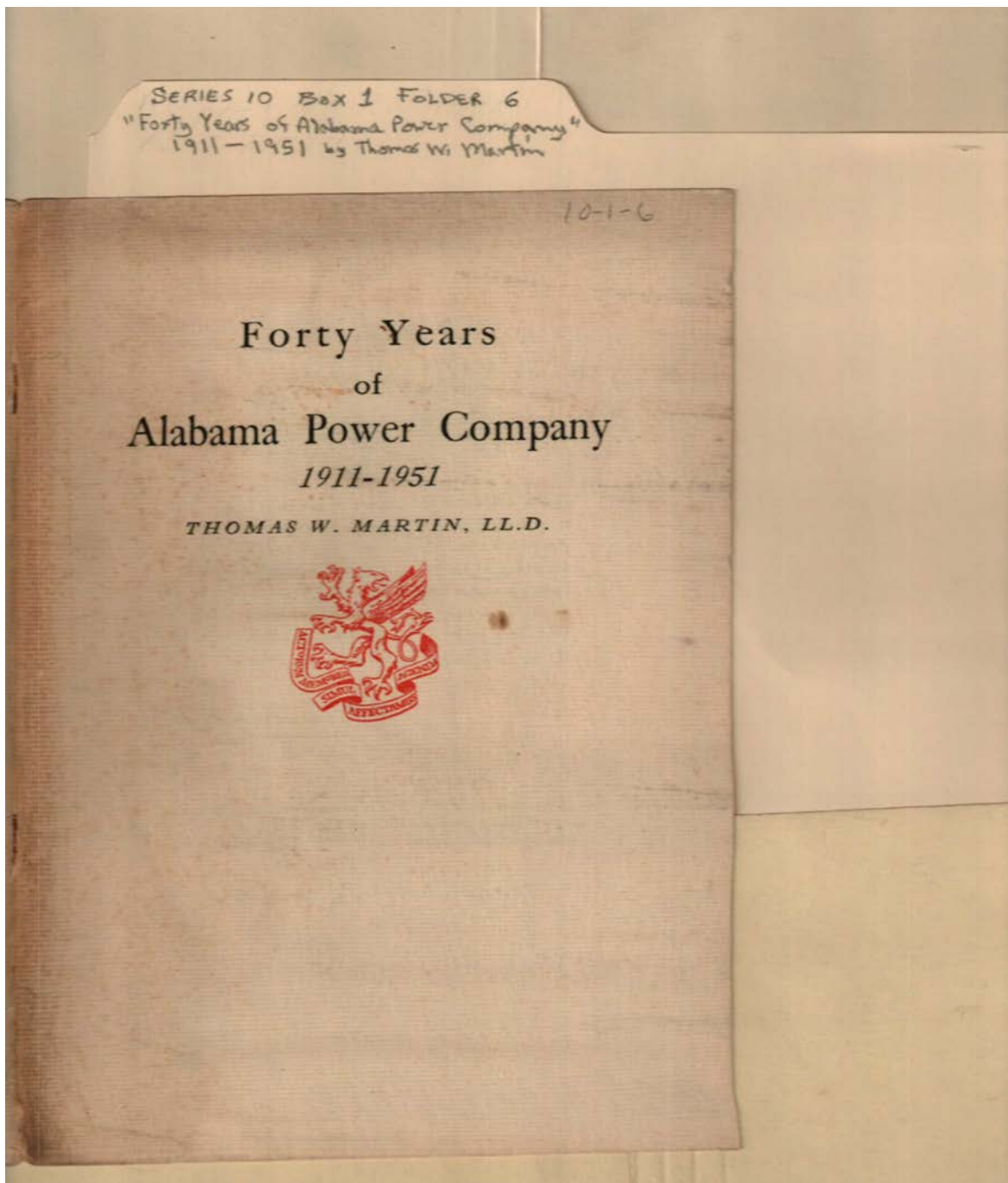


**Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6**  
**Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952**

Image 1 r10\_01-06-000-0004 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.,  
Dr.

Forty Years of  
Alabama Power Co.

**Types:**

booklet

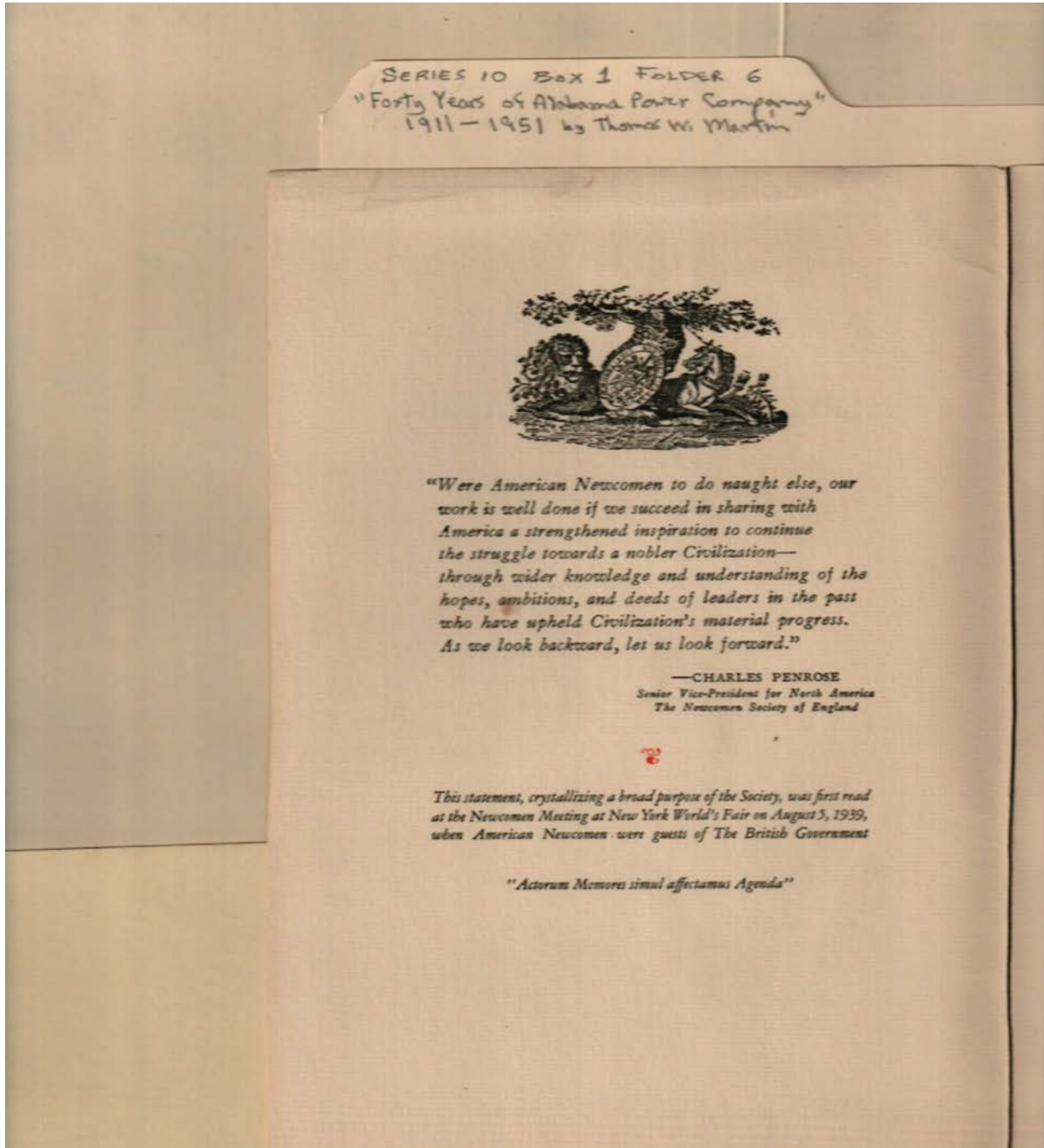
**Dates:**

1911-1951

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

Image 2 r10\_01-06-000-0005 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

American Newcomen  
Society of England

Penrose, Charles

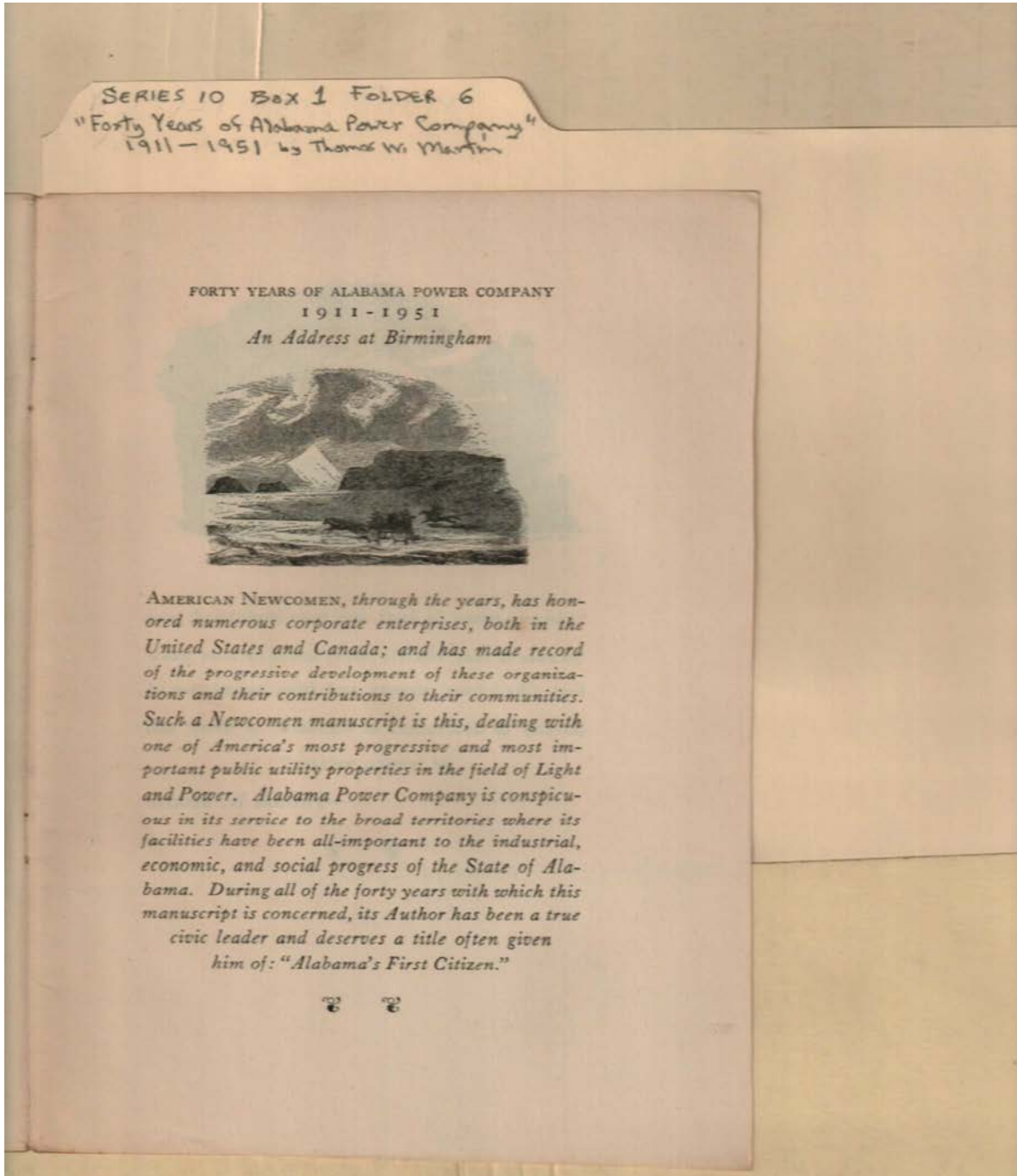
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

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**Names:**

American Newcomen

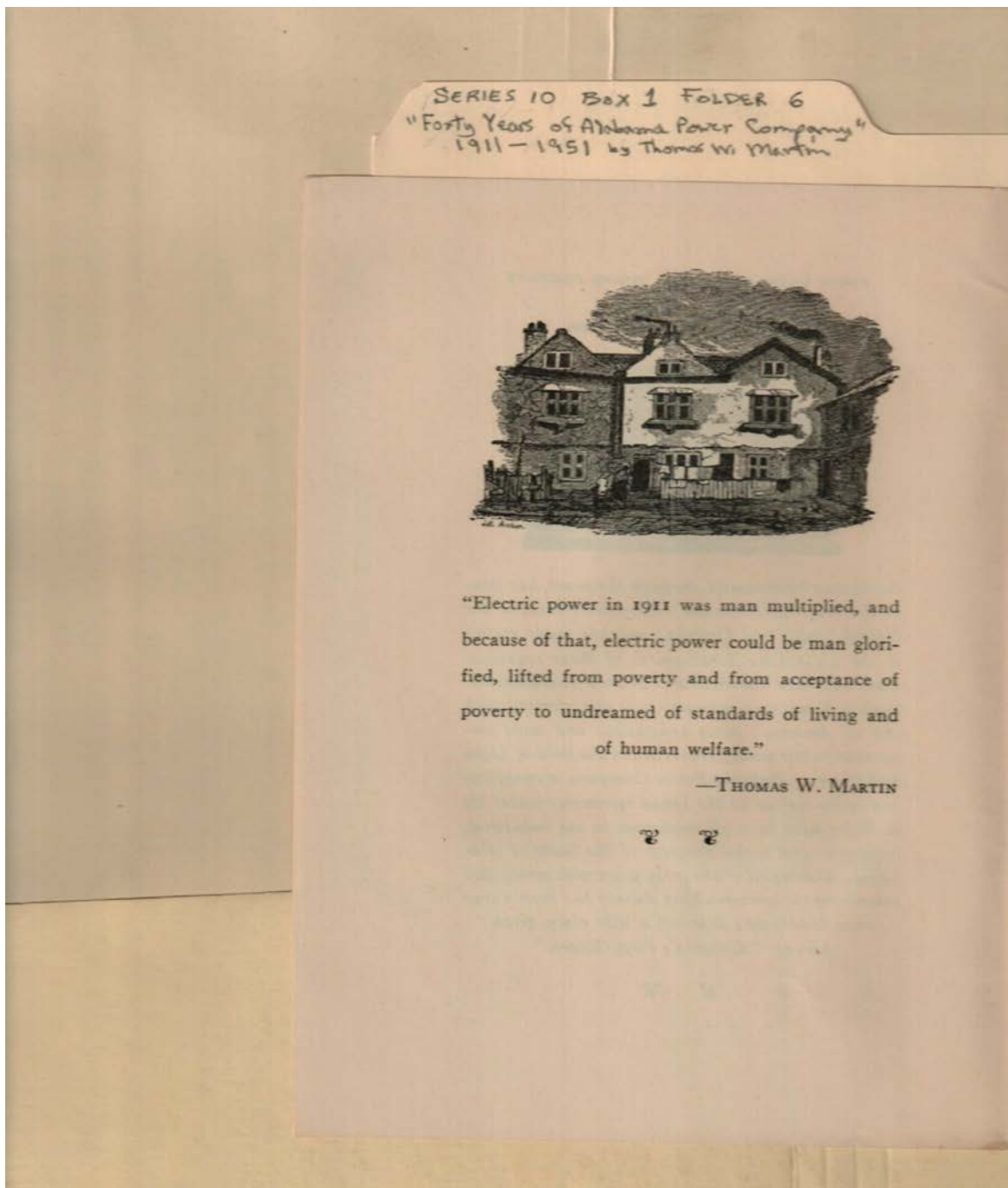
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

Image 4 r10\_01-06-000-0007 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

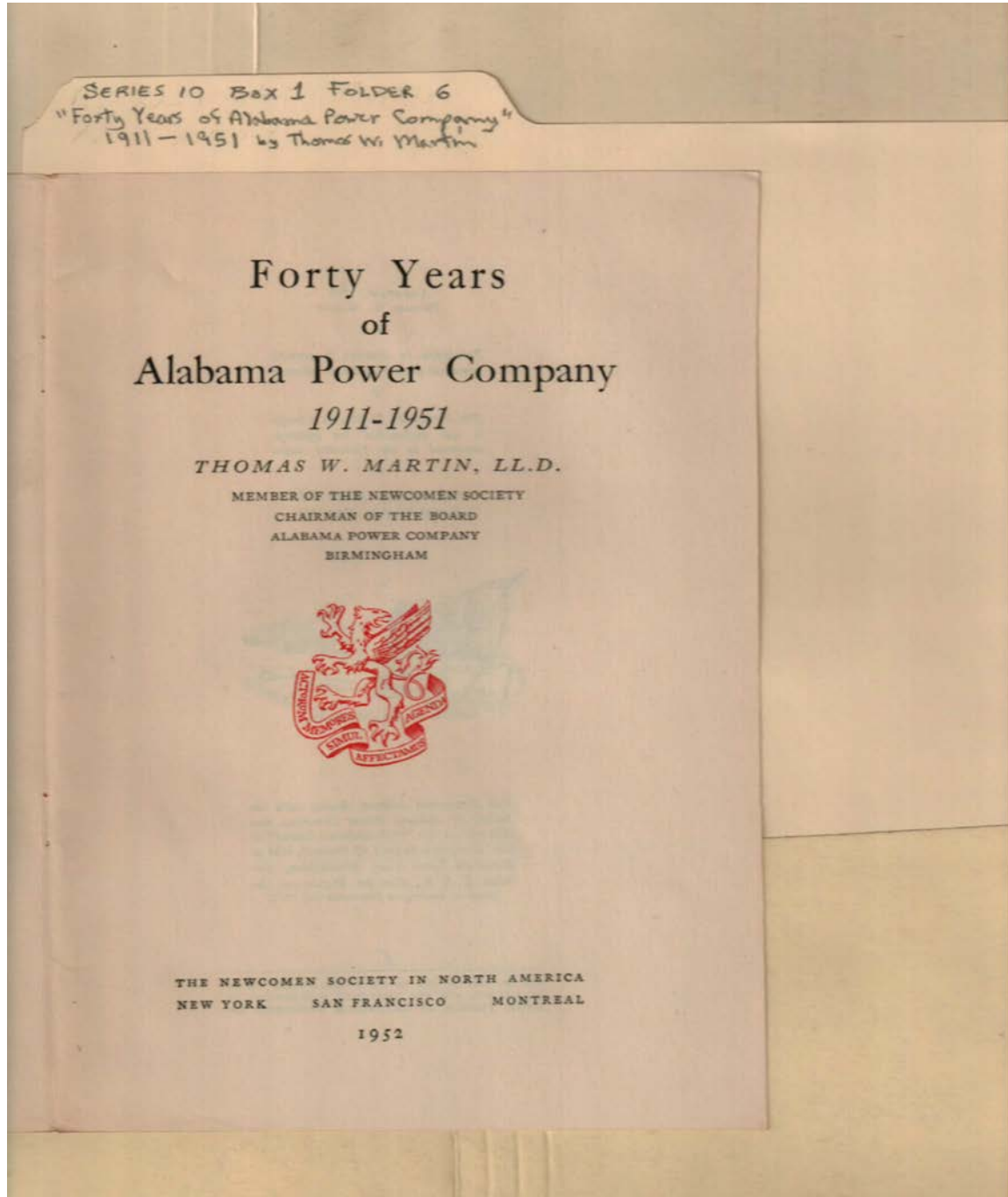
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

Image 5 r10\_01-06-000-0008 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Alabama Power  
Company

Martin, Thomas W.,  
Dr.

