



The Library
JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Special
Collections
X 101
(13 boxes)

LEWIS E. LAWES (1883-1947). Papers.¹

A world famous penologist, Lawes was best known for his twenty one year stint as Warden of Sing Sing (1920-1941), and for his often extraordinary ability to keep himself and his viewpoints on crime and punishment in the public eye. An exemplar of the prison reform movement, Lawes was a strong believer in rehabilitation as the function of the penal system, and an out-spoken opponent of capital punishment. During his administration rehabilitation programs at Sing Sing ranged far beyond traditional educational and work programs to encompass the care and maintenance of an aviary and a greenhouse, a near-professional-level football team, and a Sunday night lecture series that featured eminent personalities from the arts, sports, and religion.

Lawes reputation and ideas reached well beyond the correctional community through a long running radio program, numerous books and articles, a Broadway play, and a film adaptation of his best known book, "Twenty thousand years at Sing Sing."

In so far as was possible the collection has been arranged to reflect the order imposed by Lawes himself. The principal Series are:

- I. Personal papers
- II. Photos and Honorary Certificates and Awards
- III. Sing Sing publications
- IV. "Black Sheep" (Sing Sing football team)
- V. Miscellaneous
- VI. General Scrap Books
- VII. Artifacts

1. This collection of the Lawes' papers is not complete: at least one other very similar assortment of correspondence, scrapbooks, photos etc. has yet to find its way to a repository.

Box # File # Series I: Personal papers

In the course of his thirty six year career in New York State correctional institutions and in his post-retirement involvement in prison programs in support of the war effort, Lawes associated and corresponded with a wide range of prominent political and cultural figures including Clarence Darrow, Al Smith, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Gene Tunney and Harry Houdini. It was his habit to mount much of this correspondence in scrapbooks (boxes 3 & 4). Other correspondence files were kept in a more traditional subject-like arrangement, with inevitable overlaps between the files and the scrap books.

A. Correspondence

- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | 1 | American magazine, 1930-31 |
| | 2 | Boys Club of America, 1941-42 |
| | 3 | Commissioner(s) of Corrections - Misc. 1915-41 |
| | 4 | Commissioner of Corrections: Survey of Sing Sing prepared for Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1929 |
| | 5 | Commissioner of Corrections: Inmate visiting regulations, 1936-41 |
| | 6 | General Federation of Women's Clubs, 1941-42 |
| | 7 | Individual prisoner related correspondence, 1919-42 |
| | 8 | N. Y. State Committee on the Youth Correction Authority Plan, 1942-43 |
| | 9 | Publishers' solicitations, 1925-42 |
| | 10 | Radio shows, 1933-43 |
| 2 | 11 | Requests for comments, 1933-34, 1938-39 |
| | 12 | Requests for comments, 1940-41 |
| | 13 | Sunday lecture series, 1930-31 |
| | 14 | Testimonial dinner for 30 years service, 1935 |
| | 15 | Theatre and film related correspondence ("Chalked Out"), 1936-37 |
| | 16 | U. S. Senate Committee Hearings on Racketeering, 1933 |
| | 17 | World War I servicemen, 1918 |
| | 18 | Miscellaneous, 1927-42 |
| | 19 | Elise Lawes correspondence, 1947, 1963 |
| | 20 | Non-Lawes miscellaneous correspondence, 1893, 1942 |
| 3 | | Correspondence scrap book 1904-24 (277 pages) |
| 4 | | Correspondence scrap book 1929-32 (ca. 100 items) |

B. Drafts of articles and scripts

- | | | |
|---|----|-----------------------------|
| 5 | 21 | Capital punishment (5) |
| | 22 | "Chalked Out" (play script) |
| | 23 | Crime and penology (5) |
| | 24 | "Crime Conferences" |
| | 25 | Clarence Darrow |

