

**Harris County Archives  
Houston, Texas**

*Finding Aid*

**E. A. "SQUATTY" LYONS PAPERS  
1930 – 1994 (Bulk: 1943 – 1990)**

**Manuscript Collection:** MC001

**Size:** .5 linear feet, 22 volumes  
**Restrictions on Access:** None  
**Restrictions on Use:** None  
**Acquisition:** Fern Y. Lyons, 2003,  
Mac McCain, 2005

**Accession Number:** 2003.013,  
2005.041  
**Processed by:** Sarah Canby Jackson,  
2004, AnnElise Golden, 2007.

**Citation:** [Identification of Item], E. A. "Squatty" Lyons Papers, MC001, Harris County Archives, Houston, Texas.

**Creator Sketch:**

Everett August Lyons, Jr. was born on April 12, 1910 in Houston. Raised in Spring Branch and the Houston Heights, Lyons attended Harvard Elementary School, West End Junior High School, and graduated from Reagan High School in 1926. While playing football at Reagan, he received the nickname "Squatty" due to his stature. The name stayed with him his entire life.

After graduating from high school, Lyons worked for his father who owned a grocery store, café and feed store on Washington Avenue and played semi-pro football in the Houston area. He purchased the Lyons Feed Store and in 1933 married Fern Alice Young. The couple had four sons: Horace Young Lyons, Everett A. Lyons, III, J. H. "Jim" Lyons, and F. S. "Scottie" Lyons.

In 1940, his former high school coach, Arnold Krichamer (an Assistant District Attorney and later District Judge) encouraged him to run for County Commissioner. Assured of financial support from his father for the campaign if he waited another term, Lyons decided to run for County Commissioner of Precinct 4 in 1942. With \$6000 in funds from his father and his wife Fern running the campaign, Lyons defeated the incumbent, Tom Graham, in the Democratic Primary. Lyons then sold his feed store, believing he should devote his full attention to the job of commissioner, and spent the next six months in Graham's office learning his new role.

Lyons served as County Commissioner for Precinct 4 for 48 years. In 1981 the Republican led Commissioners Court redrew the precinct boundaries in an attempt to force him out of office. Lyons won both the 1982 and 1986 election and retired from office in December 1989 due to declining health. E. A. "Squatty" Lyons, Jr., died on May 4, 1994.

While in office, Lyons was known for his honesty, integrity, his unfailing ability to tell the truth, and his open door policy. In addition to being a "classic" road and bridge commissioner, he oversaw major county building projects including the Criminal Courthouse, the Family Law Center, the County Administration Building, and the Astrodome. He also supported the development of the Harris County Hospital District, the Toll Road System (once his constituents indicated their support), Burroughs Park, the Mosquito Control District, and Mercer Arboretum. Lyons blocked the consolidation of the City of Houston and Harris County into a metro unit form of government. He also fought a losing battle with the other members of the court to allow the Hospital District to continue to provide abortion services to its patients on the grounds that poor women deserved the same access to medical care as wealthy women. Throughout his career he was respected by both friend and foe.

### **Collection Summary:**

Twenty-two scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, printed materials, correspondence, photographs, and political ephemera, along with certificates, plaques, and photographs document the political career and interests of E. A. "Squatty" Lyons and provide a record of Harris County government from 1943 - 1990.

### **Archivists Note:**

All loose materials in the scrapbooks were removed and housed separately. The newspaper clippings and newspaper editions were arranged according to the volume of the scrapbook in which they were found. The other loose materials were arranged in series order.

## Inventory

**Series:** Scrapbooks

**Dates:** 1943 – 1990

Newspaper clippings, programs, invitations, solicitations, correspondence, photographs, and ephemera comprise the scrapbook materials. Arranged chronologically, the newspaper articles cover Harris County as it dealt with the social, financial and logistical problems of growth in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also included are national newspaper stories that either had a direct connection to Houston or Harris County or were of a personal interest to Commissioner Lyons. Among the subjects covered include Harris County Precinct 4 programs, the Washburn Tunnel opening, the construction of the new Criminal Courthouse and the renovation of the Civil Courthouse, the fight over funding for the county hospital, the building of the Astrodome, flood control, and county elections.

Personal interests reflected in the scrapbooks include the Democratic Party, politics, fraternal organizations, local sports teams, Reagan High School, Houston's Heights and the West End, the space program, and outdoor sports.

Title	Vol.	Range of Dates	Location
Scrapbook	01	1943, 01 - 1949, 09	1200-S-01
Scrapbook	02	1949, 10 - 1954, 05	1200-S-02
Scrapbook	03	1954, 06 - 1957, 09	1200-S-03
Scrapbook	04	1957, 10 - 1960, 06	1200-S-04
Scrapbook	05	1960, 05 - 1962, 01	1200-S-05
Scrapbook	06	1962, 01 - 1963, 06	1200-S-06
Scrapbook	07	1963, 06 - 1965, 05	1200-S-08
Scrapbook	08	1965, 05 - 1967, 12	1200-S-09
Scrapbook	09	1967, 12 - 1970, 06	1200-S-10
Scrapbook	10	1970, 06 - 1972, 02	1200-S-11
Scrapbook	11	1972, 02 - 1973, 08	1200-S-13
Scrapbook	12	1973, 09 - 1974, 12	1200-S-14
Scrapbook	13	1975, 01 - 1976, 05	1200-S-15

