

## GEORGE L. CARTER COLLECTION

Accession Number 12  
1888-2001 and undated  
9 linear feet (16 boxes)  
35 photographs  
4 audiocassette recordings

**Provenance:** The collection was donated by Ned L. Irwin, Jonesborough, Tenn., on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Access Note:** The papers are available for research use. Copyright and all literary rights in the collection were retained by Ned L. Irwin, the donor and creator.

**Biographical Note:** George Lafayette Carter was born on the family farm outside Hillsville, Virginia, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1857. He began his business career clerking in Early Johnson's store in town. Johnson's son, J. Fred Johnson, would later marry Carter's sister and work closely in his business enterprises for many years. From 1878-1889, Carter worked at and helped manage the Wythe Lead and Zinc Mine Company in Austinville, Va. He then went to work in Pulaski, Va., for a decade managing the Pulaski Development Company and the Dora Furnace. In 1898, he founded the Carter Coal and Iron Company, which evolved into the Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company, one of the largest industrial enterprises in the southern United States. In 1902, Carter began the development of a railroad that eventually became the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, the costliest railroad per mile built in America. Carter also had a major role in developing cities throughout the southern Appalachian region, including Johnson City, Kingsport, Bristol, and Erwin, Tenn. He donated the land that secured the establishment of what became East Tennessee State University. In 1913, Carter founded the Carter Coal Company in West Virginia that became the largest privately-owned coal operation in the country. Carter died on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1936 in Washington, D. C., and was buried in his hometown of Hillsville. It has been stated that Carter did more than any other single individual to bring the industrial age to the Southern Appalachian region. For more on Carter, see the biography written by Ray Stahl and Ned L. Irwin.

**Scope and Content Note:** The collection consists of the research files and book manuscripts used by Ray Stahl and Ned L. Irwin for their biography of Appalachian industrialist George L. Carter titled *The Last Empire Builder: A Life of George L. Carter, 1857-1936* (Johnson City, Tenn.: East Tennessee State University, 2012). Documents include correspondence, articles, research notes, newspaper clippings, publications, interview transcripts and recordings, drafts of the book manuscript, and photographs.

The collection is arranged in the following series:

Series A: Research Files, 1891-2001 and undated, Boxes 1-10  
Series B: Writing Files, 1996-2000 and undated, Boxes 11-15  
Series C: Photographs, 1904-1999 and undated, Box 15  
Series D: Recordings, 1995 and undated, Box 16

Important subjects include:

Appalachian Region, Southern—Biography  
Businessmen—Appalachian Region, Southern--Biography  
Clinchfield Coal Corporation  
Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway  
Carter, George L., 1857-1936  
Dennis, John Bartlett  
East Tennessee State University—History  
Industries—Tennessee—History  
Johnson City (Tenn.)—Economic conditions—20<sup>th</sup> century  
Johnson City (Tenn.)—History  
Johnson, J. Fred (John Frederick), 1874-1944  
Kingsport (Tenn.)—Economic conditions—20<sup>th</sup> century  
Kingsport (Tenn.)—History  
Virginia, Southwest—Biography  
Tennessee, East—Biography  
Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company  
Washington County (Tenn.)—Biography  
Washington County (Tenn.)—Economic conditions—20<sup>th</sup> century  
Washington County (Tenn.)—History

## **Series Descriptions**

Series A: Research Files, 1888-2001 and undated, Boxes 1-10.

The series consists of correspondence, newspaper clippings, interviews, notes, articles, and other documents used by the authors in researching and writing the biography of George L. Carter. Files are arranged in alphabetical order by subject.

Series B: Writing Files, 1996-2000 and undated, Boxes 11-15.

The series consists of various typed manuscript versions of the biography of George L. Carter. Also included are articles and essays written by Ned Irwin and Ray Stahl about Carter. The files are arranged chronologically by date of composition, beginning with the articles and essays, followed by the book manuscript versions.

Series C: Photographs, 1904-1999 and undated, Box 15.

The series consists of black and white and color photographs related to George L. Carter, his family, associates, business operations, and locales related to Carter. The photographs are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Series D: Recordings, 1995 and undated, Box 16.

The series consists of audiocassette tape recordings of interviews conducted by Ray Stahl with various individuals regarding information they provided about George L. Carter. The recordings are arranged alphabetically by subject.