Forty Years of  
Alabama Power Co.

**Places:**

Birmingham, AL

**Types:**

booklet

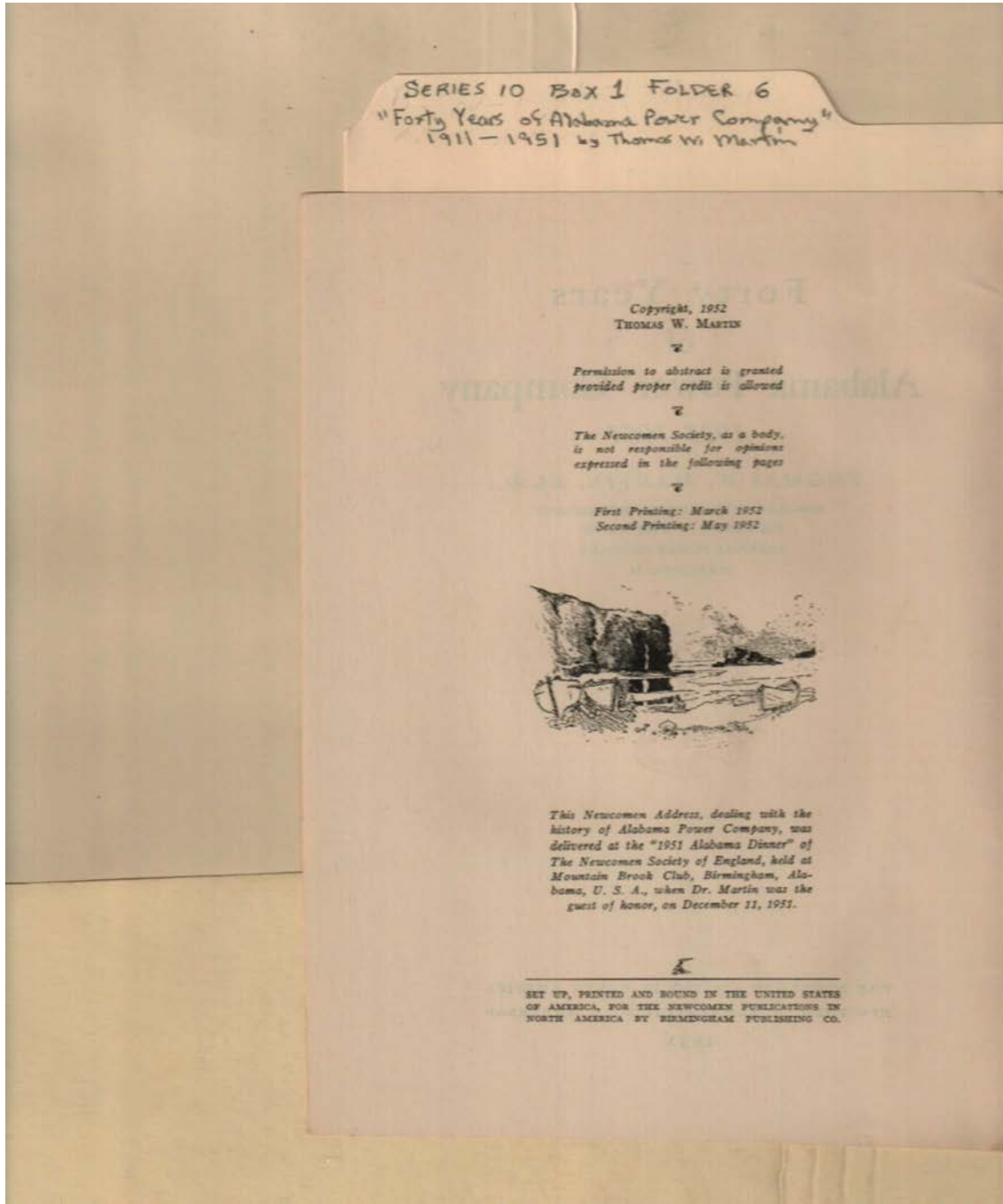
**Dates:**

1952

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

Image 6 r10\_01-06-000-0009 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

**Places:**

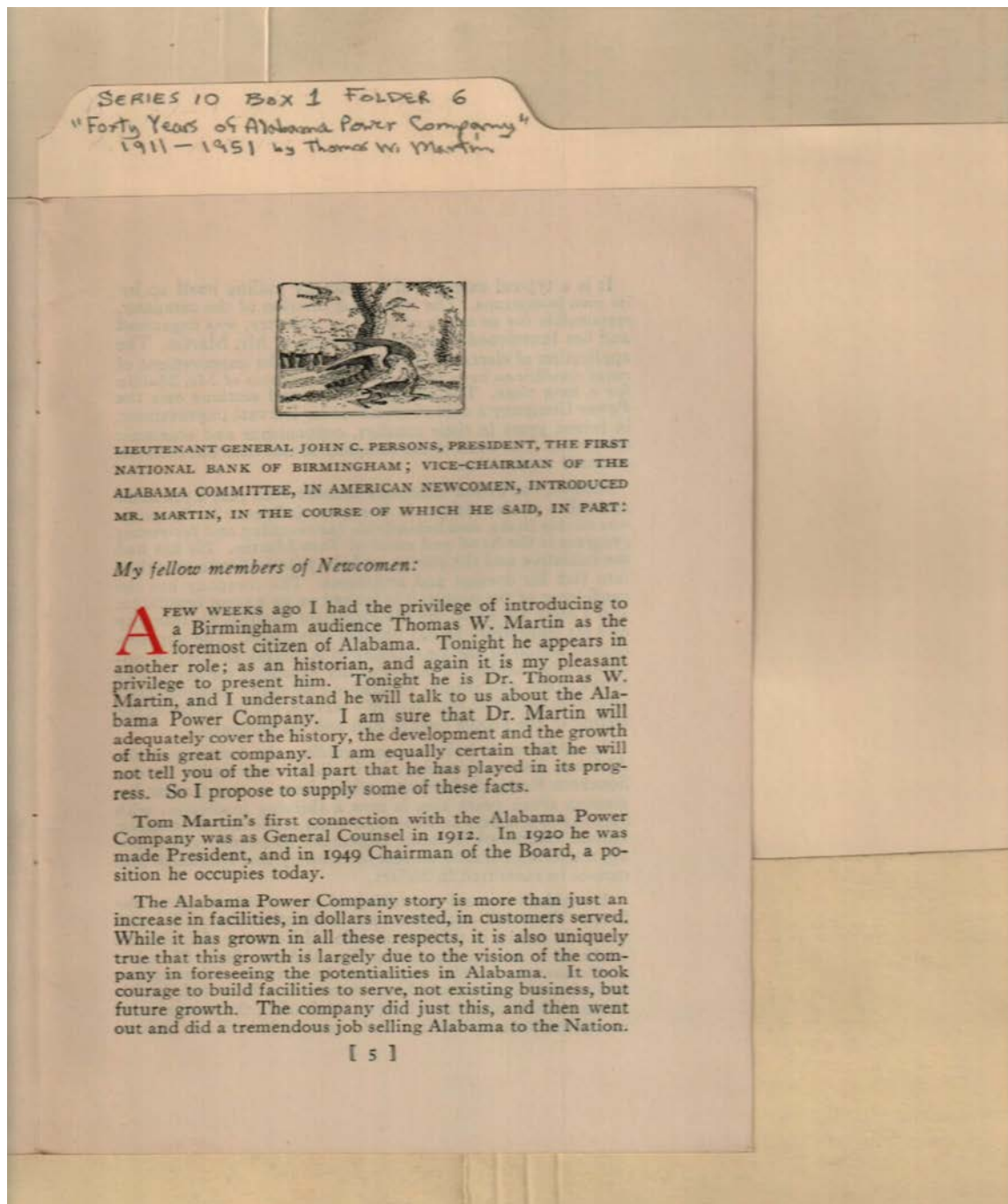
Birmingham, AL

**Types:**

booklet

**Dates:**

May 1952



**Names:**

Alabama Power  
Company Story

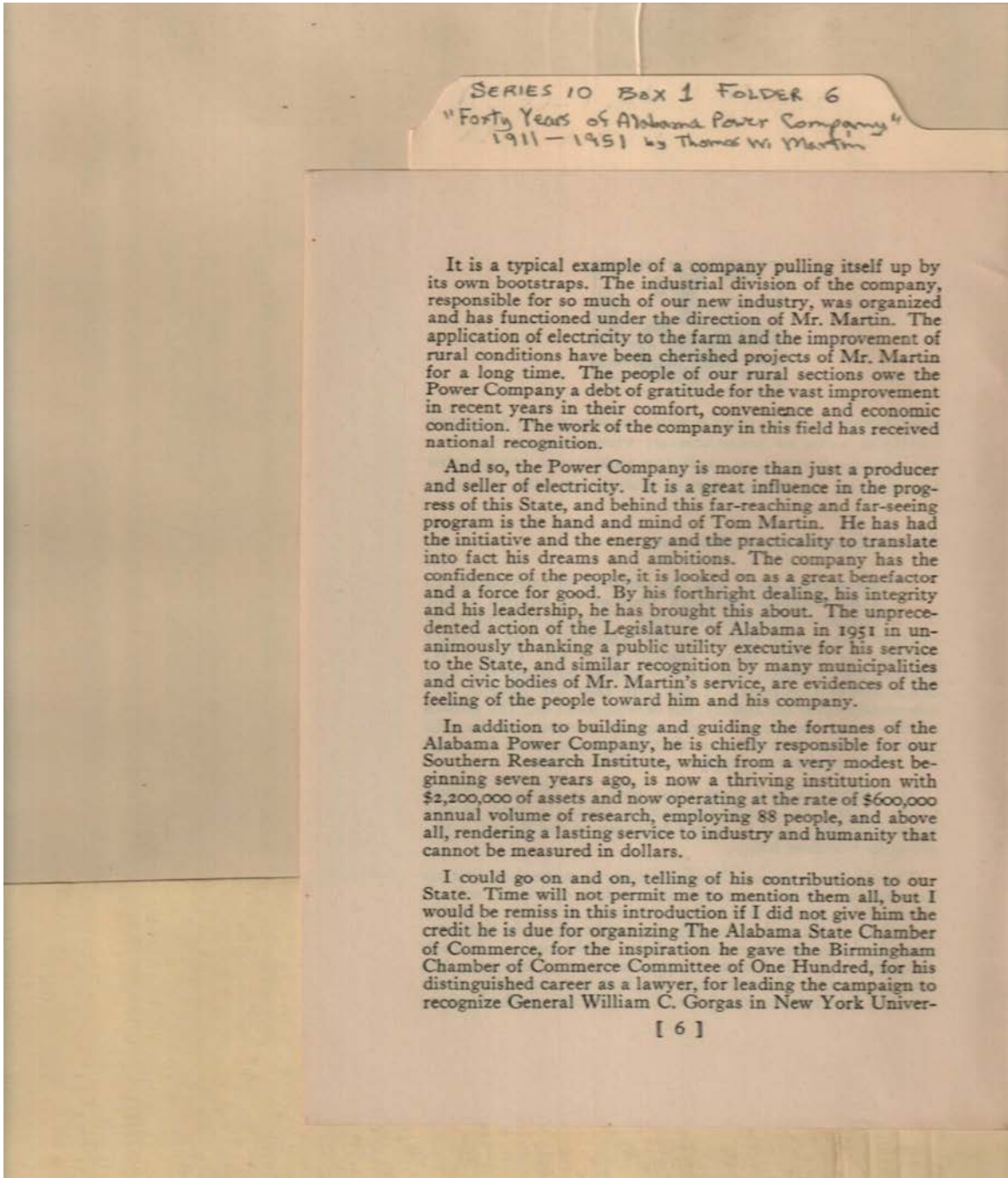
Martin, Thomas W.,  
Dr.

Persons, John C.,  
General

**Types:**

booklet

speech



**Names:**

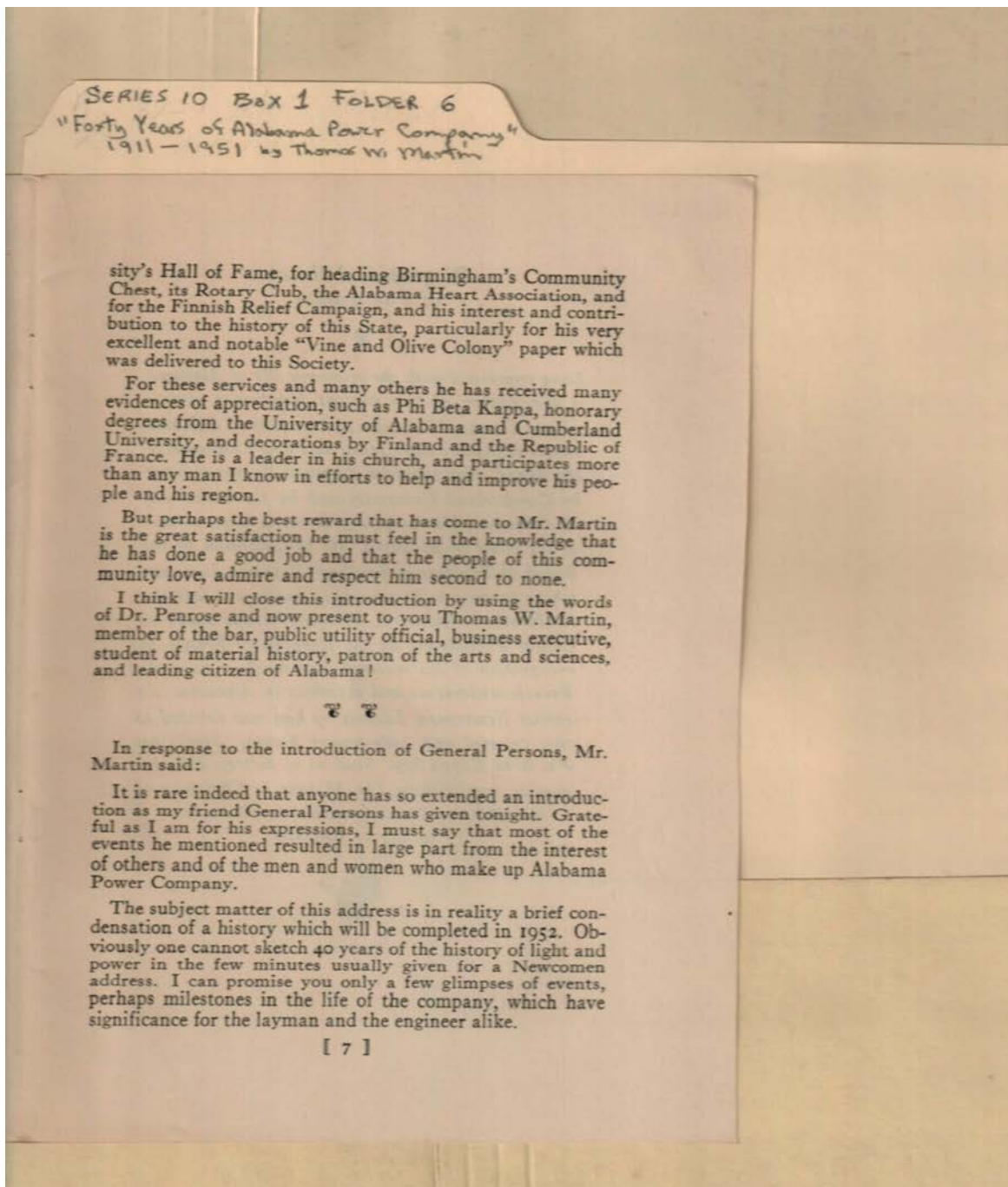
Gorgas, William C.,  
General

Martin, Tom

**Types:**

speech





**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

Penrose, Dr.

