

Finding Aid to the August Johnson Papers

Johnson, August, 1880-1956

August Johnson Papers 1919-1956

.2 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 16

[Biography](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Mrs. August Johnson, 1956 (Acc. 588).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. August Johnson Papers, MS 16, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

August Johnson was born June 2, 1880 in Stockholm, Sweden the son of Gustave and Christine (Jacobsen) Johnson. In 1882 August's father immigrated to America, settling at Grand Forks, N.D., where he grew up. His first job was as an elevator operator in the Security Building and later worked in a bicycle repair shop. In 1907 he went to Devils Lake, N.D. to work with his brother in an auto garage. In 1912 he moved to Fargo to become garage foreman for the Wheelock Auto Company and later worked at the Lewis Motor Company. In 1920 with his brother John, they opened the Johnson Brothers Garage in Fargo. Through his work August developed a high pressure grease gun in 1921. Commercial manufacturing began in 1923, first in Chicago and later in Fargo as the Jiffy Manufacturing Company.

The company was involved in considerable litigation over the patent rights which reached the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Johnson also developed a hydraulic coupler, a device for seeding and fertilizing lawns, a grease gun, an automobile sun visor and an electric snow shovel.

In 1913 he married Mary Deryle Smith at Devils Lake, N.D.. She was born March 16, 1889 at Vancouver, British Columbia but grew up at Devils Lake. They had one son, Burton. They were members of Plymouth Congregational Church. Mr. Johnson was also a member of the Fargo Elks Lodge. On January 5, 1956 Mr. Johnson died and was buried at Riverside Cemetery, Fargo, N.D. Mrs. Johnson died February 24, 1977 at Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **August Johnson Papers** consist of various items documenting the career of Mr. Johnson and have been organized into three series: Correspondence, Legal documents, and Subject files.

The [Correspondence Series](#) deals with his inventions including his proof of invention application to the Institute of American Inventors for his Jiffy Electric Snow Shovel. There are also various brochures and advertisements for his Jiffy Hydraulic Lubricator Grease Gun, and other inventions including chuck coupler, barrel-type grease gun, and an automobile auxiliary sun visor.

The [Legal Documents Series](#) consists of various legal documents related to the court cases between Jiffy Lubricator Company and the Alemite Company and Stewart-Warner Corporation over patent infringements. The cases were brought to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. The briefs, petitions and other documents are not complete but do give a general overview of the cases.

The [Subject Files Series](#) include a tribute to Mr. Johnson by his son Burton, a copy of the book *Inventors Universal Educator* which is a guide for inventors, a letter by Alfred Johnson on the history of the Johnson family, and typed copies of historical material on the Lloyd family (Mrs. Johnson's side) and of Lloydtown, Ontario. The scrapbook contains various newspaper clippings on the court cases, and Mr. Johnson's inventions.

SEPARATIONS RECORD

The following non-manuscript material has been removed from the August Johnson papers and sent to the sections indicated.

Photographs (Institute Photo Mss 16 & Portrait P112)

- 11 items: Jiffy lubricator gun, man greasing car with it, Mr. Johnson, and several views of his electric snow shovel

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Biographical material, and Finding aid
	Correspondence Series
	Inventions
1/2	Electric snow shovel, 1949
1/3	Jiffy hydraulic lubricator brochures
1/4	General
	Legal Documents Series
	United States Court of Appeals (8th Circuit) Alemite Co. v. Jiffy Lubricator Co., 1949
1/5	Brief for Defendent-Appellant
1/6	Reply brief for Defendant – Appellant
	Jiffy Lubricator v. Alemite Co., 1949
1/7	Brief on behalf of Jiffy Lubricator Co.
1/8	Brief on behalf of The Alemite Co.
1/9	Petition for rehearing
	United State Supreme Court Jiffy Lubricator Co. v. Alemite Company, 1950
1/10	Correspondence, 1950
1/11	Petition for Writ of Certiorari
1/12	Brief in support of Petition for Writ of Certiorari
1/13	Petition for rehearing on Petition for Writ of Certiorar
	Jiffy Lubricator Co. v. Stewart-Warner Corp., 1950
1/14	Petitioner's Reply Brief
1/15	Brief in support of Petition for Writ of Certiorari
	Subject Files Series
1/16	<i>"A forward about August Johnson, Inventor and Manufacturer,"</i> by Burton A. Johnson, 1956
1/17	<i>Inventors Universal Educator</i> , 1919
1/18	Johnson family biographical material
1/19	Lloyd family and Lloydtown, Ontario historical material
1/20	Scrapbook, 1946 – 1956