### **Box and Folder List**

Series A: Research Files, 1891-2001 and undated, Box 1-10

#### Box 1

1. Alderman, J. Leonard: Interview Transcript, undated
2. Alderman, John: Interview Transcript, undated
3. Articles, 1891-1999 and undated, Part 1 of 3
4. Articles, 1891-1999 and undated, Part 2 of 3
5. Articles, 1891-1999 and undated, Part 3 of 3
6. Asher, Thomas Jefferson, undated
7. Austinville, Virginia, undated
8. Beeson, D. R., Sr., 1936 and undated
9. Bolen, D. Winton, undated
10. Bowman, Owen, 1995 and copy of 1879 document
11. *Bristol Herald-Courier*, undated
12. Bristol, Tennessee-Virginia, 1955 and undated
13. Burleson, Millard: Interview Transcript, undated
14. Carnegie Hotel (Johnson City, Tenn.), 1910 and undated
15. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 1 of 8
16. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 2 of 8
17. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 3 of 8

#### Box 2

1. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 4 of 8
2. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 5 of 8
3. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 6 of 8
4. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 7 of 8
5. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, 1905-1989 and undated, Part 8 of 8
6. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway: Back Home Movement, 1911 and undated
7. Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway: Spartanburg Banquet Speech, 1909 and

undated

8. Carroll County, Virginia, 1990-1993 and undated
9. Carter, George L.: Correspondence, 1900-1936
10. Carter, George L.: Death, 1936-1977 and undated
11. Carter, George L.: Early Years, 1990 and undated
12. Carter, George L.: Last Years, undated

Box 3

1. Carter, James Walter (George L. Carter's son), 1936-1979 and undated
2. Carter, Mayetta Wilkinson (George L. Carter's wife), 1908-1946 and undated
3. Carter Coal Company, 1913-1977 and undated
4. Carter Coal Company (Alawest, Inc.), 1999
5. Carter Mansion (Hillsville, Virginia), 1976-1996 and undated
6. Carter Mansion (Johnson City, Tennessee), 1979-1984 and undated
7. Carter Stamp Ceremony (East Tennessee State University), 1999
8. Carter-Wilkinson Cemetery, undated
9. Carter's Businesses, undated
10. Chernow, Ron, 1998 and undated
11. Clinch Valley College, 1994
12. Coal (Southwest Virginia), 1911 and undated.
13. Coalwood, West Virginia, 1911-2001 and undated, Part 1 of 2
14. Coalwood, West Virginia, 1911-2001 and undated, Part 2 of 2
15. Cumberland Corporation: Minute Book Notes, undated
16. Cumberland Corporation: Syndicate Agreement, 1906 and undated
17. Davies, Davy (Wythe County, Virginia), 1995
18. Dennis, John B., 1947
19. Doggett, Berta Carter (George L. Carter's sister), undated
20. Dora Furnace, 1972 and undated
21. East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (Tweetsie), undated
22. East Tennessee State Normal School/East Tennessee State University, 1911-1986 and undated

Box 4

1. East Tennessee State Normal School/East Tennessee State University: Lawsuit, 1950
2. East Tennessee State University: Ghost Stories, 1986-1987
3. Edison, Thomas (Pulaski, Virginia), undated
4. Estillville Convention, undated
5. Fort Chiswell, Virginia (Wythe County), undated
6. Fuller, Justin: "A History of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company, 1852-1907," 1966
7. Goforth, James: Interview Transcript and other material, 1994 and undated

8. Graham's Forge, 1976
9. Guffey Coal Act, 1935-1994 and undated, Part 1 of 2
10. Guffey Coal Act, 1935-1994 and undated, Part 2 of 2
11. Hale, Elizabeth: Interview Transcript and other material, 1943-1984 and undated
12. Harkrader, Charles J., 1956-1965 and undated
13. Harman, J. N.: Interview Transcript, 1996 and undated
14. Harman property, 1994
15. Hillsdale, Virginia, undated
16. Hillsdale Christian Church, 1945-1992 and undated
17. Huff, Mary Bell Crockett, 1888
18. Interview transcripts (unidentified), undated