Persons, General

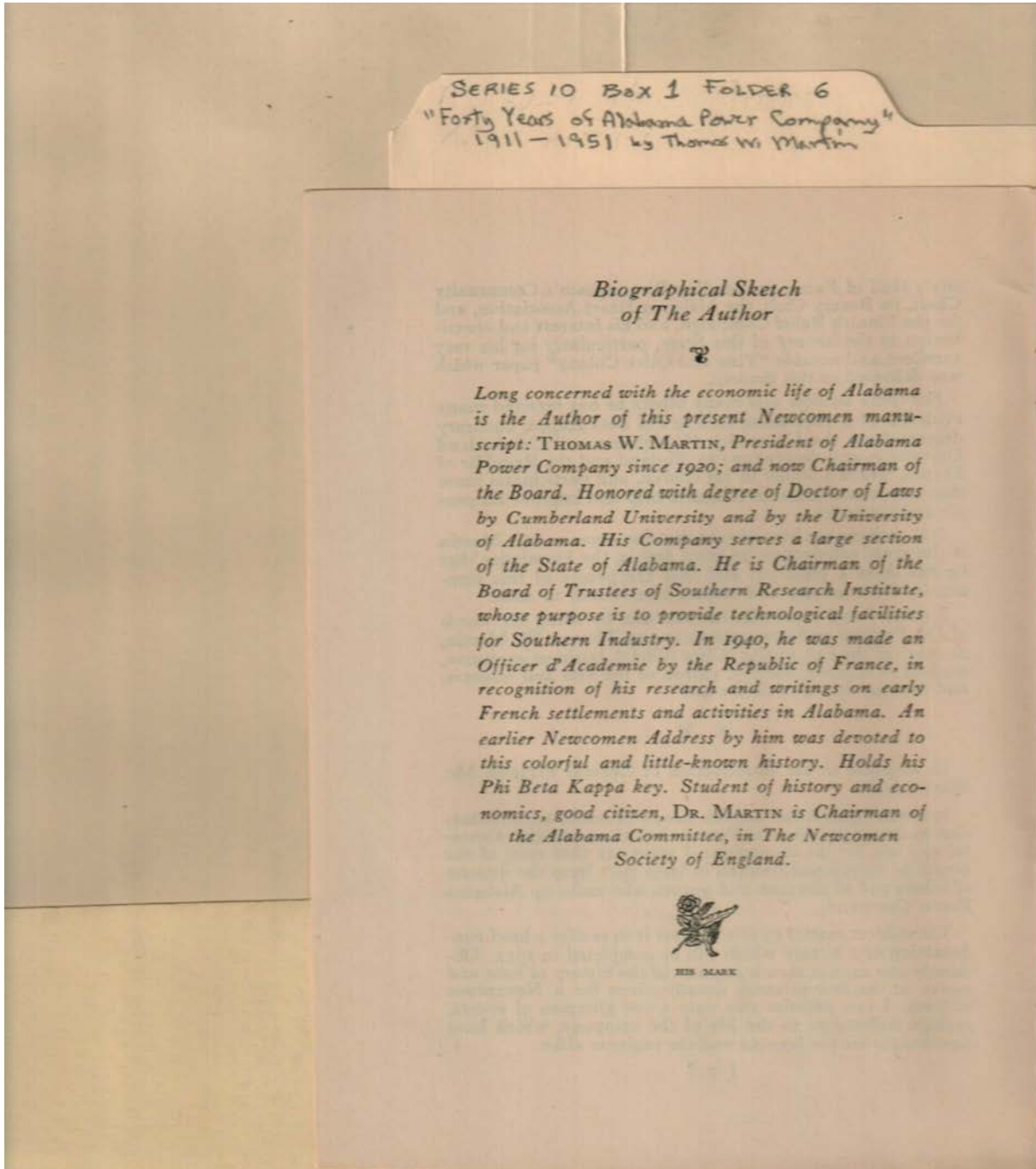
**Types:**

speech

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

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**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

**Types:**

biography

SERIES 10 BOX 1 FOLDER 6  
"Forty Years of Alabama Power Company"  
1911-1951 by Thomas W. Martin



*My Fellow Members of Newcomen:*

**T**HE STEAM ENGINE may be regarded as the greatest invention of all time. It launched the age of machines and of machine power. There had been man-power, horsepower, windpower and the power of water falls, but steam power was power multiplied many times over, leading to electric power, oil power and now, atomic power.

The Newcomen Society centers its work in the history of material civilization. To call it the Society of Civilization would not be excessive. The story of machines is much the story of human progress in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Industrial Revolution, which began with Newcomen and Watt and altered the face of England in the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, came to our country shortly after the Revolutionary War. Its great impact upon America was in the years between 1850 and 1900; upon Alabama these past fifty years.

Among the greatest of the boons to man that have come of the steam engine is electric power.

Edison's historic Pearl Street system in New York began operation September 4, 1882.

[ 9 ]

**Names:**

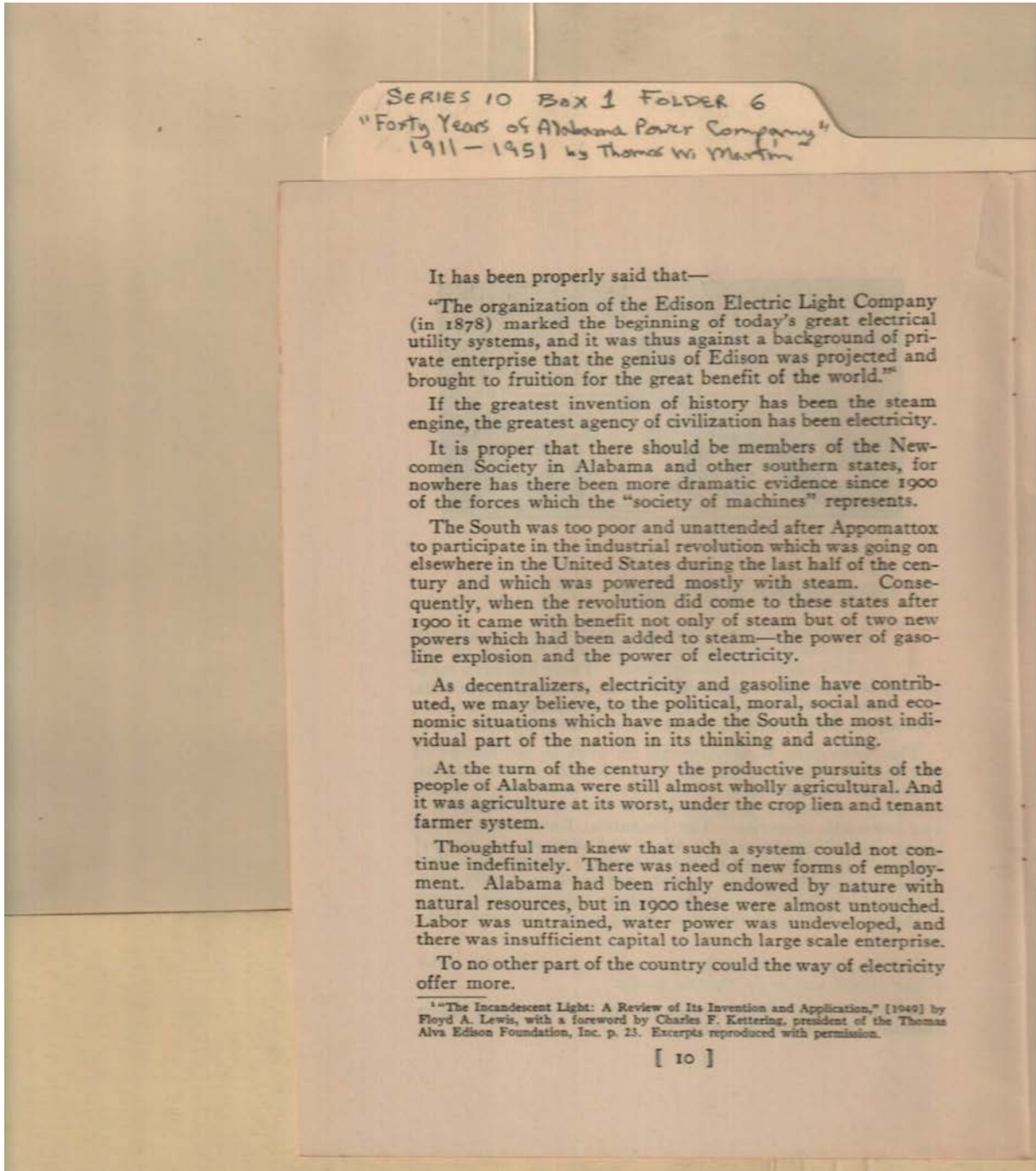
Edison,

Newcomen,

Watt,

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

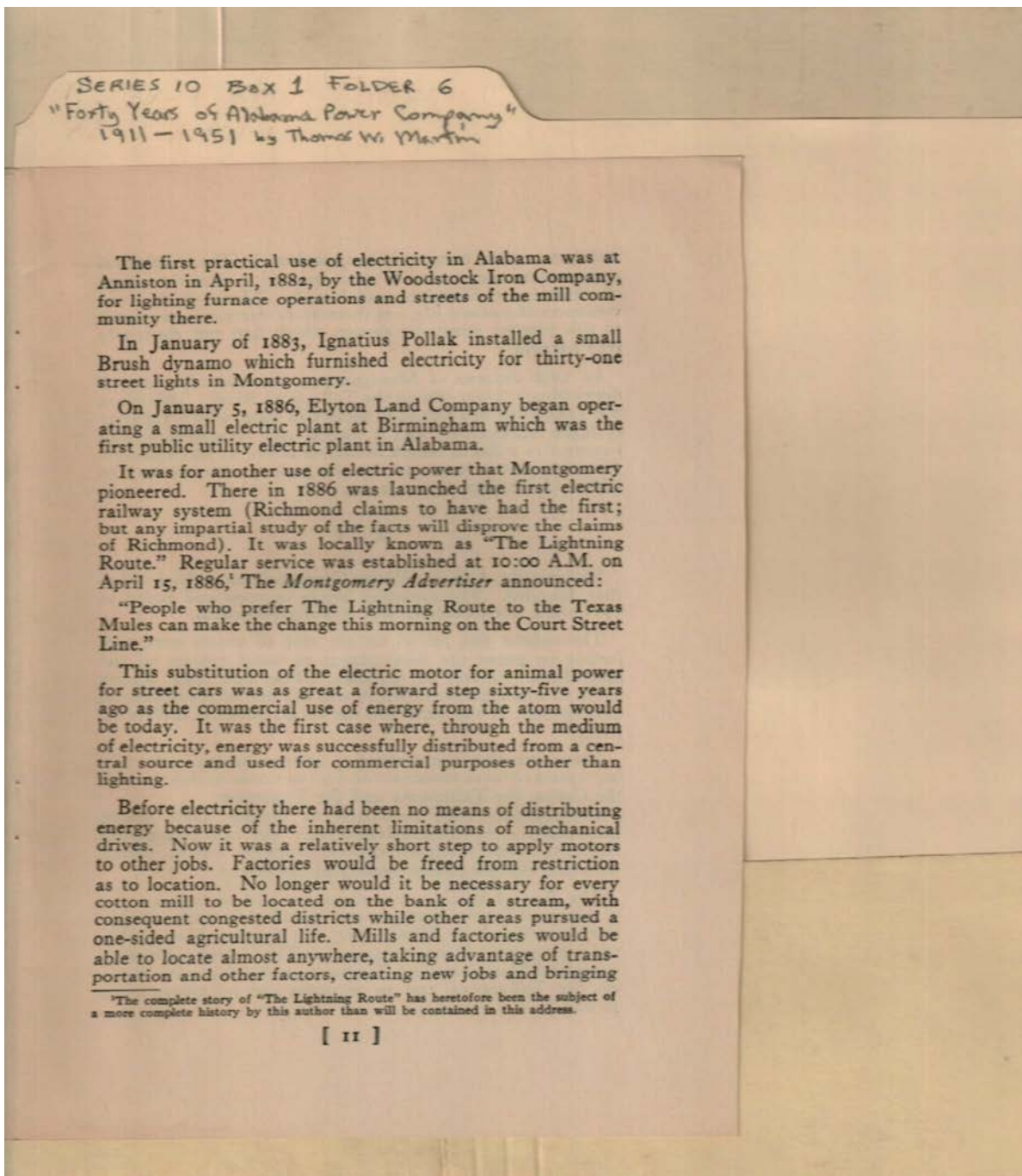
Edison,

Kettering, Charles F.

Lewis, Floyd A.