<u>Box #</u>	<u>File #</u>	
5 (Cont.)	26	Juvenile delinquency: prevention and rehabilitation (4)
	27	Parole (5)
	28	Sing Sing (2)
	29	Miscellaneous drafts submitted to Lawes
<u>Series II: Photos and Honorary Certificates and Awards</u>		
6	<u>A. Photos</u>	
	30	Portraits
	31	Lawes family
	32	Sing Sing
	33	Public activities
	34	Non-Lawes photos
	35	<u>B. Certificates and awards</u>
7	<u>Series III: Sing Sing publications</u>	
		<u>Star of Hope</u> (bound volumes) Vol.I. 1899-1900
		Vol.II. 1900-1901
		Vol.III. 1901-1902
8		<u>Sing Sing Bulletin</u> (bound volume) Vol. 19, nos. 1-12, 1917-18
		Special Lawes birthday edition of <u>Sing Sing News</u> , 9/40
	<u>Series IV: "Black Sheep" (Sing Sing football team)</u>	
	The football team was the star in the firmament of Sing Sing's sports programs. Games were played both within the home grounds and "away"; assorted dignitaries attended and assumed honorific responsibilities at the games; the accompanying pomp and splendor included music by the Sing Sing band and a parade featuring the team mascot, a pony painted to resemble a zebra. The team spawned at least one professional athlete, Alabama Pitts, whose cross-over from the "Black Sheep" to an outside team required overcoming a good deal of local fear and hostility.	
	36	"Black Sheep" programs, 1931-34
	37	"Black Sheep" scrap book
	38	"Black Sheep" correspondence
	<u>Series V: Miscellaneous</u>	
	39	Lawes stationary
	40	Inventory of Lawes' book collection and Index to <u>Correction</u> (magazine) 1931-38 - typescripts
	41	"Memorials of my Uncle (A. Oakley Hall) Dec. 1856" (Scrap book)
	42	Peter M. Daly materials
	43	Watercolor sketches by Sammie O'Farr
	44	Blue print for first electric chair

Box 44 File 44

Series VI: General Scrap Books

The thousands of newspaper and magazine articles in Lawes' numerous scrap books (photocopied because the originals were crumbling) contain both clipping service items related to Lawes, and material selected by Lawes himself because of his interest in the subject. The arrangement, except for the "strays" in File 44 63, follows the original: no effort has been made to overcome the general lack of order. Where Lawes himself attached a title to a particular scrap book, this is noted in quotation marks; when a clear emphasis characterizes a scrap book, this is noted in parenthesis.

Despite the lack of a consistent chronological or subject arrangement, the scrap books are ample testimony to the depth and breadth of Lawes' commitments, activities and reputation.

9	45	1925-31 (191 pp - 441-212)
	46a	1926-29 (158 pp - 44213-320;
	46b	44321-465)
	47	1926-30 (34 pp - 44466-501)
	48	1926-30 (primarily 1929) (177 pp - 44502-693)
10	49	1926-32 (sparse for '26-'29) (96 pp - 44694-790)
	50	1927-32 (95 pp - 44791-886)
	51	1929-30, 1937 "Misc. newspaper clippings and anecdotes" (51 pp - 44887-939)
	52a	1930-31 (137 pp - 44940-1176;
	52b	441177-1316;
	52c	441317-1432)
11	53	1931-32 (79 pp - 441483-1549)
	54	1931-32 "Football clippings Suicides" (6 pp - 441550-1572)
	55	1933-35 (109 pp - 441573-1672)
	56	1933-36 (primarily radio program clippings) (101 pp - 441673-1774)
	57	1935 (Testimonial dinner for thirty years service)(unnumbered)
12	58	1935-38 (54 pp - 441775-1892)
	59	1935-37 (sparse '37) (101 pp - 441830-1930)
	60	1936-38 (23 pp - 441931-1956)
	61	1940-41 (74 pp - 441957-2033)
	62	1941 (retirement) (5 pp - 442034-2039)
	63	1933-43 (Stray and unmounted scrap book material) (34 pp - 442040-2076)

Series VIII: Artifacts

13 Film footage; printing plates (portraits and book jacket); carved monogram portion of chair back; autographed baseballs; inscribed loving cups.

LEWIS E. LAWES (1883-1947). Papers: Supplementary Collection.¹

Materials in this supplement to collection "X 101" add significantly to the documentation of Lawes' life and career. Correspondence files, scrapbooks, photo's and artifacts expand on the materials acquired earlier. The Sing Sing administrative files however strike a totally new note. Communications between the warden's office and prison staff are stylistically and substantitively at a far remove from the sentimentalized versions of prison life prepared for popular consumption.

