

# Kemper Papers

## RG 52

Louisiana State Museum Historical Center

September 2014

### Descriptive Summary

<b>Provenance:</b>	Gift of Cordelle Kemper Ballard in 1974
<b>Title:</b>	Papers of James Parkerson Kemper
<b>Dates:</b>	1923 – 1965
<b>Abstract:</b>	Collection of John Parkerson Kemper's engineering writings on flood prevention and management in the Atchafalaya Basin and biographical and historical writings about Bayou Teche.
<b>Extent:</b>	.75 ln ft/1.5 Boxes/29 Folders
<b>Accession:</b>	1974.006.001-043

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### Biographical / Historical Note

James Parkerson Kemper was born in St. Mary Parish on August 5, 1868. He was the originator and pioneer in the field of flood control in Louisiana. He first advocated his plan of flood control around 1912, and for a number of years was practically the only engineer to persist in the advocacy of his ideas. Kemper's plan included the construction of a spilldam or spillway to relieve the flooding Mississippi through a direct channel to the Atchafalaya Basin and then to the open Gulf. Over time, he turned his attention to writing personal memoirs and histories of Bayou Teche. [Source: LSM accession notes]

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### Scope and Content

#### Subjects

John Parkerson Kemper	Bayou Teche
Mississippi River	History
Atchafalaya Basin	Politics
Flood Control	Genealogy
Flooding	Farming/Agriculture
Spillway/dam	Pointe Coupee
Grand Lake	World War II
Cote Blanche	Walter Parker
Sugar production	Louisiana Engineering Society

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## Access of Use Restrictions

### Access

Collection is **open** for research

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## Related or Separated Materials

N/A

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Kemper Papers, Louisiana State Museum Historical Center

### Acquisition Information

This collection was gifted to the Louisiana State Museum by Mrs. Cordelle Kemper Ballard, daughter of J.P. Kemper, on January 18, 1974.

### Notes

Accession notes and older indexes are included with this collection. Copies of correspondence between Mrs. Ballard and John R. Kemp, the Curator of Manuscripts c. 1973, are housed with the accession notes and give further information about the history of the collection. Photocopied selections of Alcee Fortier's *Louisiana*, William Henry Perrin's *Southwest Louisiana*, and Henry Chamber's *History of Louisiana* giving biographical information about Kemper and his family are included as well. Cordelle Kemper Ballard, who donated this collection, also donated Record Group 167 (the Cordelle Kemper Ballard Papers).

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## Contents List

Folder Location	Accession #	Date	Item Description
Box 1 Calendar	No Accession	No Date No Date	Mailing label, Cordelle K. Ballard to John R. Kemp (LSM). 1 page. Card announcing resumption of J.P. Kemper's private civil engineering practice. 1 page.
Box 1 Folder 1	1974.006.001	3 July 1926	Pamphlet: "A Brief Submitted to the Engineering Committee" appointed by the Secretary of War, under the Riley J. Wilson Spillway Survey Bill by the St. Mary Protective Association. Regarding flood prevention and the Atchafalaya Basin. Printed, 16 pp.
Box 1 Folder 2	1974.006.002	August 1927	Magazine: <i>New Orleans Life</i> . Article by J.P. Kemper "The Mississippi Flood Problem" on page 16. 34 pages. Printed, 34 pp.