**Types:**

speech

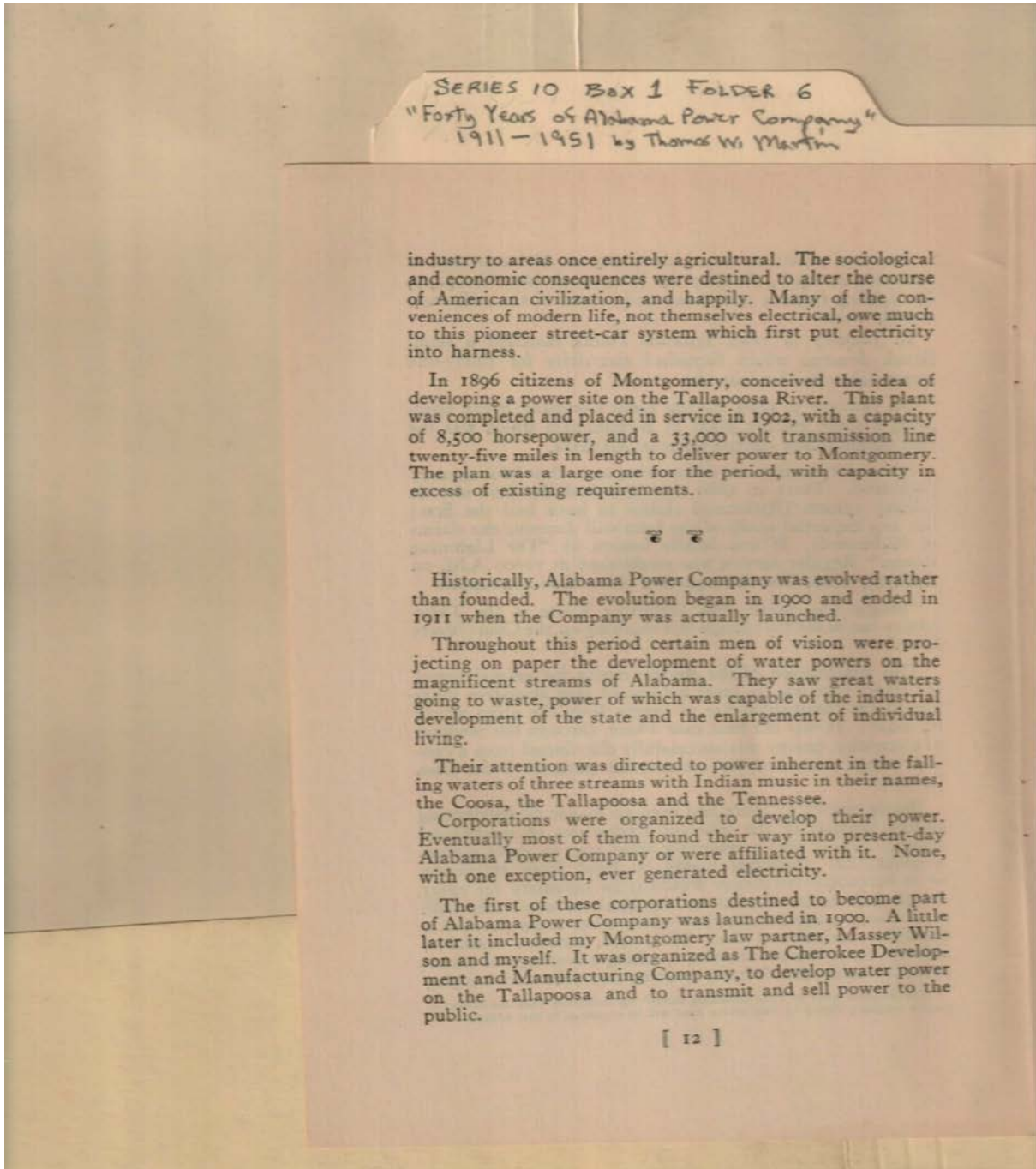


**Names:**

Pollak, Ignatius

**Types:**

speech

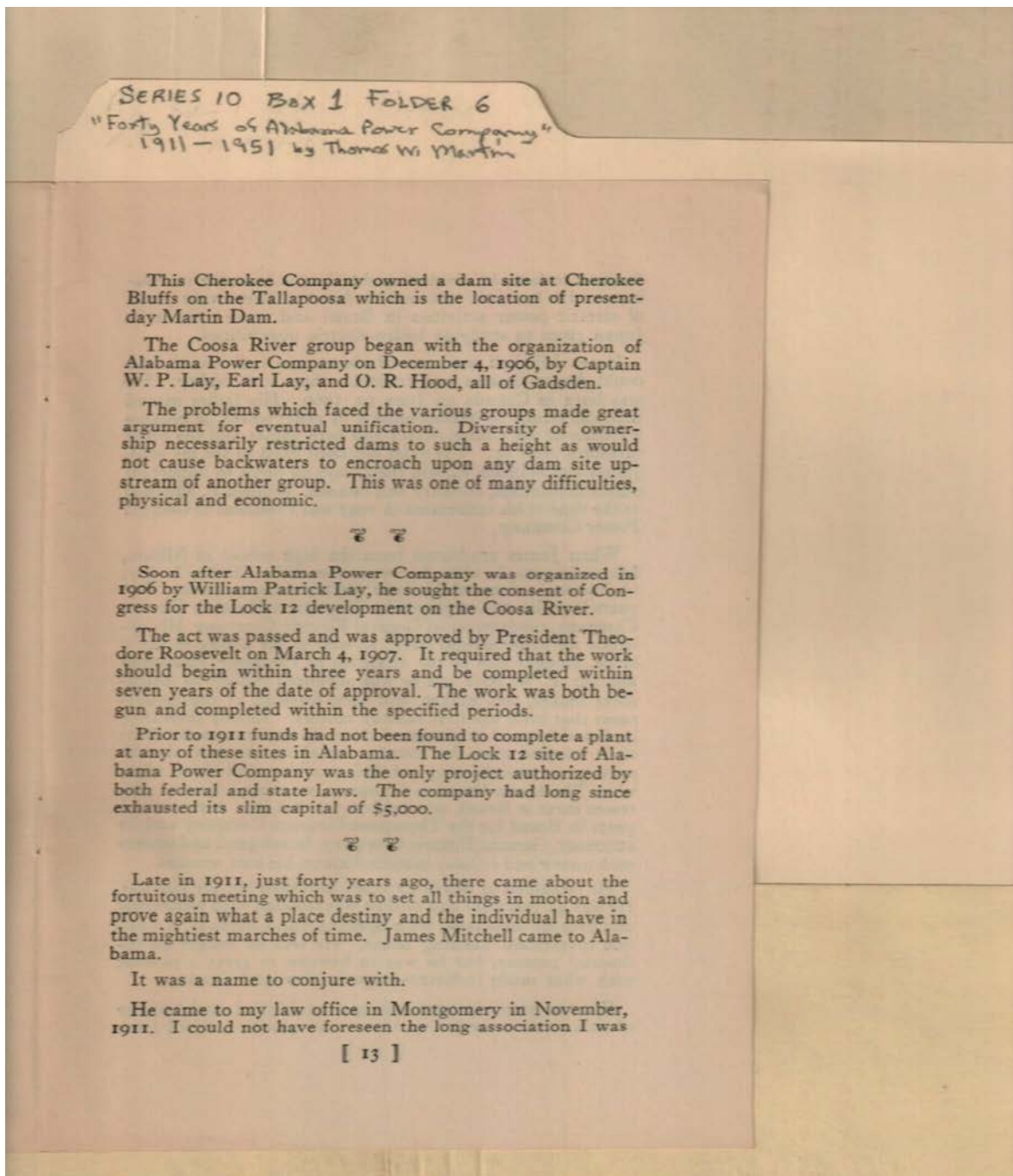


**Names:**

Wilson, Massey

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

Hood, O. R.

Lay, Earl

Lay, William Patrick,

Captain

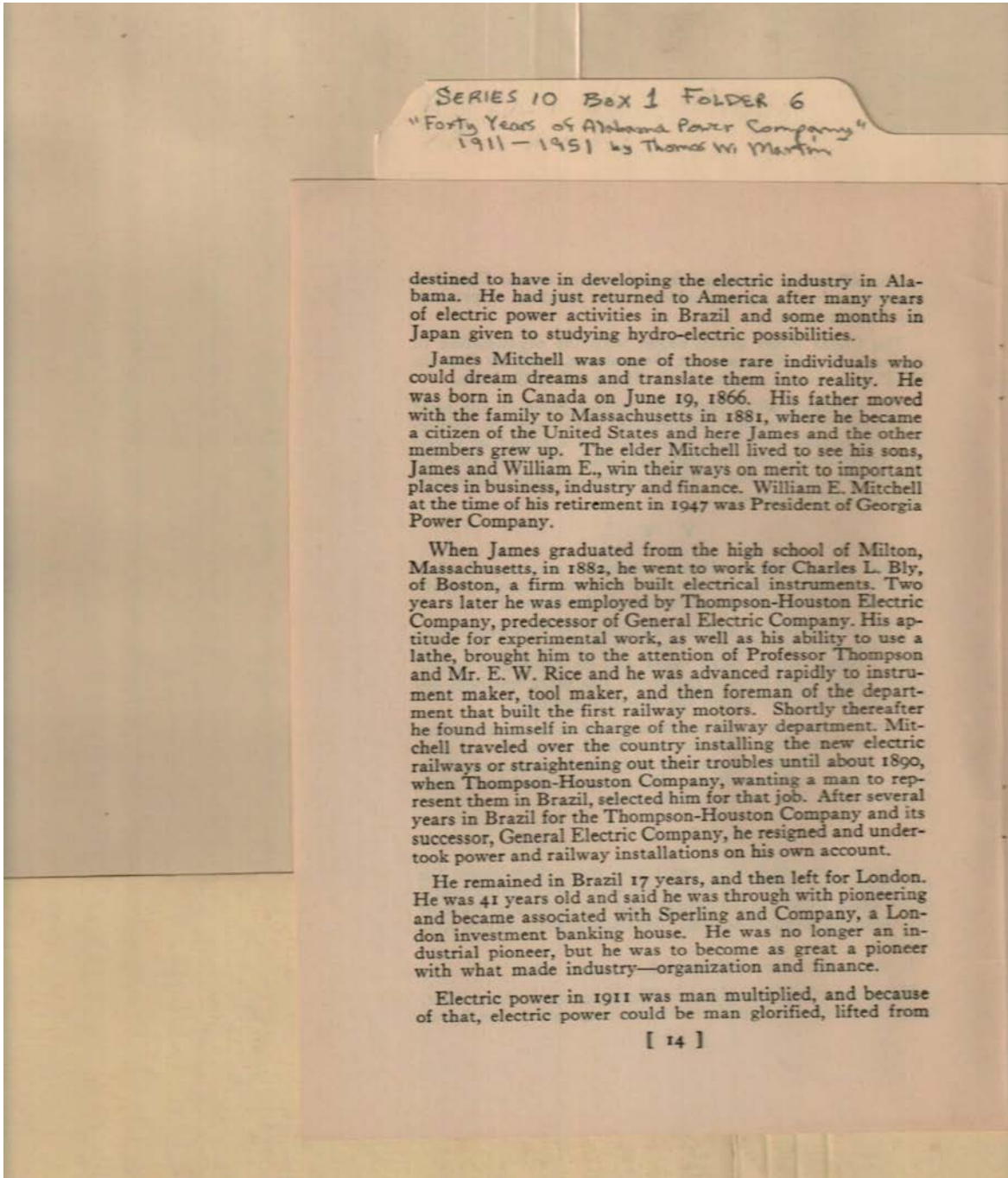
Mitchell, James

Roosevelt, Theodore,

President

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

Bly, Charles L.  
Mitchell, James

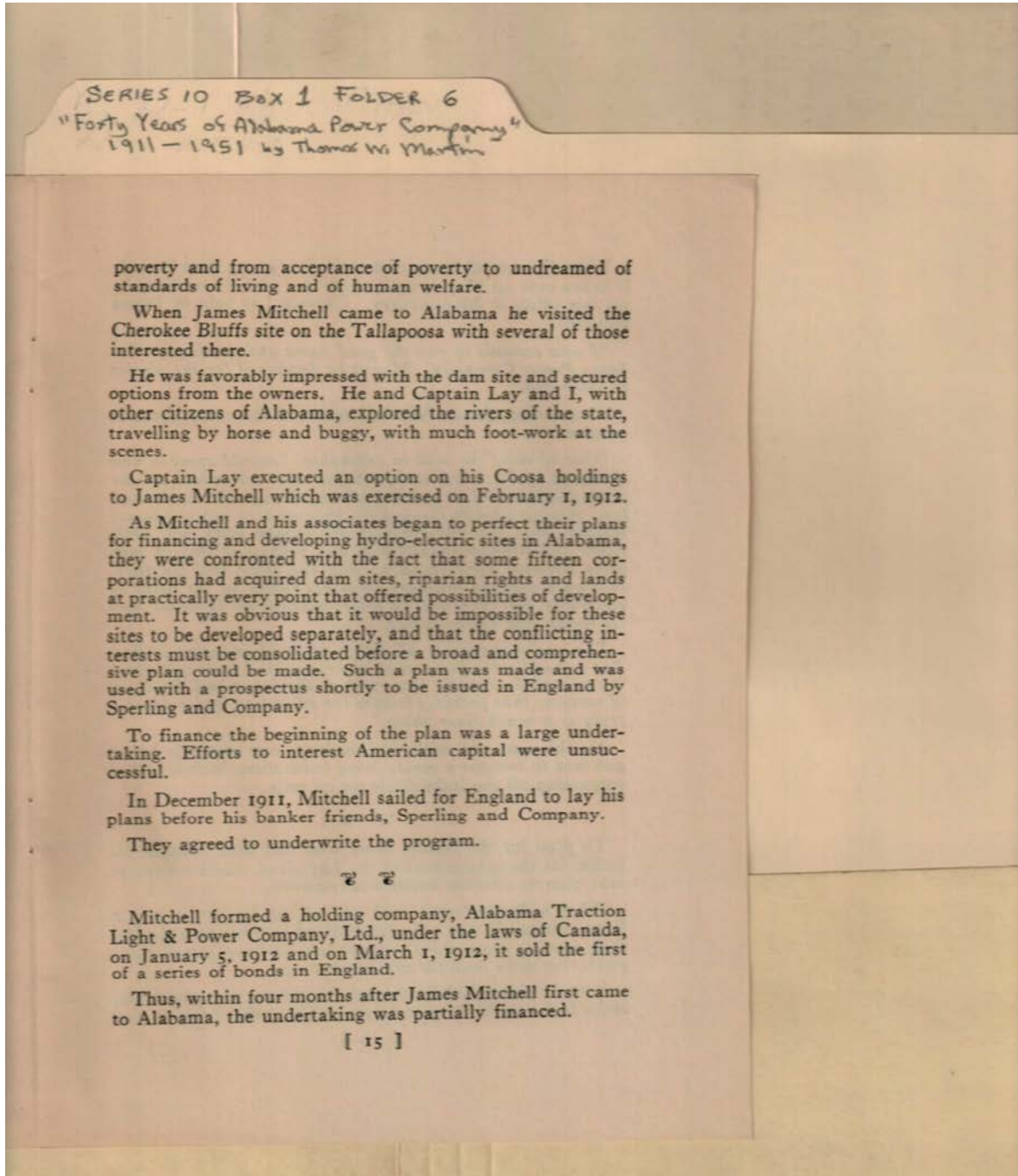
Mitchell, William E.  
Rice, E. W.