Similarly, the numerous unsuccessful attempts at producing a major post-humous biography illuminate not only divergent family interests but also reflect a social ethos increasingly uncomfortable with images of paternalistic prison wardens and their strayed-sheep charges.

The principle series in this supplement are:

- I. Personal papers
- II. Publications and Presentations
- III. Biographical Material
- IV. Scrap Books
- V. Artifacts

¹ This collections was acquired many years after collection "X 101" although internal evidence suggests they were originally a unified collection.

Box #

File #

Series I: Personal papers

1

A. Correspondence

1: Lewis E. Lawes

General:

1 1920's
2 1930-35
3 1936-40
4 1941
5 1942-47

6 "Collier's Hour" (radio program) re death
penalty. 1928

7 "Collier's Hour" re parole. 1931

8 re Dinner honoring publication of "20,000
years in Sing Sing". 1937

9 re Testimonial dinner. 1935

Condolence messages on Katherine Lawes'
death 1937:

10 General
11 Inmates

12 re American Youth Congress

re Retirement 1941:

13 General
14 Inmates

15 2: Lewis E. / Elise Lawes 1940-45

3: Elise Lawes

16 General 1939-1971
17 Condolences on LEL's death. 1947

18 4: Other Lawes family 1940-1956

5: Contracts and related Correspondence (Books,
films, television)

19 1931-40
20 1940-47
21 1947-1964 (Elise Lawes executrix)

Box # File # Series I (Continued)

B. Publications and Presentations

1: Drafts of Articles and Speeches

1	22	1928-1935 "Who is in prison and why" "The change in Society's Attitude toward the Criminal" "The Death Penalty" Address... at the New School for Social Research Radio Address... Boy's Week in New York "The challenge to the School (to National Education) Address... National Institute of Social Sciences "Introduction" to book by Dr. Amos Squire "How a Warden Looks at Education" Speech at Testimonial Banquet 3/25/35 (See File for additional material) "Modern Methods in Dealing with the Criminal" "The Great Unseen Audience" Transcript of a discussion at a "Women's Club"
	23	1936-1938 "Youth Against the Crime Problem" "Prisons and Prisoners" "The Slums Must Go" Press release... re Boy Scouts of America Statement in response to criticism re his Penological Expertise Review of "Youth in the Jails" by L. V. Harrison "Crime and the Community" (2 drafts) "The Products of Our Schools as I Find Them" "Crime and its Prevention" "Institutions and Anti-Social Conduct (2 drafts)
	24	1938 "The Warden Speaks"

Box #	File #	Series I (Continued)
1	25	1939-1945 Walter Winchell Column Submission Statement on Anti-Semitism (and Related Correspondence) Notes for talk at Scarborough School Commencement "Crime Doesn't Pay" (2 drafts) "Adolescence - The Critical Stage" "On with the Fight" "Capital Punishment" (2 drafts) "Expose" Editorial on Crime and Gangsters "Why We Should Repeal the Neutrality Act" Address to National Child Welfare Committee of the American Legion "Hitler, the Criminal" "Strength Through Unity" (2 drafts) "Prisons - 1942" "Striking at International Criminals" "Facing Correctional Problems in Wartime" "Crime and Prisons" "Will There be a Crime Wave?" "Education as a Warden Sees It"
	25a	n.d. "Crime Commentator" "The Death House" "A Warden Looks at Boys Clubs" "Practical Criminology" (text book proposal) "Face to Face with Death" "The Guards relationship to Institu- tional Morale" "Within Sing Sing Walls" "What of it?" "Crime-What is it?" "So You Know All About Crime" "Parents and/or Schools" "Sing Sing's Early History" "Crime of the Community" "Stray Manuscript Pages"
		2: Reports
	26	1946 "Parole and Penal Institutions in Massachusetts: Reports
	27	Related Correspondence