Box 1 Folder 3	1974.006.003	1943	Booklet: <i>A Plan for Peace</i> . J.P. Kemper, Fordoche, LA. Outlines and describes a plan for world peace following World War II. Printed, 128 pp.
Box 1 Folder 4	1974.006.004	August 1927	Pamphlet: <i>Plan for Flood Control in the Mississippi Valley</i> . J.P. Kemper, C.E. Published and circulated by the National Flood Commission, New Orleans, LA. Printed, 49pp.
Box 1 Folder 5	1974.006.005	11 May 1927	Magazine: <i>The Nation</i> . "Curbing the Mississippi", by Walter Parker of the National Flood Prevention Commission. Printed, 32 pp.
Box 1 Folder 6	1974.006.006	1 June 1927	Pamphlet: <i>A.B.C. of the Flood Problem: A Discussion by J.P. Kemper, C.E. Consultant Engineer of the National Flood Prevention and River Regulation Commission</i> . New Orleans. Printed, 12 pp.
Box 1 Folder 7	1974.006.007	June 1926	Pamphlet: <i>Spillways in Louisiana: Supplementing a Report on Proposed Plan for Flood Control Below the Arkansas</i> . J.P. Kemper, C.E. New Orleans. Printed, 16 pp.
Box 1 Folder 8	1974.006.008	No Date	Pamphlet: <i>Statement by the Atchafalaya Basin Flood Protective Association to Those with Interests below Vicksburg and in the Atchafalaya and Lower Tensas Basins</i> . Atchafalaya Basin Flood Protective Association. Printed, 25 pp. Envelope addressed to Cordelle K. Kemper.
Box 1 Folder 9	1974.006.009	16-17 January 1928	Booklet: <i>Plan for Flood Control in the Mississippi Valley By Means of Lower Flood Levels through Outlets and Spillways below the Arkansas River</i> . J.P. Kemper, C.E. New Orleans, LA. Submitted to the Committee on Flood Control. Printed, 147 pp.
Box 1 Folder 10	1974.006.010	12 May 1927	Article [typescript copy]: "Contradictory Advice on Flood Control". <i>Houston Chronicle</i> . Editorial by the National Flood Commission. 2 pages.
Box 1 Folder 11	1974.006.011	19 January 1925	Article: "Speech of Hon. James O'Connor of Louisiana in the House of Representatives". <i>Congressional Record</i> . Regarding "Flood Control and Building and Empire Through a Remade Economic Environment." Printed, 4 pp.
Box 1 Folder 12	1974.006.012	No Date	Article: "Why Engineers Disagree on Flood Control". Walter Parker. Printed, 2 pp.
Box 1 Folder 13	1974.006.013	July 1927	Article: "What are we Going to do about It?: An analysis of America's greatest flood disaster". Reprint from <i>Outdoor America</i> . Gifford Pinchot. Printed, 4 pp.
Box 1 Folder 14	1974.006.014	No Date	Circular: "Notice: Close Old River Now". Atchafalaya Basin Flood Protective Association. Printed, 1 page.
Box 1 Folder 15	1974.006.015	9 April 1949	Letter: Published letter from J.P. Kemper, Engineer of the Atchafalaya Basin Flood Protective Association, to Henry D. Larcade, Jr. House of Representatives, Washington, D. C. regarding flood protective measures "in the Mississippi Valley Below Vicksburg". Includes statistical analysis of the Flood of 1945 and schematic of the Lower Tensas Basin. Printed, 8 pages and envelope.

Box 1 Folder 16	1974.006.016a 1974.006.016b 1974.006.016c 1974.006.016d	No Date No Date No Date No Date	Circular advertising <i>Rebellious River</i> , by J.P. Kemper. 1 page. Blank order card for <i>Rebellious River</i> . 1 page. "Penny Postcard" announcing sale of <i>Rebellious River</i> . 1 page Advertisement card for <i>Rebellious River</i> . 1 page.
Box 1 Folder 17	1974.006.017	8 April 1937	Published Address: "Flood Control or Prevention in the Mississippi Valley", given by J.P. Kemper before the Round Table Club. Printed, 15 pages.
Box 1 Folder 18	1974.006.018	No Date	Report: "Outline of a Project to Solve the Problems of Storms, Floods and Salt Water Infiltration of the Entire Coastal Plain of the Attakapas". J.P. Kemper. Typed, 4 pages, and schematic of Louisiana Coastline labeled "Proposed Levee & Highway".
Box 1 Folder 19	1974.006.019	30 April 1927	Newspaper: <i>New Orleans States</i> . Front page describes and discusses flooding of the Mississippi River. Printed, 1 Page.
Box 1 Folder 20	1974.006.020 1974.006.021 1974.006.022 1974.006.023 1974.006.024 1974.006.025 1974.006.026 1974.006.027 1974.006.028 1974.006.029 1974.006.030 1974.006.031 1974.006.032 1947.006.033 1974.006.034	30 December 1949 31 December 1949 14 January 1940 1923 1923 c. 1920s 13 September 1963 No Date 13 July 1963 No Date – c.1950s 2 May 1965 No Date 12 October 1927 13 January 1940 12-13 January 1940	Newspaper article: "Flood Control Expert Succumbs". <i>Times Picayune</i> . Death notice for J.P. Kemper. Newspaper article: "J.P. Kemper". <i>Times Picayune</i> . Editorial on the death of J.P. Kemper Newspaper article: "Wax Lake Outlet to Protect Land, Confine Floods". <i>New Orleans States</i> . On J.P. Kemper and flood control in the Atchafalaya Basin. Newspaper article: "Engineers' Spillway Fight Near Crisis". Name of paper not indicated. On J.P. Kemper and flood control. Newspaper article: "Engineers' Spillway Fight Near Crisis". Name of paper not indicated. On J.P. Kemper and flood control. Copy of .023. Newspaper article. "Safe River Men Present Views at White House". Name of paper not indicated. J.P. Kemper meets with President Coolidge. Newspaper article: "Kemper Credited with Old River Leadership". <i>Franklin Banner-Tribune</i> . Tribute to J.P. Kemper. Newspaper article: "Excerpts from <i>West of the Atchafalaya</i> : Three Kemper Brothers Fought for West Florida's Independence". <i>Franklin Banner-Tribune</i> . Parts of Kemper's book <i>West of the Atchafalaya</i> . Newspaper article: "U.S. Engineers Close Vast Threat to South Louisiana". <i>Times-Picayune</i> . Describes closing of Old River for flood control. Newspaper article: "A Worthy Tribute". <i>Franklin Banner-Tribune</i> . Tribute to life and flood prevention works of J.P. Kemper. Newspaper article: "The Mississippi Balks Efforts at Control". Name of paper not indicated. Discusses Mississippi River flooding. Newspaper article: incomplete, no title. <i>New Orleans States</i> . Plans for Mississippi spillways. Newspaper Article: "A Worthy Soldier". <i>New Orleans Item</i> . Published letter from J.P. Kemper to Walter Parker concerning levee construction in New Orleans. Program: Fifth Annual Banquet of the Louisiana Engineering Society. Printed, 4pps. Program: Louisiana Engineering Society Annual Meeting. Printed, 2 pps.