Thompson, Professor

**Types:**

speech





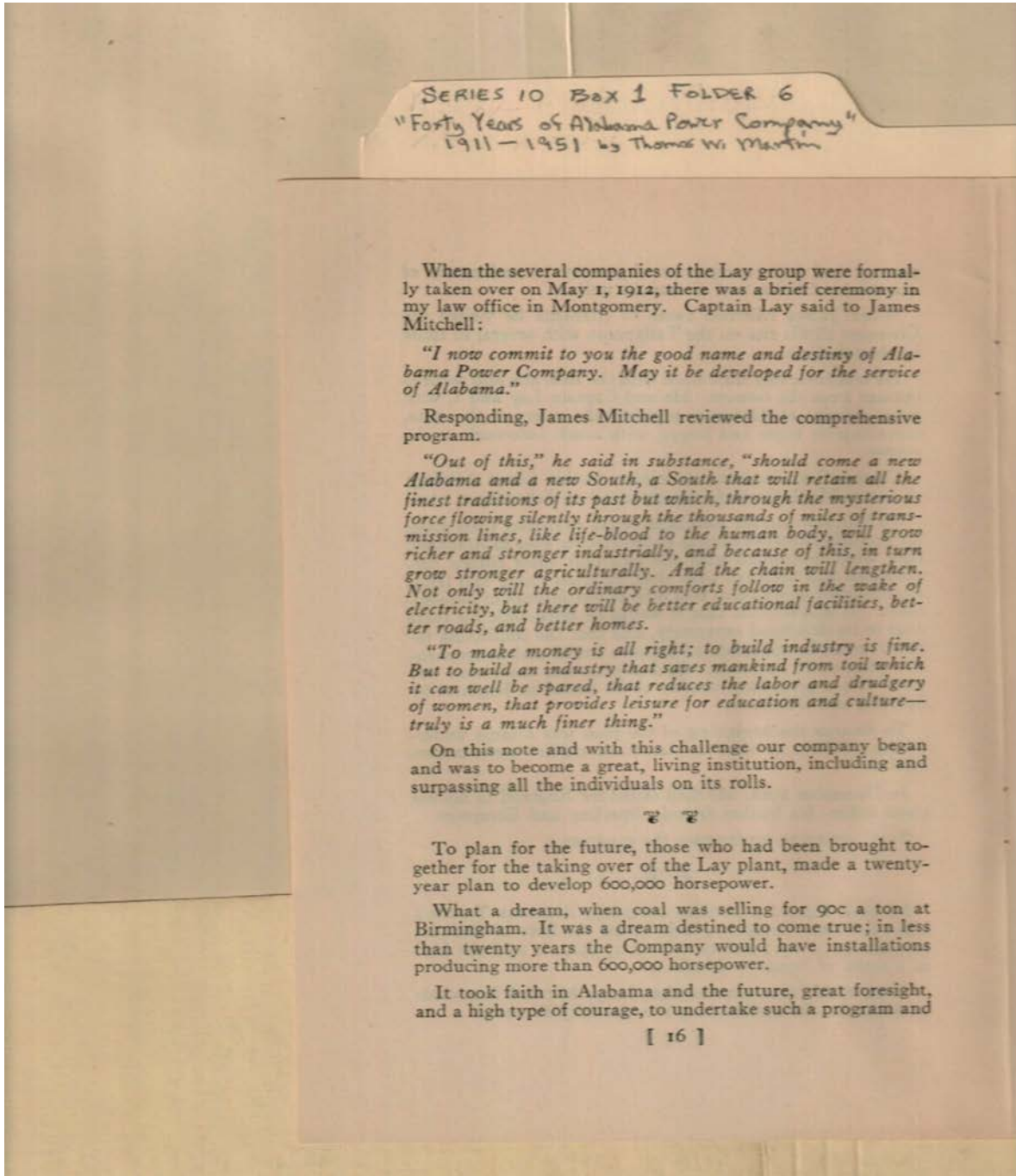
**Names:**

Lay, Captain

Mitchell, James

**Types:**

speech



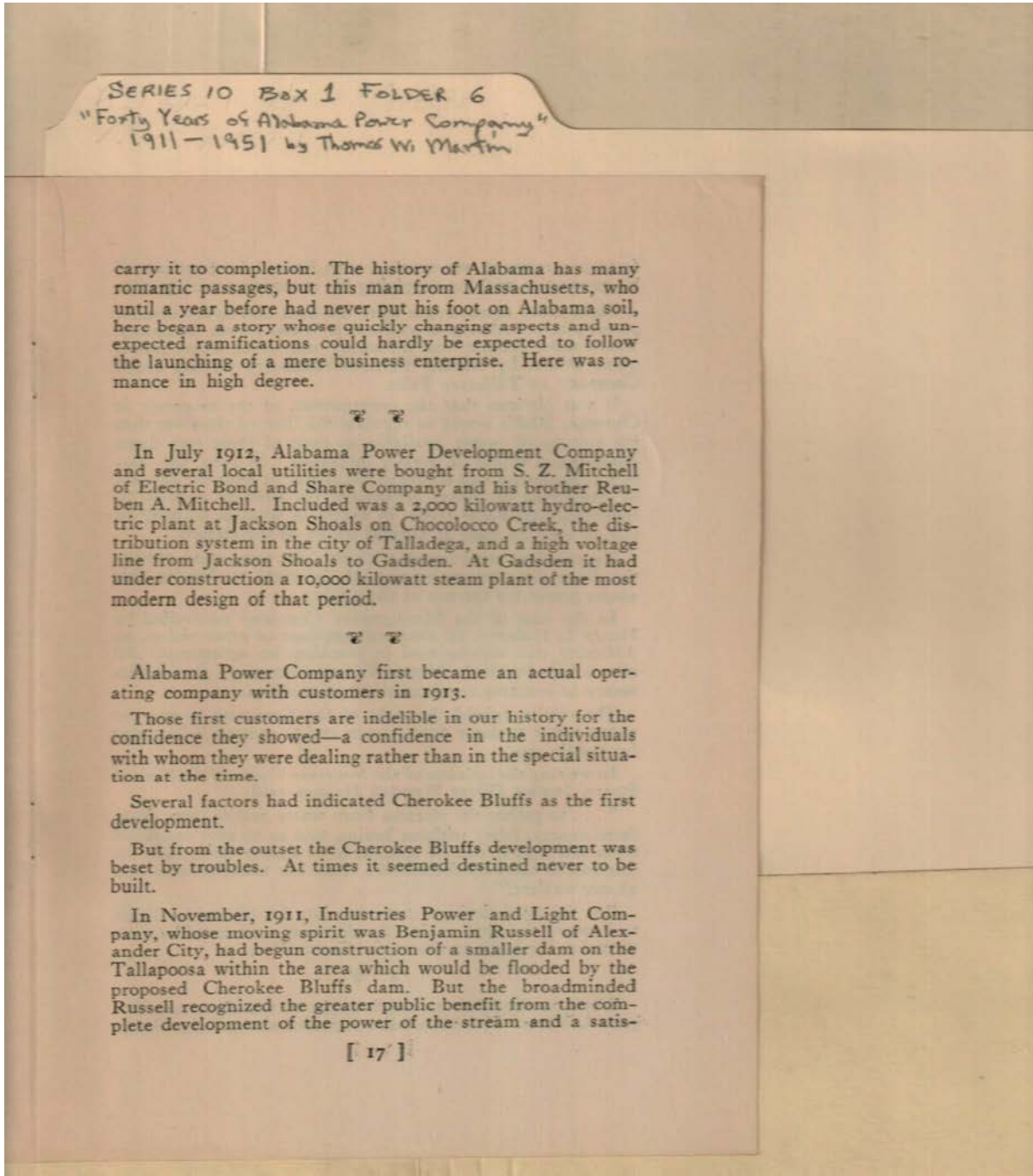
**Names:**

Lay, Captain

Mitchell, James

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

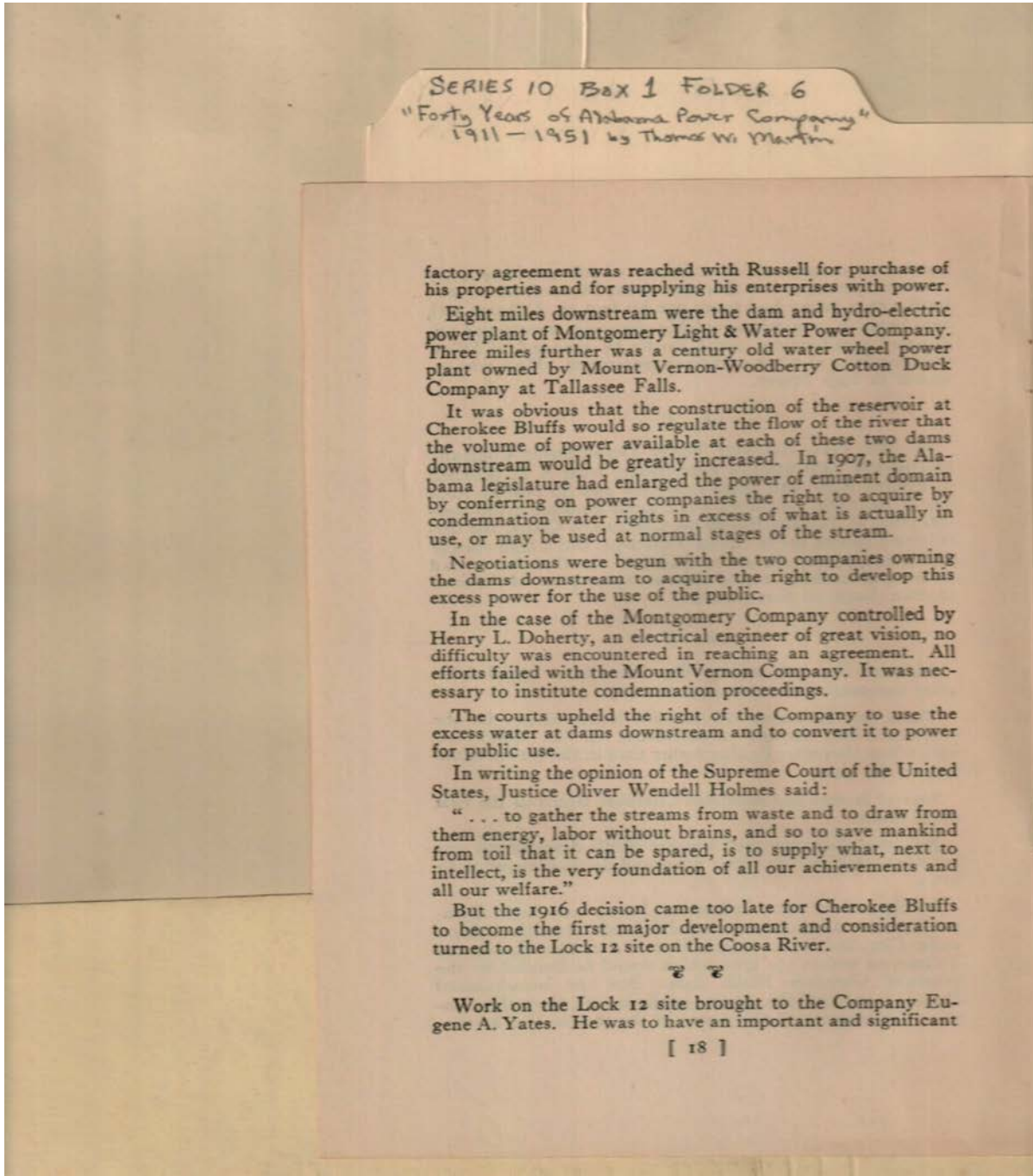
Mitchell, Reuben A.

Mitchell, S. Z.

Russell, Benjamin

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

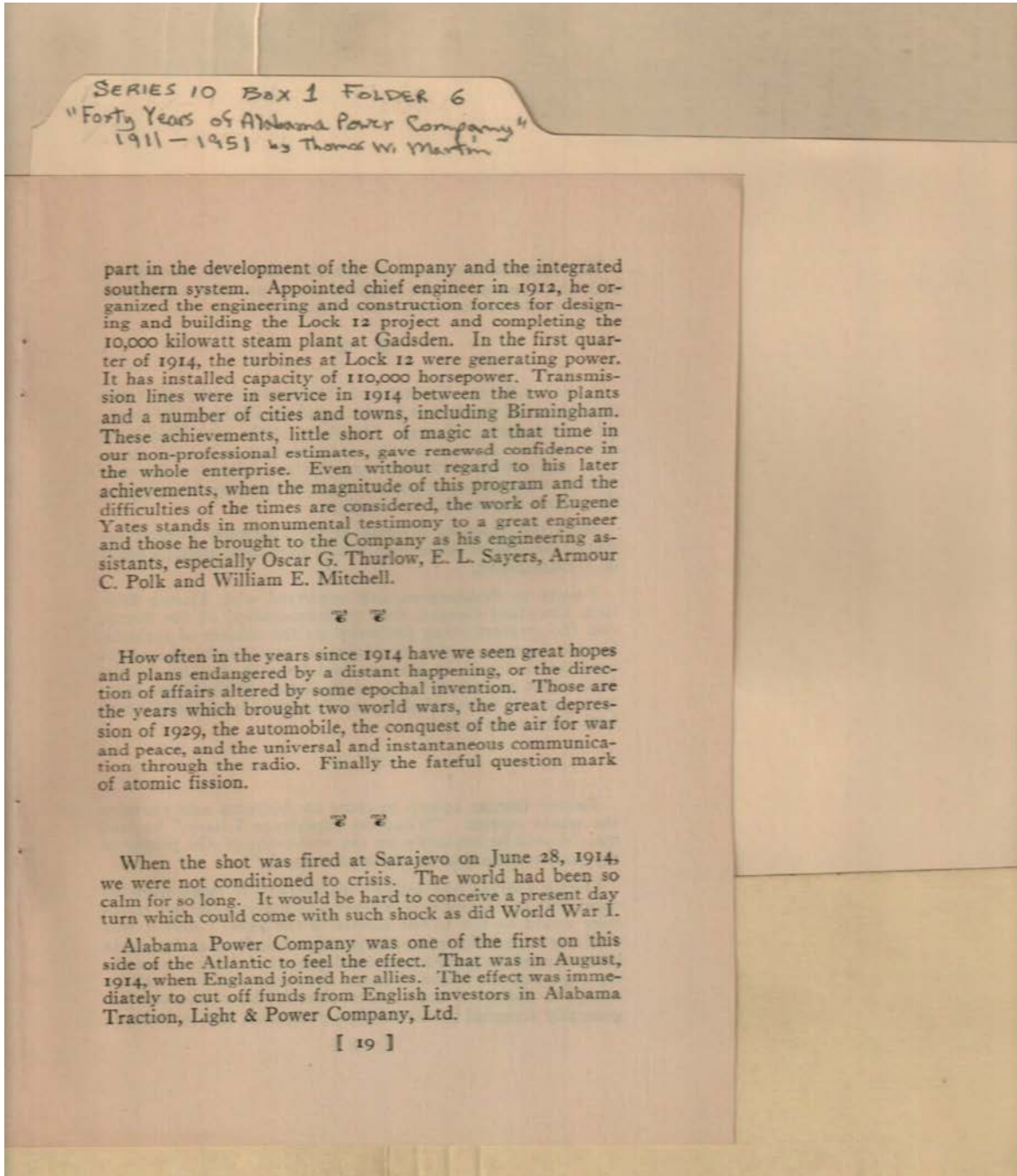
Doherty, Henry L.

Holmes, Oliver  
Wendell, Justice

Yates, Eugene A.

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

Mitchell, William E.

Sayers, E. L.

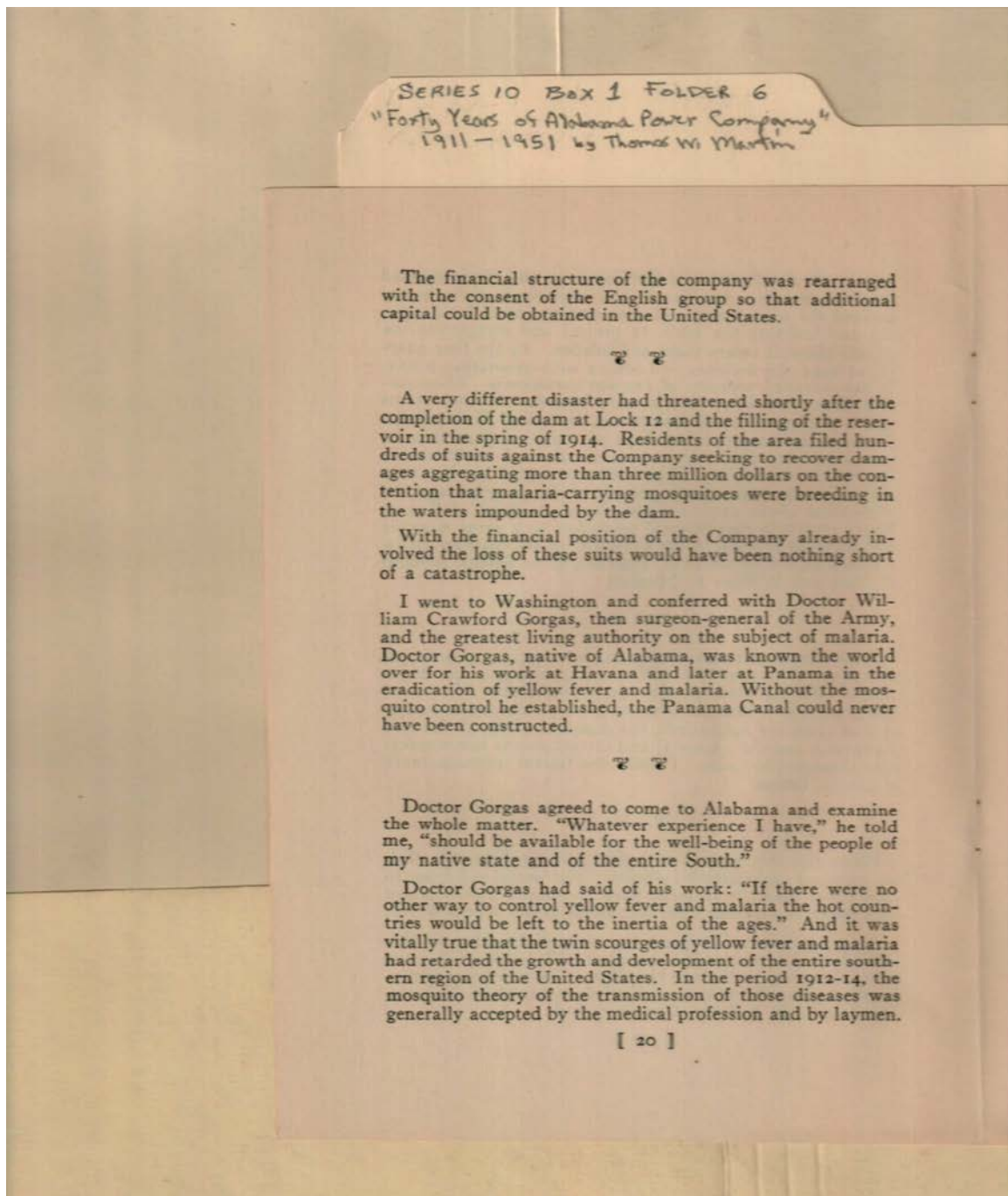
Yates, Eugene

Polk, Armour C.

Thurlow, Oscar G.

**Types:**

speech

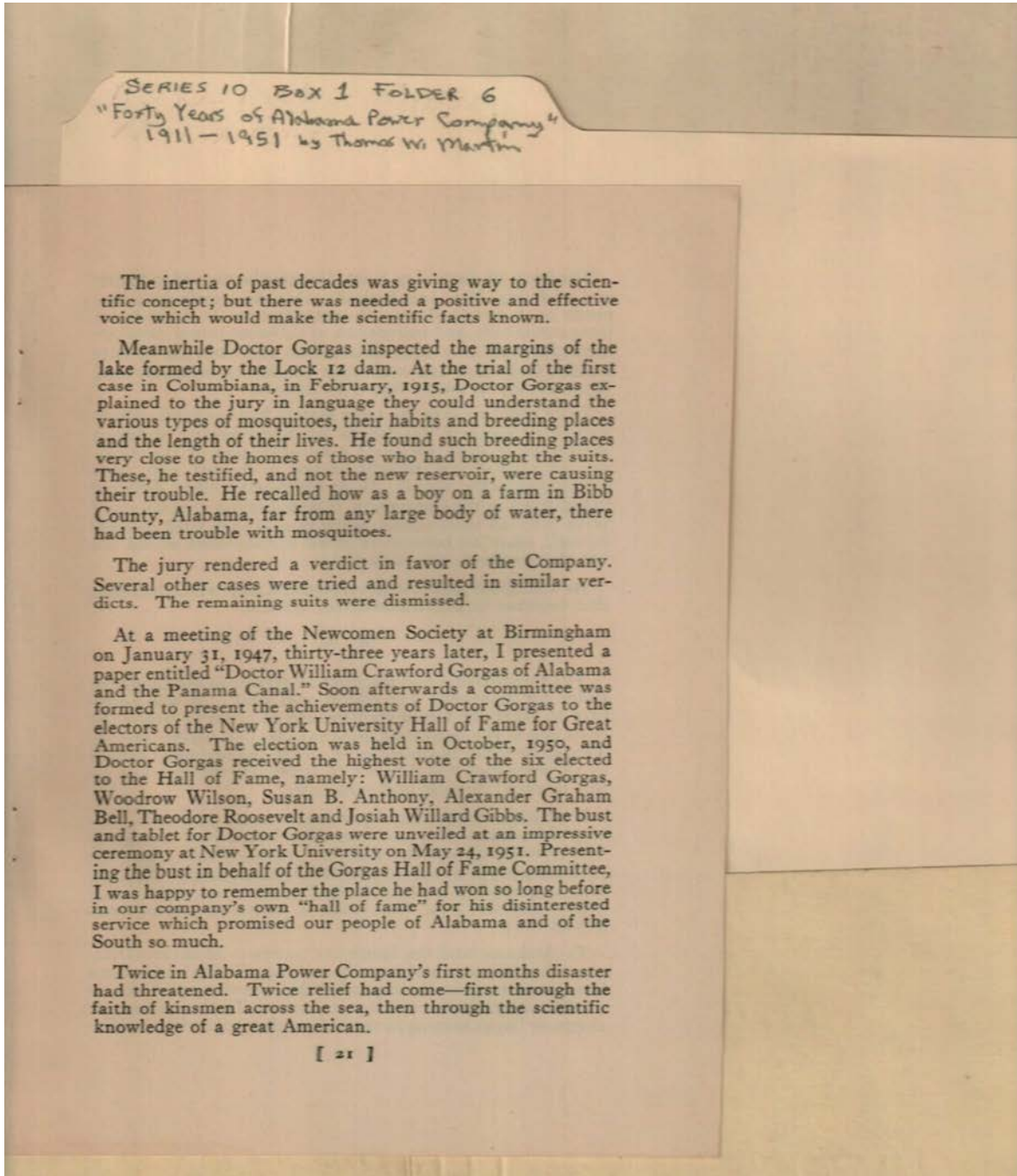


**Names:**

Gorgas, William  
Crawford, Dr.