Box #	File #	Series I (Continued)
1	28	1945 "Report of Survey... State Farm, Massachusetts Reformatory and Reformatory for Women"
2	29	1945 "Manual of Suggested Standards for a State Correctional System"
		3: 1935 "Legal Larceny" (book) [Also serialized in "Prisonlife Stories"]
	30	Notes
	31	Preface, Foreword, Chapter One (4 drafts)
	32	Chapters Two and Three
	33	Chapter Four
	34	Related Correspondence and Proofs
		4: Scripts
	35	1933-37 "20,000 Years in Sing Sing" (radio scripts)
	36	1942 "Lawes of Sing Sing" (typescript)
	37	1942 "Lawes of Sing Sing" (felon script)
	38	1944-47 Misc. radio scripts, television
	39	1946 "Prison Story" (radio script)
	40	196? "20,000 Years in Sing Sing" (television script)
	41	Script ideas
		5: Published Articles by LEL
		1923-29
	42	"Presidents Address" 1923 American Prison Association
		"Why I Have Lost Faith in Capital Punishment: An Interview" <u>The Outlook</u> , 8/15/23
		"The Death Penalty No Cure For Murder" <u>The Literary Digest</u> , 6/28/24
		"The Question of Capital Punishment [A Debate]" <u>Congressional Digest</u> , Aug-Sep 1927
		"The Death Penalty at Sing Sing" <u>The Survey</u> , 10/15/27
		"Life and Death in Sing Sing" <u>The World's Work</u> , 5/28
		"Why Men Go to Sing Sing" <u>The World's Work</u> , 9/28
		"Why Capital Punishment" <u>True Detective Mysteries</u> , 8/29

Box # File # Series I (Continued)

- 2 43 1930-31
- "Crime, its Prevention and Punishment"
The Consensus, v.15:1 (1930)
 - "A Warden Speaks for Convicts"
NYT Magazine 3/16/20
 - "The Telephone and the Warden"
Telephone Review, 4/30
 - "Empty the Prisons" The Clarion, 4/30
 - "Sing Sing Prison Has Its Own Fire
Department" The Modern Fire Chief,
May-June 1930
 - "Crime is Important" The Guidon, 10/30
 - "The Mind of the Men in Prison"
The NYT Magazine, 4/19/31
 - "The Death Penalty Does Not Deter
Murder" Santoro's Pictorial
Monthly, 4/20/31
 - "What a Prison Should Be..." The
NYT Magazine, 10/18/31
 - "Playing th Game on Sing Sing's Field"
The NYT Magazine 11/29/31
- 44 1932-40
- "Young Criminals: The Rising Trade"
The NYT Magazine, 4/24/32
 - "A Challenge to the School" reprinted
from Good Housekeeping 9/32
 - "More Education, Not Less, is the
Need of Our Civilization" School
9/1/33
 - "The Way With Crime" The Rotarian,
11/33
 - "Radio Goes to Jail" Radio Guide,
7/7/34
 - "Humanizing Our Prisons" American
Prison Association, Fall 35
 - "My Death Chair at Sing Sing" Sunday
Express, 11/25/35
 - "The Parole Question" Harper's
Magazine, 5/38
 - "Crime and the Community" Vital
Speeches, 5/15/38
 - "Censor Mail in My Jail? Why?" Jail
Association Journal, Nov-Dec 39
 - "Iron Fences" Youth Leaders Digest,
1/40
- 45 1944-52 (1 item not dated)
- "The Warden's Role in Parole"
Prisons World, Sep-Oct 44

<i>Box #</i>	<i>File #</i>	<i>Series I (Continued)</i>
2	45	1944-52 (Continued) "Will There Be a Crime Wave" <u>The NYT Magazine</u> , 11/5/44 "Juvenile Delinquency" <u>General Federation Clubwoman</u> , 12/44 "The Rose Man of Sing Sing" <u>Coronet</u> , 4/52 "The Criminal - Who and Why" [Appears to be an encyclopedia entry but source and date are lacking]

C. Miscellaneous Personal Papers

		European Trip (1935)
46		Itinery; Travel documents and receipts
47		Bon Voyage messages (Including several from inmates)
48		Correspondence, Letters of Introduction (to "One of Hitler's right hand men")
		Memorabilia
49		Ship-board ("Normandie")
50		Touring
51		Programs of Conferences and Programs Attended 1917-1942
52		Prison Wave Program Service 1943-45
53		Photographs: LEL
54		Misc. printed material with references to LEL. 1934-42
55		Insurance, Tax, Pension, and Misc. Fiscal Documents.
56		Real Estate Documents
57		Misc. Membership Cards
58		Christmas Card List; Address Book (LEL and ECL)
59		Testamentary Documents (Lawes Family)