Box 1 Folder 21	1974.006.035	No Date	Manuscript: <i>Recollections of a Sugar Planter: A True Story of Life on a Sugar Plantation in the Bayou Teche Country of Louisiana</i> . J.P. Kemper. Typewritten, 144 pp. Includes map plate of the Atchafalaya Basin.
Box 1 Folder 22	1974.006.036	No Date	Manuscript: <i>O, He's a Farmer</i> . J.P. Kemper. Regarding the integration and importance of the farmer in the national economy Typewritten, 92 pp.
Box 1 Folder 23	1974.006.037	No Date	Manuscript: <i>Down Where the Sugarcane Grows: A Story of Bayou Teche</i> . J.P. Kemper. Regarding genealogical sketches, economic and political history of the Bayou Teche area. Typewritten, 242 pages. Includes black and white plates of Bayou Teche area.
Box 1 Folder 24	1974.006.038	No Date	Manuscript: "Chapter Two". J.P. Kemper. Regarding the genealogy of the Kemper family. Typewritten, 21 pages.
Box 1 Folder 25	1974.006.039	No Date	Manuscript: <i>The Negro</i> . J.P. Kemper. Regarding race relations and segregationist policies in the United States post-Civil War. Typewritten, 5 pages.
Box 1 Folder 26	1974.006.039	No Date	Copy of manuscript: <i>The Negro</i> . J.P. Kemper. Regarding race relations and segregationist policies in the United States post-Civil War and in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century. Typewritten, 5 pages
Box 2 Folder 27	1974.006.041	No Date	Manuscript: Incomplete copy of manuscript by J.P. Kemper. Regarding the Bayou Teche area, sugar production. Typed, 185pps.
Box 2 Folder 28	1974.006.042	No Date	Manuscript: Notes written by J.P. Kemper relating to political, economic, and genealogical history of Bayou Teche. Notes include "Two Old Men", "The Fuselier Family", "Families of Pioneers on Bayou Teche", "Chapter IV: The Anglo Americans Arrive", "The Palfrey Family". Handwritten, 151 pps.
Box 2 Folder 29	1974.006.043a-e	C. 1947	Manuscript: "Three Brothers from Virginia", which became chapters in Kemper's book <i>West of the Atchafalaya</i> . Handwritten, 250 pages. 43a: Contains draft of a letter from Kemper to Congressman James Domengeaux and Henry D. Laracade, Jr., Washington, D.C., regarding flood control in the Atchafalaya Basin. No date. 43b: Contains draft of report by J.P. Kemper regarding the closing of Old River and flood control in the Tensas and Atchafalaya Basins. 43c: Contains draft of letter from Kemper to Morris Shannon, Mayor, Morgan City, Louisiana. Regarding flood control in the Atchafalaya Basin. June 1947. 43d: Includes descriptions of "Cajun" and "Creole" social life, horse racing, balls, agriculture, hunting and fishing, and sugarmaking. 43e: Describes sugarmaking, African-American singing, the Chicago World's Fair, the advent of electrical engineering and its use in sugar production, Pointe Coupee in the 1930s, automobile culture, Bayou Teche politics and family histories, education, American migrants from the Middle West [sic], and an appendix including further genealogical information.