goals: achieving the highest accreditation of the college and building a laboratory school for teacher training. These goals were based on Burris' firm belief that teaching must be made a profession comparable to the other professions, and that a teacher must have high ideals and inspiration, as well as scholarship, since they were ever forming the citizen

of tomorrow. During Burris' tenure, various types of social and intramural activities prospered. Ball Gymnasium opened in 1925, the Library and Assembly Hall were constructed in 1926, and Lucina Hall was built in 1927.

President Burris died unexpectedly on April 26, 1927. At the time of his death, he was a member of the State Board of Education by appointment of Governor Jackson, as a member of the National Education Association, Indiana State teachers Association, Indiana Schoolmen's Club, the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Fraternity, and Columbia Club of Indianapolis. He was active in all these organizations and gave much of his time and service to public causes of all kinds.

Organizational History:

The institution currently known as Ball State University was founded in 1899 as the Eastern Indiana Normal Institute under the guidance of the Eastern Indiana Normal University Association. August 28, 1899 marked the dedication of the Administration Building, which was built on a budget of \$33,000.

On September 24, 1901 the Eastern Indiana Normal University closed its doors due to low enrollment numbers. In September 1902, it became Palmer University, named for New York bank Francis Asbury Palmer who contributed \$100,000 to reopen the school's doors. Upon Palmer's death in September 1903, his heirs contested the deceased's gift to the University, and the school closed for a second time.

In 1905, Muncie residents urged the state legislature to take control of the buildings and grounds. The Association agreed, and Muncie's college fell under the auspices of the state of Indiana and opened as Indiana Normal School and College of Applied Sciences. In 1907, the third attempt at post-secondary education in Muncie failed. The buildings and grounds were closed for 5 years, until 1912 when the Muncie Normal Institute reinvigorated the landscape.

A combination of The Marion Normal College and Business University, the National Mutual Training Company, the Muncie Conservatory of Music, and the Eastern Indiana Normal Institute, the Muncie Normal Institute, renamed the Muncie National Institute after the first year, lasted until January, 17, 1917 when the Muncie Trust Company filed a complaint to foreclose.

Also in 1917, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation permitting state educational institutions to receive private gifts, and after a generous donation from the Ball family and six months of negotiations, the school in Muncie became the Eastern Division of the Indiana State Normal School in Terre Haute on April 14, 1918.

After the Ball family donated enough money to design and construct Ball Gymnasium, the Indiana State Legislature recognized their generosity by renaming the school yet again. In May of 1922, the Indiana State Normal School Eastern Division became Ball Teachers College, Eastern Division, Indiana State Normal School. In 1929, it was shortened to Ball State Teachers College, and in March of 1930, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools acknowledged the school not as a teacher-training institution, but as a fully accredited college. In 1965, the school took on its current name, and Ball State Teachers College became Ball State University.

Scope and Content Note:

The Benjamin J. Burris Published Materials collection contains Ball Teachers College publications, scholarly journals, and a memorial program documenting President Burris' tenure as State Superintendent of Public Instruction and President of Ball Teachers College.

Detailed Description of the Collection:

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Official Directory of Normal Schools and Colleges in Indiana, 1921-1922
	2	Manual with State Courses for Secondary Schools, 1923
	3	<i>American Education</i> , vol. XXVII, no. 7, (March, 1924)
	4	Manual with Courses of Study in Arithmetic for the Elementary of Indiana, 1924
	5	<i>The Easterner</i> , vol. 4, n. 25 (April 2, 1925)
	6	A Memorial for Benjamin Jackson Burris, 1927