Series II: Sing Sing Files

A. Administrative

3	60	Memos to Prison Staff 1936-37
	61	1938-41
	62	Memos from Prison Staff 1935, 36, 41
	63	Administrative Records - Desk Copy
	64	Annual Recommendations - 1928/29 - 1939/40

Box #	File #	<i>Series II (Continued)</i>
3	65	Log Books 1936-41
	66	Commissary Dept. Reports 1936, 1938
	67	Misc. Fiscal Records 1929-45
	68	Disciplinary Hearing 1937
	69	Escape Plan 1930
	70	Misc. Correspondence
		 B. Prison Programs
	71	Music in Sing Sing
	72	Black Sheep Football Team 1933
		 C. Inmate Related Files
	73	Correspondence 1936-46
	74	World War II Service Records
	75	Mutual Welfare League Greeting Cards to Mr. and Mrs. LEL
	76	Condolences on death of LEL 1947
		 D. Miscellaneous
	77	Inventories of Warden's Quarters 1941
	78	Photographs
	78a	"Sing Sing Prison: Ossining N.Y." 1944 and 1958 reprints of series of articles in <u>Correction Magazine</u>

Series III: Biographical Material

A. Lewis E. Lawes

	1: Published Articles 1928-51
79	"The Chair" by Frederick Tisdall (<u>Liberty</u> , 1/7/28)
	"Life and Death in Sing Sing" (Announcement of forthcoming series: <u>World's Work</u> , 4/28)
	"Warden Lawes, Man Sayer" by Peggy Wells (<u>Radio Stars</u> , 4/34)
	"Pleader for the Damned" by Henry G. Pringle (<u>Forum</u> , 1/38)
	"Lewis E. Lawes" reprint from <u>Ency- clopedia of American Biography</u> 1938

Box #

File #

Series III (Continued)

3

79

1: Published Articles (Continued)

"Guest Editorial" (New Hampton Flash, Mar-Apr 1938)

"Meet the Murderer" (Correction, 9/41)

"Warden Lawes Next Task" (Correction, 8/41)

"Former Associates Meet Lawes" (Correction, 9/41)

"Lawes, Lewis Edward" (Current Biography, 10/41)

"Lawes Heads Boy Rangers" (Correction, 10/41)

"Warden Lawes in California" (Correction, 12/41)

"Building Americans" (Rockefeller Center Magazine, 2/42)

"Accent on Candor" (The Atlantian, Oct-Nov 1944)

"Why Parole the Lifer" [excerpt] (The Mentor, Jan-Feb 51)

2: Unpublished Manuscripts

80

"Biography" (Unsigned; 194-)

"The Story of Warden Lawes" by Martin Racklin (1947)

81

Correspondence

82

Outline

"Thou Shall Not Kill" by Emile Gavreau (ca 1950)

83

Correspondence

Typescript (Several Missing Pages)

84

Chapters 1-15

85

Chapters 16-31

"Lawes of Sing Sing" by Elise

Chisholm Lawes (In collaboration with Dorothy Giles, mid 1950's)

86

Correspondence

87

Outline; Stray pages and notes

88

Chapters 1-7 with note re

"submission"

89

Chapters 1-7 submitted to Cass Canfield

B. Katherine Lawes

90

"Warden Lawes' Wife Was Murdered" by Frank O'Leary (Confidential 7/56) and related correspondence

Box # File # Series III (Continued)

3

C. Elise Chisholm Lawes

91

Mss. (partial) and notes toward an auto-
biography. Chapters 1-3 (several drafts)
towards an autobiography

Series IV: Scrap Books

- 1: "Personal Mention" 1929-1931
- 2: "Capital Punishment" 1928-1930
- 3: " " 1930-1931
- 4: Mounted Correspondence 1924-1925
- 5: " " 1928-1929
- 6: Mounted Wedding Congratulations 1939
- 7: Unmounted Clippings
Elise Lawes related clippings

Series V: Artifacts

Framed Honorary Degree from Colgate University