

C Jesse, Richard Henry (1853-1921), Papers, 1871-1932
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INTRODUCTION

The papers of a professional educator and president of the University of Missouri from 1891 to 1908 include correspondence, school records, biographical materials, and manuscript copies of speeches and articles.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Jesse Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Bredelle Jesse on 3 November 1983 (Accession No. 4539). Additions to the papers were made on 30 March 1984, 15 October 1984, and 17 October 1985 (Accession Nos. 4564, 4594, and 4678).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Henry Jesse was born 1 March 1853, on his family's plantation in Lancaster County, Virginia. Jesse attended the University of Virginia from 1873 to 1875. Upon graduation he was appointed instructor of French and mathematics at Hanover Academy in Taylorville, Virginia. In 1877 and 1878 he was principal of Washington Academy in Princess Anne, Maryland. While in Maryland, Jesse met Addie Henry Polk, whom he later married in July 1882.

From 1878 to 1884 Richard Jesse was professor of Greek, Latin, and English and dean of the Academic Department at the University of Louisiana. From 1884 to 1891 he was professor of Latin at Tulane University. He was president of the University of Missouri from 1891 until his retirement in 1908. Jesse remained in Columbia, Missouri, during his retirement and continued to pursue educational and personal interests through lectures and writings until his death on 22 January 1921.

See also *Richard Henry Jesse, President of the University of Missouri, 1891-1908*, by Henry O. Severance.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

These papers consist of personal and professional **correspondence**, **school records**, **biographical materials**, manuscript copies of **speeches and articles**, and a few **miscellaneous** family and collected materials. The documents within each series are arranged in chronological order.

Most of the **correspondence** is incoming and dates from the period of President Jesse's retirement from the University of Missouri in 1908 until his death in 1921. The correspondents include personal friends from Missouri, Virginia, and Louisiana, professional educators, members of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and others. Many of the letters are personal in content, but they often discuss educational issues and the University of Missouri. The earliest letters concern Jesse's days as a student at Hanover Academy in Virginia, student and alumni opposition to Jesse's presidency at the University of Missouri, and Jesse's retirement in 1908. The latest correspondence includes a letter to Addie Polk Jesse regarding the naming of Jesse Hall at Missouri and correspondence of Henry O. Severance, Jesse's biographer.

Richard Henry Jesse's attendance, examination, and grade reports from Hanover Academy in Virginia and from the University of Virginia make up the **school records** section.

Biographical materials include sketches from *Who's Who in America* and the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*; newspaper clippings; a copy of the publication *Official Retirement of President Richard Henry Jesse*; and the 6 June 1908 issue of *The Independent*, a University of Missouri student newspaper, which reports Jesse's retirement.

The **speeches and articles** are manuscript copies, handwritten and typed, of speeches and articles authored by Richard Henry Jesse. Much of this material is autobiographical, especially the reminiscences of his early life in Virginia. Other topics include education, religion, social issues, and the University of Missouri.

The collection best documents the life of Jesse from the time of his retirement as president of the University of Missouri until his death. Nearly all of the correspondence dates from this period, as do most of the manuscript copies of speeches and articles. A few biographical materials and papers from his school days help to document the earlier periods of Jesse's life, as do many of his articles, which are autobiographical.

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- f. 35 "Shall We Pay for the Negro?"
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- f. 37 Editorials regarding higher education in Montana; a book of words and phrases compiled by Jesse; an article on Congregationalism.
 f. 38 "The Gray Fairy," a one-act play for children adapted by Gladys M. Wheat from Mary Polk Jesse's story of the same name.
 f. 39 Catalogue of the University of the State of Missouri, 1897-98, annotated by Jesse

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