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

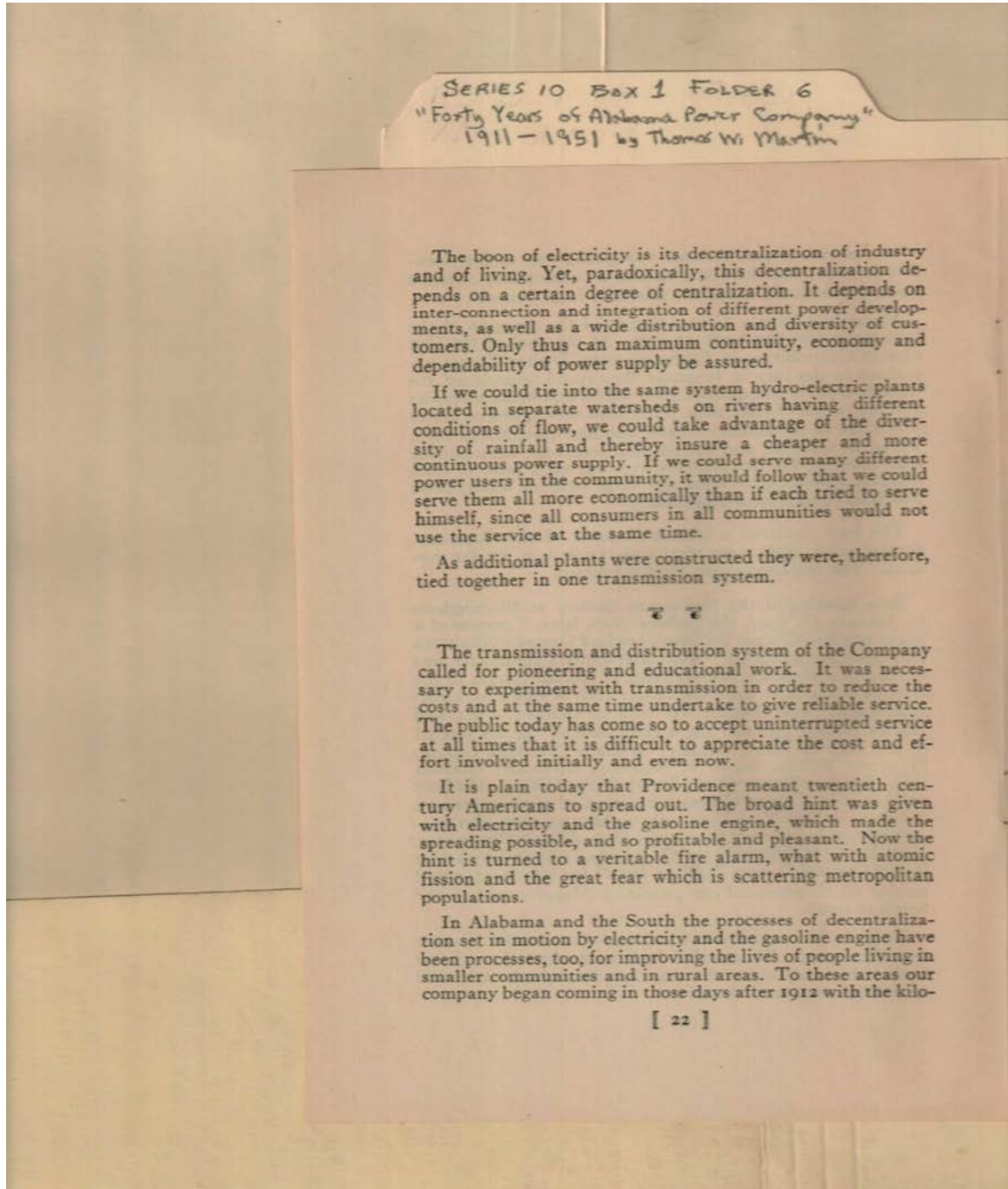
Anthony, Susan B.  
Bell, Alexander  
Graham

Gibbs, Josiah Willard  
Gorgas, William  
Crawford, Dr.

Roosevelt, Theodore  
Wilson, Woodrow

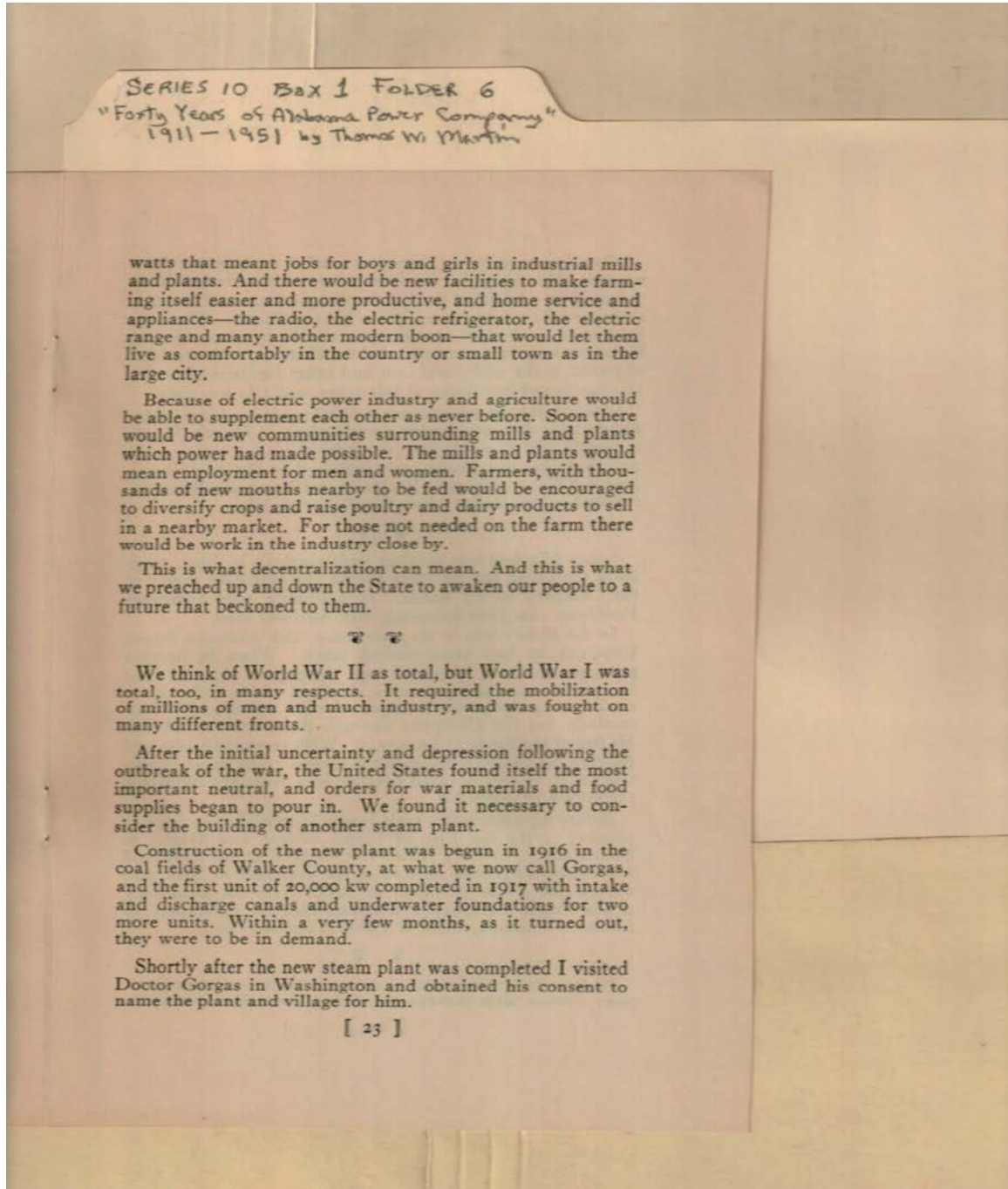
**Types:**

speech



Types:  
speech



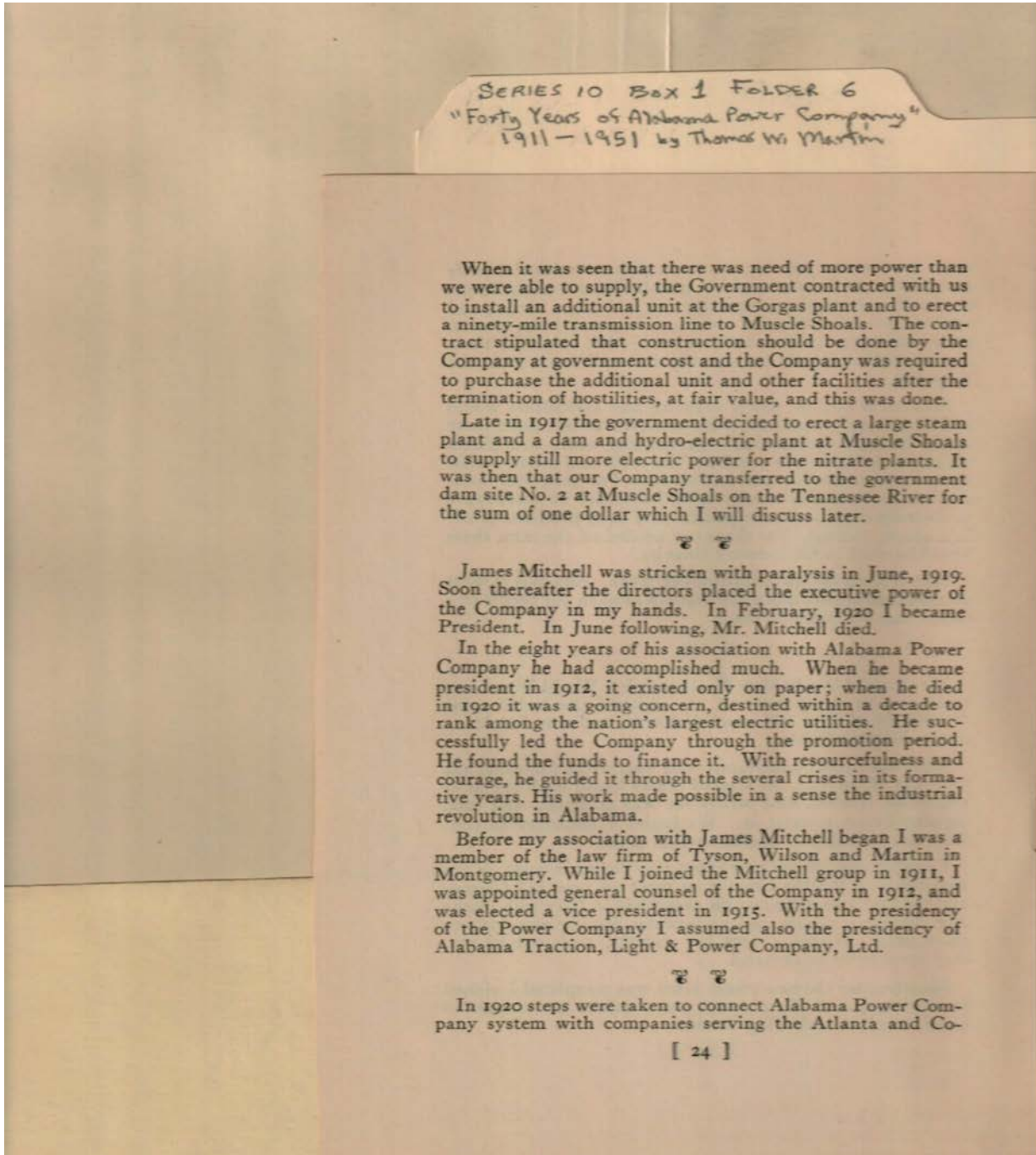


**Names:**

Gorgas, Dr.

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

Martin,

Mitchell, James

Tyson,

Wilson,

**Types:**

speech

SERIES 10 BOX 1 FOLDER 6  
"Forty Years of Alabama Power Company"  
1911 - 1951 by Thomas W. Martin

lumbus, Georgia, areas, so that surplus power could be exchanged with them.

The arrangement quickly proved its worth. During 1921 a severe drouth occurred throughout the South seriously affecting utility service in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Alabama Power Company had ample power to meet its own needs, and some to spare, but not enough to help its neighbors. The Company, therefore, leased the government's steam plant at Muscle Shoals and, through the interconnection with the Georgia system, relayed enough power to Georgia and the Carolinas to help materially in tiding them over.

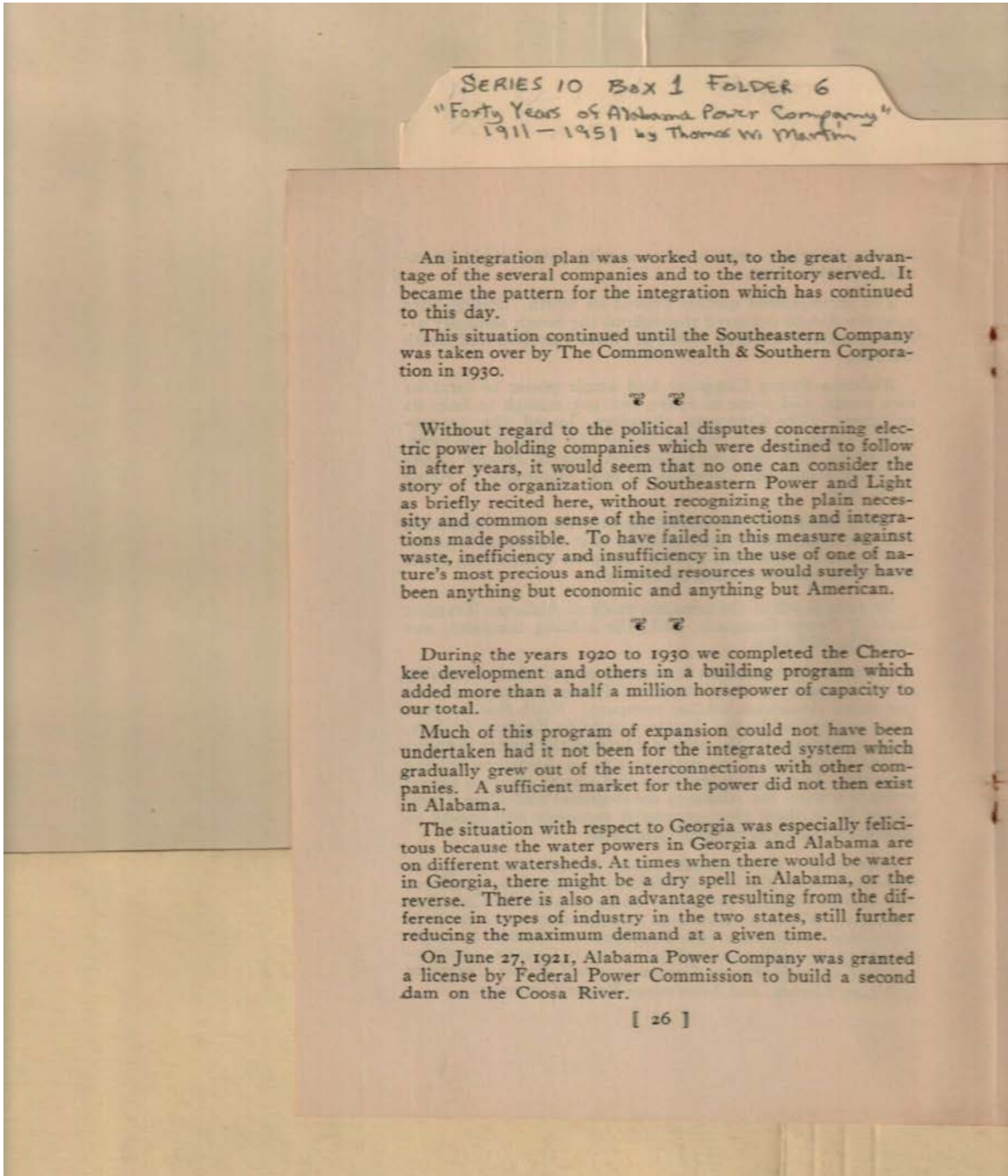
These early interconnection agreements were significant and important but it was realized that maximum benefits could never be obtained without complete integration, made possible by common stock ownership.

By 1924 much of the common stock of Alabama Traction Light & Power Company, Ltd., the holding company, was owned in Alabama.