Title	Vol.	Range of Dates	Location
Scrapbook	14	1976, 05 - 1977, 05	1200-S-16
Scrapbook	15	1977, 05 - 1978, 09	1200-S-17
Scrapbook: John F. Kennedy Assassination and Aftermath	16	1963, 11 - 1964, 12	1200-S-07
Scrapbook	17	1978, 09 - 1980, 08	1200-S-18
Scrapbook	18	1980, 08 - 1982, 06	1200-S-19
Scrapbook	19	1982, 06 - 1983, 12	1200-S-20
Scrapbook	20	1983, 12 - 1985, 05	1200-S-21
Scrapbook	21	1985, 05 - 1987, 02	1200-S-22
Scrapbook	22	1987, 02 - 1990, 12	1200-S-12

**Series:** Scrapbooks: Loose Materials

**Dates:** 1930 – 1990

Unattached newspaper clippings and editions document local and national events. Of particular interest are various Voters Guides produced by the *Houston Chronicle*, several editions of the *Press Club Bull-Sheet* (a satirical look at local government), the *Ben Milam Bugle* (1975 - published by a Houston hotel), and special editions covering the opening of the Astrodome (1964-1965), the Economic Summit (1990), Richard Nixon (1974), and the Apollo moon landing (1969). The fascination with the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy is recorded in the newspapers collected from 1963 to 1965.

Loose printed materials chronicle the active life led by Lyons with invitations and programs for social events, fraternal organization meetings, and county functions.

Title	Vol.	Range of Dates	Location
Newspaper Clippings	01, 02, 03, 04	1947, 01 - 1960, 06	0010-V-01
Newspaper Editions: La Porte-Baytown Tunnel Opening	03	1956, 09/22	0010-V-02
Newspaper Clippings	06	1961, 02 - 1963, 06, n.d.	0010-V-03
Newspaper Clippings	07	1964, 03 - 1964, 12, n.d.	0010-V-04
Newspaper Clippings / Editions: Astrodome	07	1964, 01 - 1965, 04	0010-V-05
Newspaper Clippings	08, 09	1965, 06 - 1969, 08, n.d.	0010-V-06

<b>Title</b>	<b>Vol.</b>	<b>Range of Dates</b>	<b>Location</b>
Newspaper Clippings	10, 11	1970, 11 - 1971, 11, n.d.	0010-V-07
Newspaper Clippings	12	1974, 04 - 1974, 11	0011-V-01
Newspaper Editions	12	1930, 1974 - 1975	0011-V-02
Newspaper Clippings	13, 14, 15	1975, 06 - 1978, 04	0011-V-03
Newspaper Clippings / Editions: JFK Assassination	16	1963	0012-V-01
Newspaper Clippings / Editions: JFK Assassination	16	1964	0012-V-02
Newspaper Clippings / Editions: JFK Assassination	16	1965	0012-V-03
Newspaper Clippings	17	1978, 10 - 1980, 08	0011-V-04
Newspaper Clippings	18, 19	1981, 04 - 1983, 08	0011-V-05
Newspaper Clippings	20	1984, 03 - 1984, 07	0011-V-06
Newspaper Clippings	21	1986 - 1987	0011-V-07
Newspaper Clippings	22	1989, 07 - 1990, 11	0011-V-08
Newspaper Editions	22	1990, 1994	0011-V-09
Correspondence		1975 - 1980, n.d.	0039-X-01
Advertisements		1961, n.d.	0039-X-02
Political Campaign: Lyons		1982 - 1986, n.d.	0039-X-03
Political Campaign: Other		n.d.	0039-X-04
Certificates		1963 - 1990	0039-X-05
Invitations		1965 - 1985, n.d.	0039-X-06
Programs		1967 - 1990	0039-X-07
Organizations:			
County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas		1974 - 1987	0039-X-08
Royal Order of Jesters		1965 - 1983	0039-X-09
Pamphlets:			
"Table of 1942 License Plates Assigned Various Counties"		1944	0039-X-11

Title	Vol.	Range of Dates	Location
"20 Years of Caring / Harris County Hospital District / Baylor College of Medicine"		1985, ca.	0039-X-12
Serials:			
<i>Engineering News Record</i>		1964, 02/27	0039-X-13
<i>Humble Area Magazine</i>		1990, 03	0039-X-14
<i>Texas County Progress</i>		1980, 06	0039-X-15
Magazine Clippings, Reprints		1963 - 1989, n.d.	0039-X-16
Photographs		1990, n.d.	0039-X-17
Drawings		1984, 03/06	0039-X-18
General: Invocation, Employees Lament, Tribute to Fern Lyons		1988, n.d.	0039-X-19

**Series:** Ephemera

**Dates:** 1946, n.d.

Political ephemera used during the Lyons campaigns includes bumper stickers, campaign buttons, posters, window signs, business cards, and nail files. A song sung for the Lyons' 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary records his political and their family history.

Title	Vol.	Range of Dates	Location
Campaign Materials: Squatty Lyons		1946, n.d.	0013-V-00
Untitled Song – Celebrating 50 years of marriage		n.d.	0039-X-20

**Series:** Framed Materials and Plaques

**Dates:** 1949-1989

Newspaper clipping, certificates, plaques, and photographs (1949-1989) document the materials presented to Commissioner Lyons by his constituents.

#### Archivists Note:

All certificates and photographs were removed from their original frames for preservation purposes. Due to the quantity of the plaques many were photocopied onto acid free paper.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Vol.</b>	<b>Range of Dates</b>	<b>Location</b>
Plaques		1956-1989	0020-V-00
Plaques		1953-1989	0013-V-00
Certificates		1949-1985	0013-V-00
Newspaper Clipping		1988	0013-V-00
Photographs		1971-1972	0003-P-13
Photographs		1986, 04/19	0004-P-00