Box 5

1. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 1997
2. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 1998
3. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 1999 (January-August)
4. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 1999 (September-December)
5. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 2000 (January)
6. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 2000 (February-October)
7. Irwin, Ned: Correspondence, 2001
8. Irwin, Ned: Carter Speeches, 1994-1999
9. Jennings, Stephen Richard, 1969
10. Johnson, J. Fred (George L. Carter's brother-in-law), 1936-1979 and undated
11. Johnson City, Tennessee, 1908-19983 and undated
12. Johnson City, Tennessee: Holston land deal, 1925-1926
13. Johnson City, Tennessee: Tree Streets, undated

Box 6

1. Kentucky, 1973 and undated
2. Kingsport, Tennessee, 1908-1984 and undated, Part 1 of 2
3. Kingsport, Tennessee, 1908-1984 and undated, Part 2 of 2
4. Maryland Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore, Maryland), 1923-1999
5. McDowell County, West Virginia (Coalwood), undated
6. McGavock Family (Max Meadows, Virginia), 1926-1983
7. McHome, J. S.: Interview Transcript, 1995
8. Meadows Company, undated
9. Model Mill (Johnson City, Tennessee), 1925-1999 and undated
10. Mountain Meadow Preserve (Carroll County, Virginia), 1982-1983 and undated
11. Nelms, Willie: "George Lafayette Carter: Empire Builder," 1980
12. New River, 1987

13. Newspaper Clippings, 1906-1986 and undated, Part 1 of 2
14. Newspaper Clippings, 1906-1986 and undated, Part 2 of 2
15. Norfolk and Western Railroad, undated
16. Norfolk Southern Railway, 1946-1997 and undated
17. Notes, undated, Part 1 of 4
18. Notes, undated, Part 2 of 4
19. Notes, undated, Part 3 of 4
20. Notes, undated, Part 4 of 4
21. Post Office (Johnson City, Tennessee), 1908
22. Gene Price (Carter Coal Company), undated
23. Pulaski, Virginia, undated
24. Questionnaire, undated
25. Quotations, undated

Box 7

1. Research File (General), 1984 and undated
2. Research Trip: Bluefield, West Virginia, 1995 and undated
3. Research Trip: Radford University (Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company Records), 1997-1998 and undated
4. Research Trip: Virginia Tech (Blacksburg), 1998 and undated
5. Ring Trial, 1925 and undated
6. Ryan, Thomas Fortune, 1925-1998 and undated
7. Sisson, Sebert L., 1975-1999 and undated
8. Smith, Adelaide Jennings (Wytheville, Virginia), 1995-1999 and undated
9. Sources, 1998 and undated, Part 1 of 2
10. Sources, 1998 and undated, Part 2 of 2
11. Stahl, Ray: Book Proposal (early ones), undated
12. Stahl, Ray: Clippings, 1995 and undated

Box 8

1. Stahl, Ray: Correspondence, 1993-1999 and undated
2. Stahl, Ray: Speeches, undated
3. Stanley, Tal: "The Poco Field" (dissertation), 1996
4. Time Line (Carter's life), undated
5. Tom's Creek Coal Company, 1894 (copy)
6. Virginia Banner Coal Corporation, undated
7. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company, 1899-1999 and undated, Part 1 of 3
8. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company, 1899-1999 and undated, Part 2 of 3
9. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company, 1899-1999 and undated, Part 3 of 3
10. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company (Penn Virginia Collection, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware), 1902-1997 and undated, Part 1 of 3

11. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company (Penn Virginia Collection, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware), 1902-1997 and undated, Part 2 of 3

Box 9

1. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company (Penn Virginia Collection, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware), 1902-1997 and undated, Part 1 of 3
2. Virginia Iron, Coal and Coke Company (Philadelphia Branch, National Archives), 1901-1999 and undated
3. War, West Virginia, undated
4. Webb, Early (George L. Carter's chauffeur), undated
5. West Virginia: Sources, 1981
6. Wise County, Virginia, 1958-1984
7. Wythe County, Virginia, 1986 and undated

Box 10 (oversized)