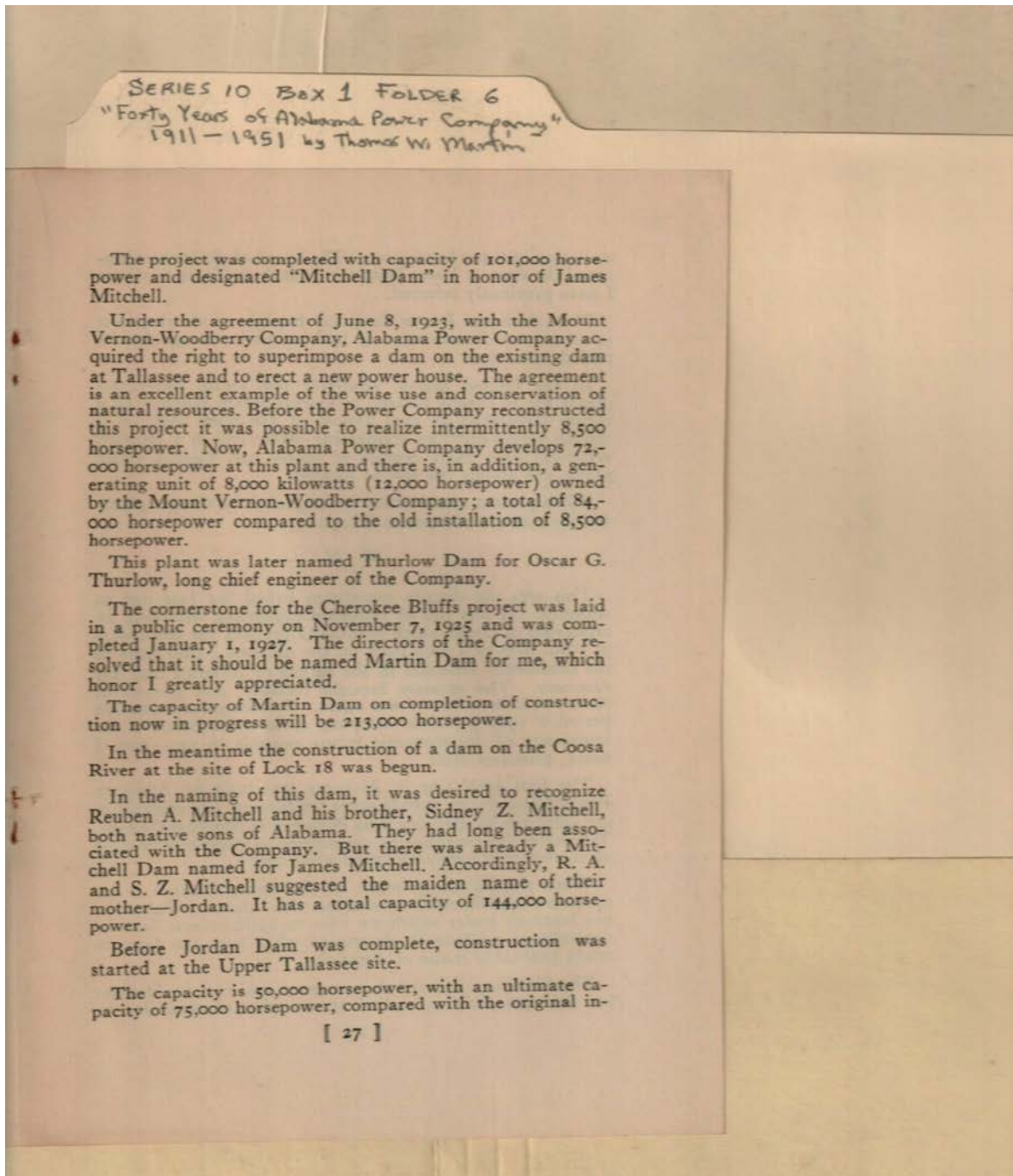
In these circumstances it seemed proper that ownership of the common stock of Alabama Power Company should rest in an American holding company. With this in view, I was authorized by the directors to go to England in July, 1924, to discuss with the principal holders the matter of transferring ownership of the enterprise to an American holding company. The English investors had always shown a liberal attitude toward the Alabama development and when I presented it to them they expressed complete willingness to accept the change of holding companies.

Accordingly, Southeastern Power & Light Company was organized under the laws of Maine with myself as president and it took over the properties and assets of the Canadian company. Within a short time arrangements were made to bring other companies into Southeastern Power & Light Company; including various companies in Georgia, now constituting Georgia Power Company; Gulf Power Company in North Florida, and Mississippi Power Company.

Types:  
speech



Types:  
speech



**Names:**

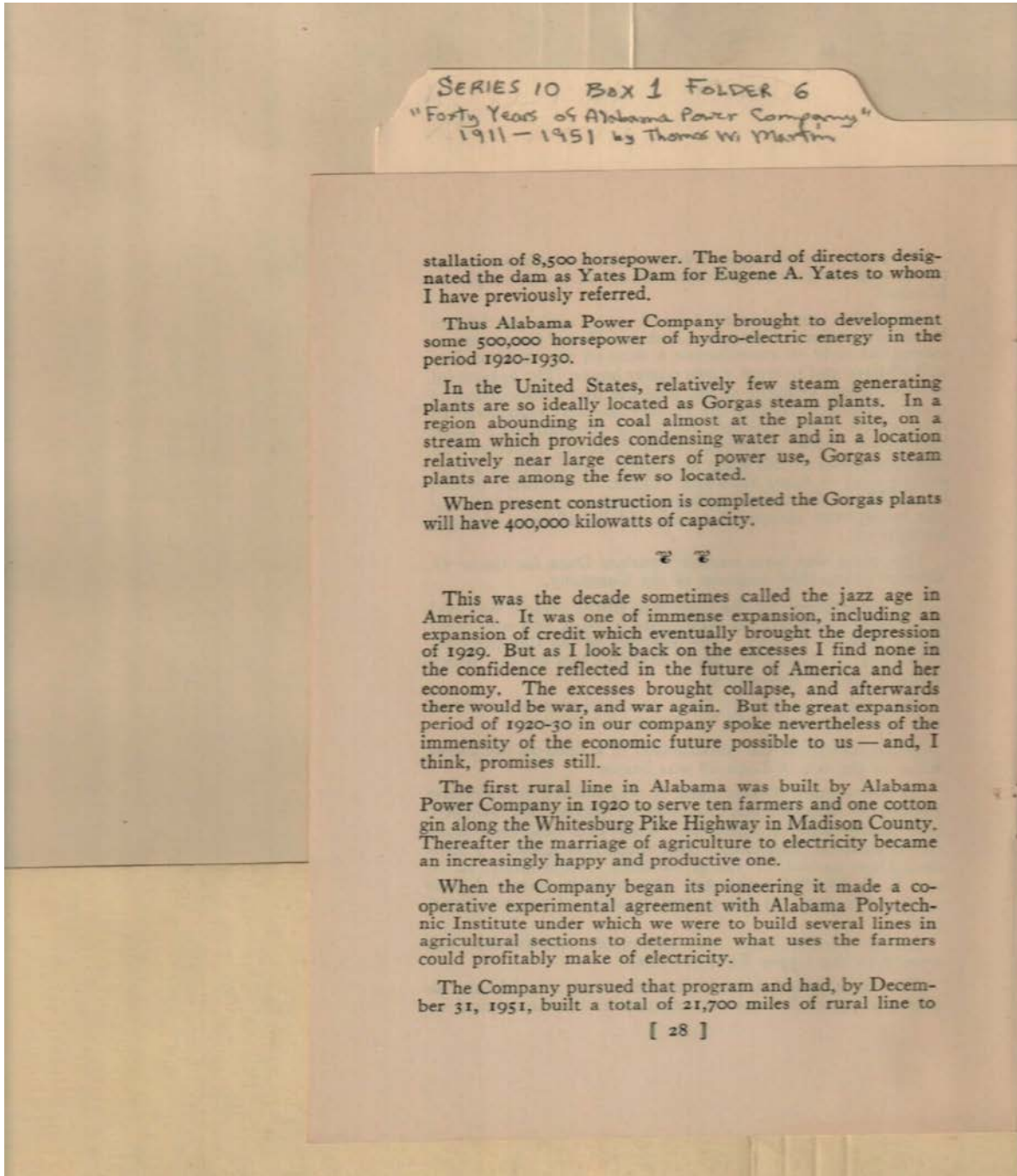
Jordan,  
Mitchell, James

Mitchell, Reuben A.  
Mitchell, Sidney Z.

Thurlow, Oscar G.

**Types:**

speech



**Names:**

First Rural Line

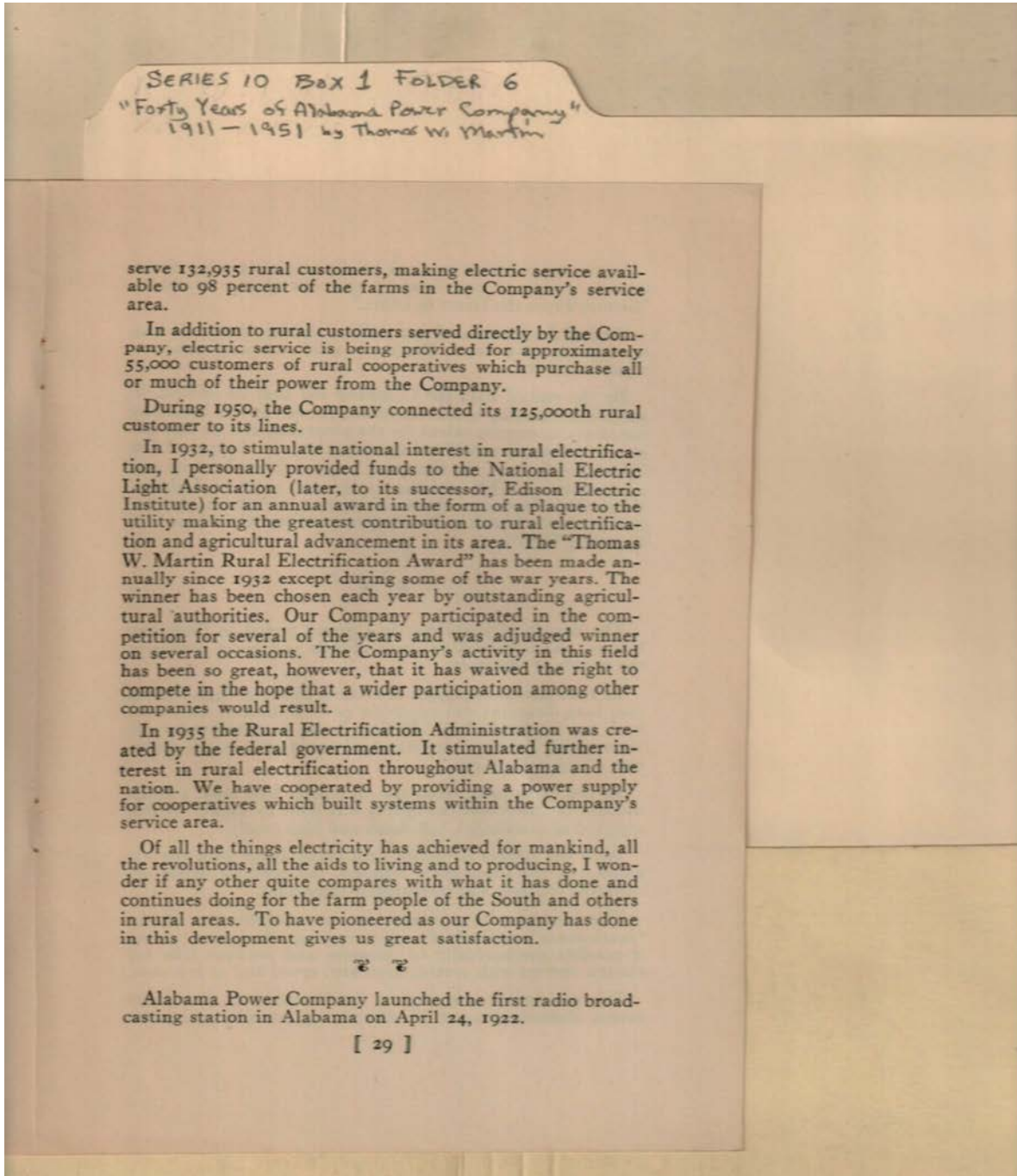
Yates, Eugene A.