1. Newspaper clippings (oversized, mostly copies), 1909-2000 and undated

Series B: Writing Files, 1996-2000 and undated, Boxes 11-15

Box 11

1. Chapter Headings, 1997
2. Disk Drives (contains original version of book manuscript of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2000), 2000
3. Epilogue (epigram), 1936
4. Irwin, Ned: "Coalwood: George L. Carter's Miners' Paradise," undated
5. Irwin, Ned: "George L. Carter (1857-1936): Enigma and Empire Builder," 1999
6. Stahl, Ray: Carter book (early draft notes), undated
7. Stahl, Ray: First Draft on Railroads, 1996
8. Stahl, Ray: "The Legacy of George L. Carter," 1996
9. Stahl, Ray: "Native Baron of Coal and Rail: The Appalachian Legacy of George L. Carter (1857-1936)" [book proposal], undated
10. Manuscript (draft): Prologue, 1998
11. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 2, 1998
12. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 3, 1998
13. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 4, 1998

Box 12

1. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 5, 1998

2. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 6, 1998
3. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 7, 1998
4. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 8, 1998
5. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 9, 1998
6. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 10, 1998
7. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 11, 1998
8. Manuscript (draft): Preface-Chapter 2, 1999
9. Manuscript (draft): Chapters 3-4, 1999
10. Manuscript (draft): Chapters 5-6, 1999
11. Manuscript (draft): Chapters 7-8, 1999
12. Manuscript (draft): Chapters 9-10, 1999
13. Manuscript (draft): Chapter 11-Epilogue and Bibliography, 1999

Box 13

1. Manuscript (draft): Appendix, 1999
2. Manuscript (draft): Sebert Sisson's correction to 1999 version, Preface-Chapter 2
3. Manuscript (draft): Sebert Sisson's correction to 1999 version, Chapters 3-4
4. Manuscript (draft): Sebert Sisson's correction to 1999 version, Chapters 5-6
5. Manuscript (draft): Sebert Sisson's correction to 1999 version, Chapters 7-8
6. Manuscript (draft): Sebert Sisson's correction to 1999 version, Chapters 9-11 and Epilogue)
7. Carter Book: Manuscript, Introduction and Chapters 1-2 (pages 1-94), 1999
8. Carter Book: Manuscript, Chapters 3-4 (pages 95-211), 1999
9. Carter Book: Manuscript, Chapters 5-6 (pages 212-336), 1999

Box 14

1. Carter Book: Manuscript, Chapters 7-9 (pages 337-457), 1999
2. Carter Book: Manuscript, Chapters 10-end of book (pages 458-626), 1999
3. Manuscript (draft), Introduction-Chapter 6, undated
4. Manuscript (draft), Chapter 7-to end of book, undated
5. Carter Book Manuscript (submitted to Overmountain Press), Chapters 1-3), 2000
5. Carter Book Manuscript (submitted to Overmountain Press), Chapters 4-5, 2000

Box 15

1. Carter Book Manuscript (submitted to Overmountain Press), Chapters 6-8, 2000
2. Carter Book Manuscript (submitted to Overmountain Press), Chapters 9-11, 2000
3. Carter Book Manuscript (submitted to Overmountain Press), Epilogue and Bibliography, 2000

Series C: Photographs, 1904-1999 and undated, Box 15

4. Illustrations for book, undated
5. Photographs: Photograph Order for Carter stamp cancellation ceremony at East Tennessee State University, 1999
6. Photographs: Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway, undated [10 images]
7. Photographs: Carter Mansion (Johnson City, Tennessee), c. 1910 [1 image]
8. Photographs: George L. Carter, undated [1 image]
9. Photographs: George L. Carter and family, undated [2 images]
10. Photographs: George L. Carter and Clinchfield investors, 1904 [2 images]
11. Photographs: Carter Family Cemetery (Hillsville, Virginia), 1999 [2 images]
12. Photographs: Cloudland Hotel (old), undated [1 image]
13. Photographs: Sebert Sisson Collection, undated [15 images]
14. Photographs: Unidentified building, undated [1 image]

Series D: Recordings, 1995 and undated, Box 16

Box 16

1. Alderman, John: Interview recorded, April 6, 1995 [1 audiotape cassette]
2. Harman, J. N.: Interview, undated (Side A); Adelaide Smith interview (Side B), undated [1 audiotape cassette]
3. Sisson, Sebert: Interview, undated [1 audiotape cassette]
4. Webb, Early: Interview, undated [1 audiotape cassette]