**Places:**

Madison Co., AL

**Types:**

speech

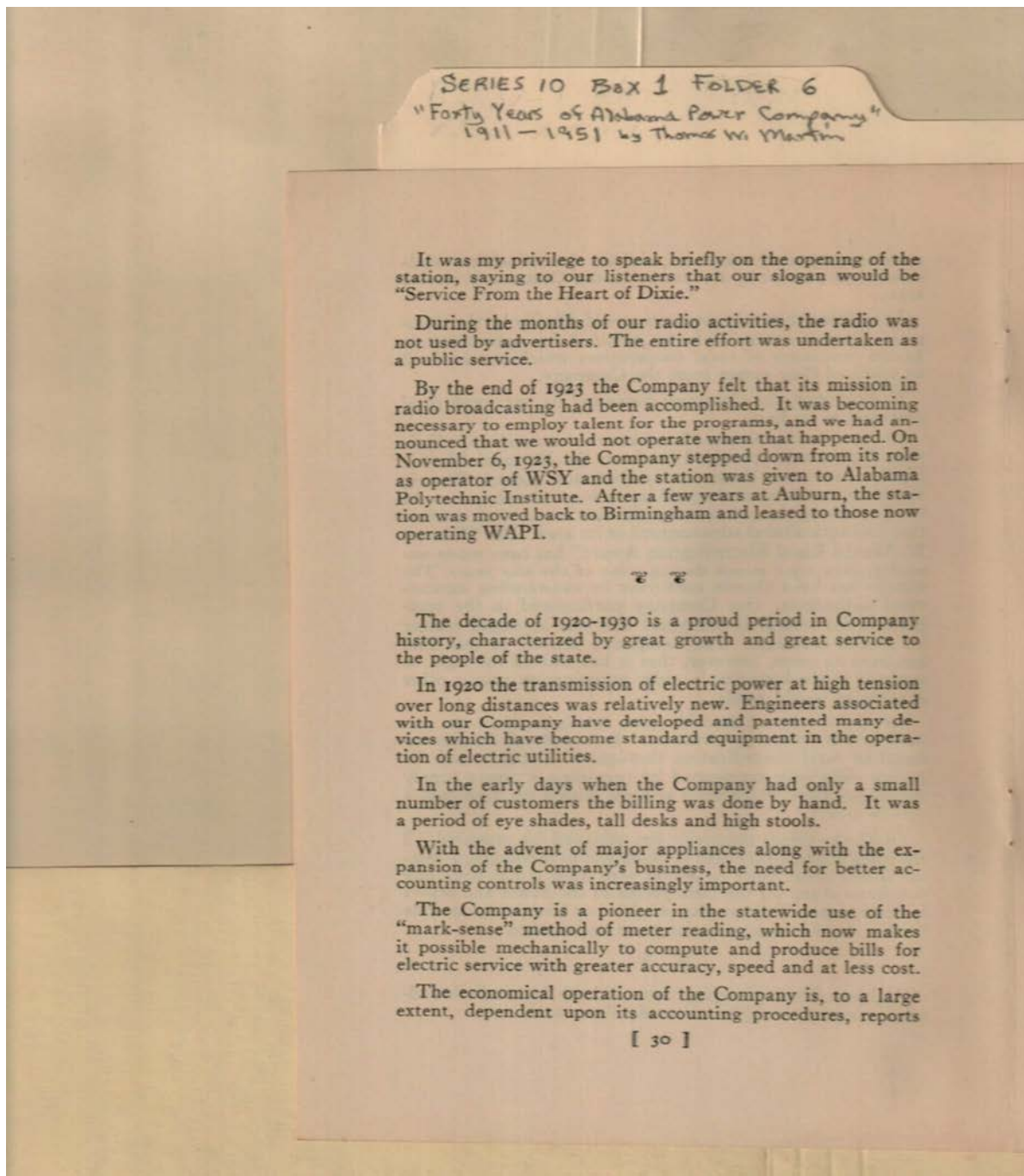


**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

**Types:**

speech



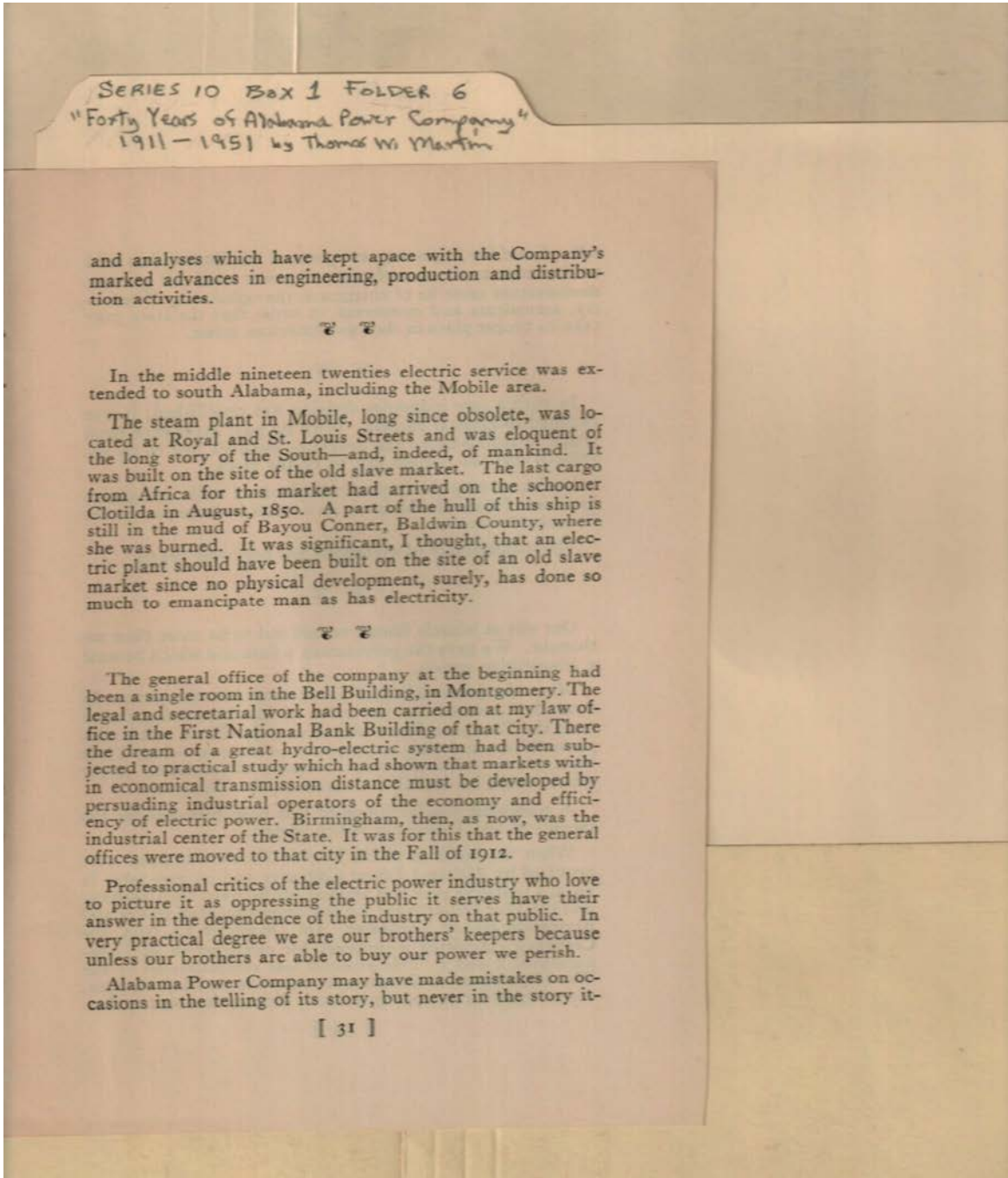
**Names:**

WAPI Radio Station

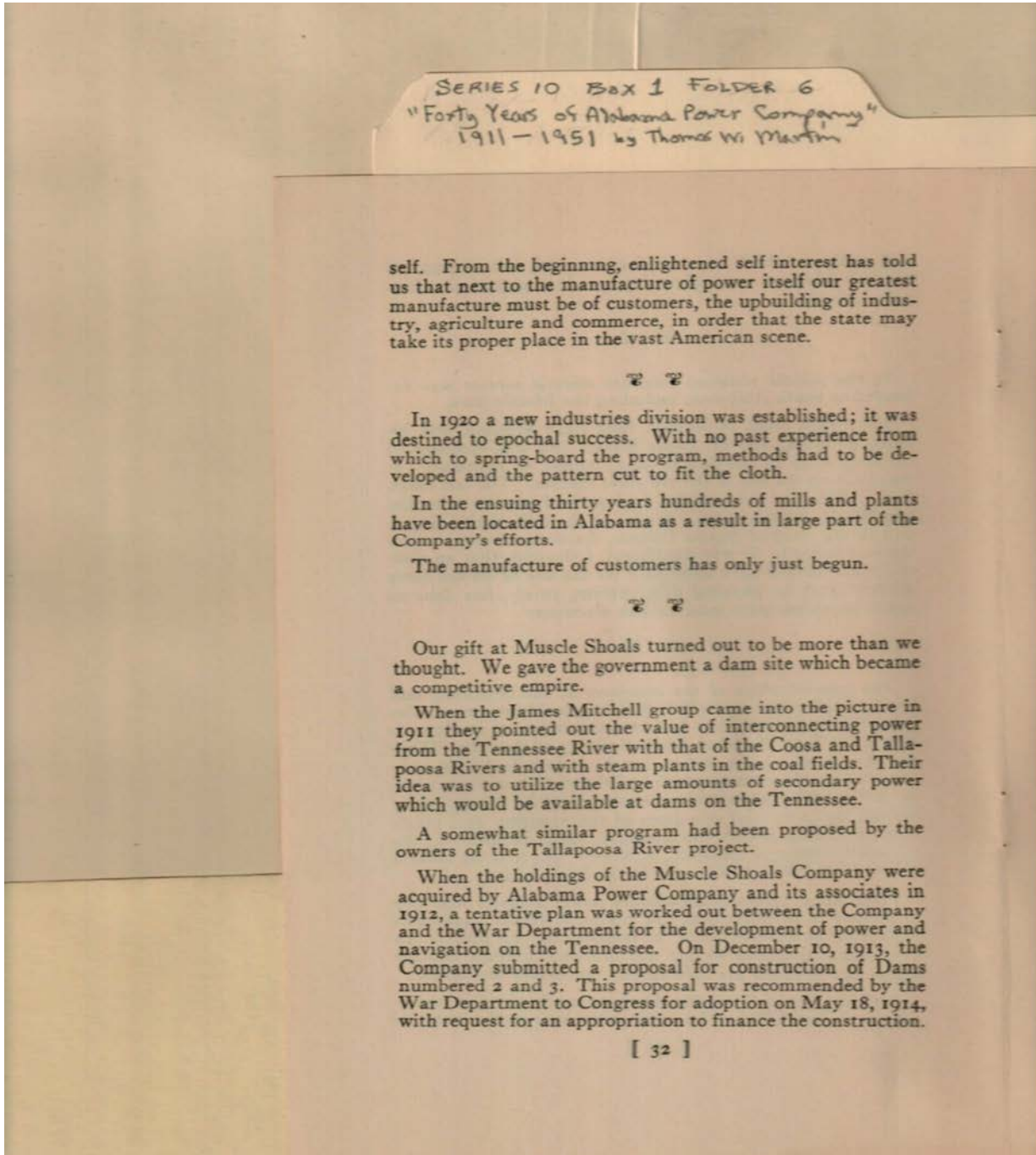
**Types:**

speech





Types:  
speech



**Names:**

Mitchell, James

**Types:**

speech

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"Forty Years of Alabama Power Company"  
1911-1951 by Thomas W. Martin

But World War I broke out a few weeks later and the attention of America was directed to the eventuality of being brought into the conflict. Large quantities of nitrogen would be needed for explosives and the principal source of supply was Chile. This supply might easily be cut off by enemy submarines. It was decided to erect a plant to extract nitrogen from the air.

In 1916 Congress authorized construction of such a plant and both a steam and hydro power plant to supply the necessary electricity. Muscle Shoals was selected for the development. This terminated our plan for joint construction for power and navigation. Alabama Power Company, through its subsidiary Muscle Shoals Hydro-Electric Power Company had invested more than \$500,000 in the dam site, studies, and adjacent lands to be submerged. The United States desired to acquire title to these properties for the nitrogen project but was unwilling to reimburse the Company for what it had spent. No agreement could be reached. Government representatives announced that they would exercise the power conferred by the acts of Congress and take possession.

Not wishing to take the matter into the courts at a time of national emergency, James Mitchell, on behalf of the Company, offered on February 18, 1918, to donate the power site, the lands, and all its engineering studies, plans and specifications to the government, on the expressed condition that the Company "*should receive consideration in the disposition of any surplus power not required for the needs of the Government.*"

This offer was accepted by the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, on February 20, 1918, who thanked the Company "for its generous and public-spirited action." The Company received a U. S. Treasury check for one dollar which is still held in the archives of the Company.

Two undertakings of the government at Muscle Shoals were incomplete when the war ended. One was the steam plant which was finished shortly after the end of the war. The other was the famous Wilson Dam. Congress continued to make appropriations for a year or two for the construction of Wilson Dam, but when \$17,000,000 had been

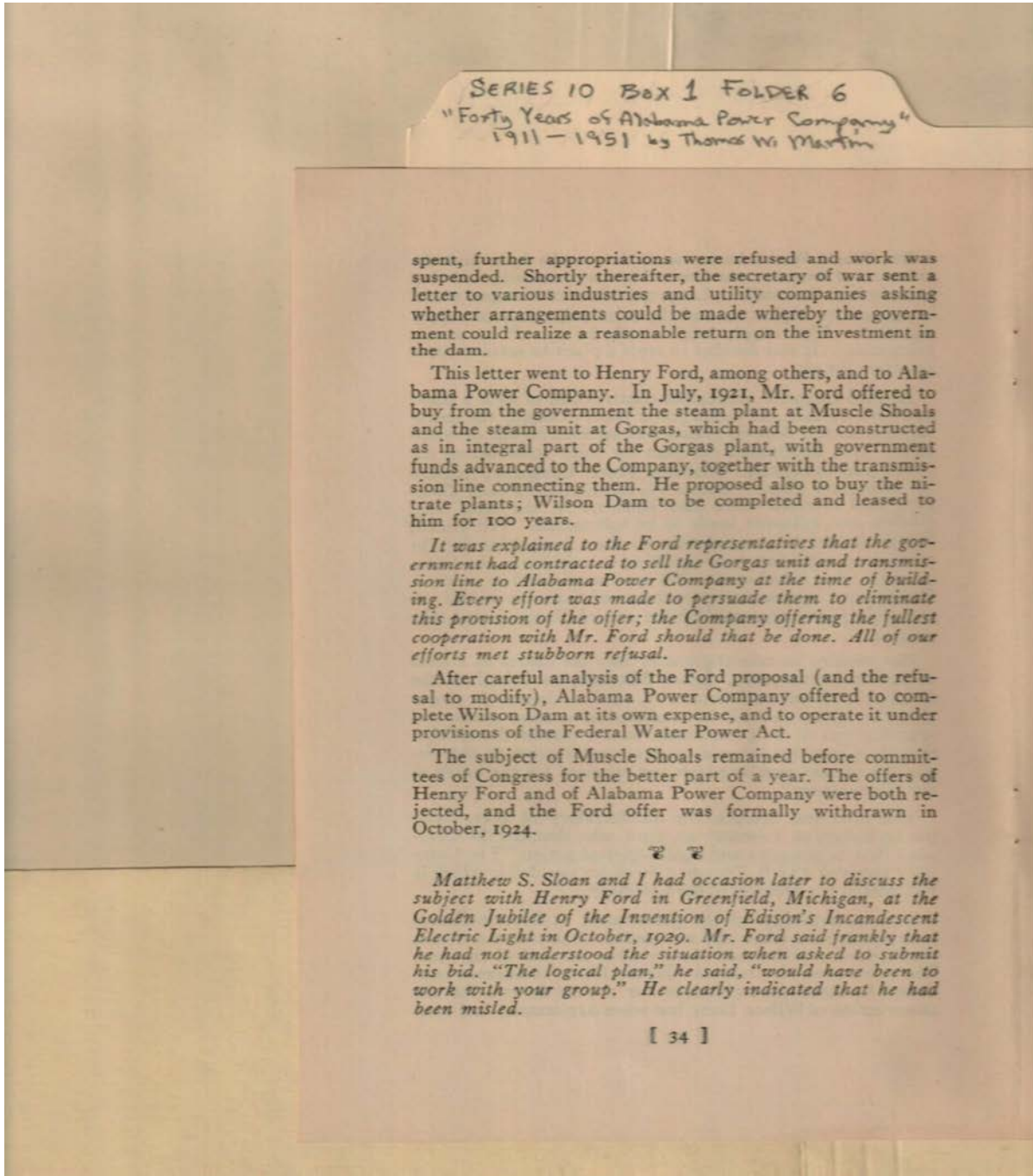
**Names:**

Baker, Newton D.

Mitchell, James

**Types:**

speech



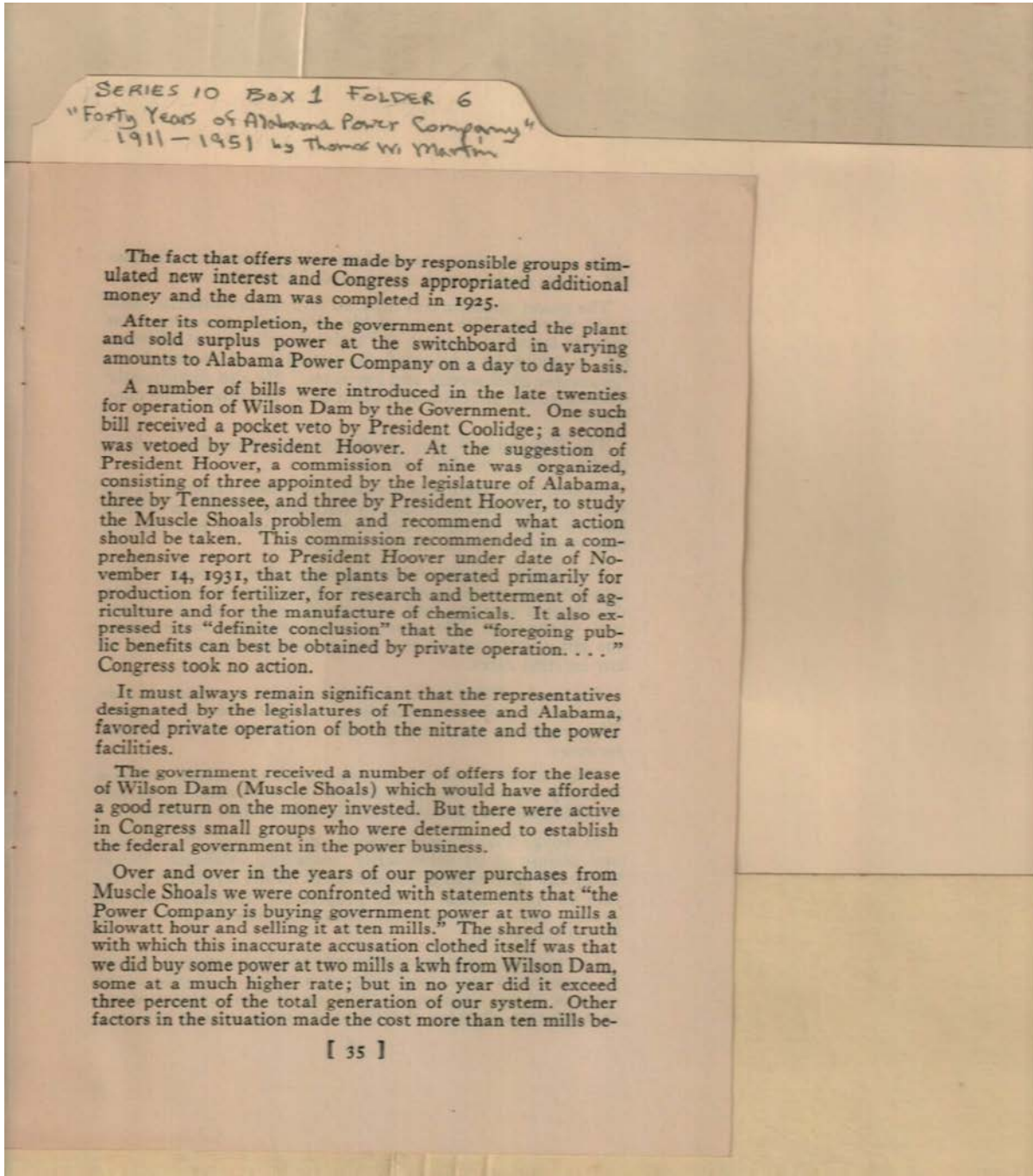
**Names:**

Ford, Henry

Sloan, Matthew S.

**Types:**

speech



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The fact that offers were made by responsible groups stimulated new interest and Congress appropriated additional money and the dam was completed in 1925.

After its completion, the government operated the plant and sold surplus power at the switchboard in varying amounts to Alabama Power Company on a day to day basis.

A number of bills were introduced in the late twenties for operation of Wilson Dam by the Government. One such bill received a pocket veto by President Coolidge; a second was vetoed by President Hoover. At the suggestion of President Hoover, a commission of nine was organized, consisting of three appointed by the legislature of Alabama, three by Tennessee, and three by President Hoover, to study the Muscle Shoals problem and recommend what action should be taken. This commission recommended in a comprehensive report to President Hoover under date of November 14, 1931, that the plants be operated primarily for production for fertilizer, for research and betterment of agriculture and for the manufacture of chemicals. It also expressed its "definite conclusion" that the "foregoing public benefits can best be obtained by private operation. . . ." Congress took no action.

It must always remain significant that the representatives designated by the legislatures of Tennessee and Alabama, favored private operation of both the nitrate and the power facilities.

The government received a number of offers for the lease of Wilson Dam (Muscle Shoals) which would have afforded a good return on the money invested. But there were active in Congress small groups who were determined to establish the federal government in the power business.

Over and over in the years of our power purchases from Muscle Shoals we were confronted with statements that "the Power Company is buying government power at two mills a kilowatt hour and selling it at ten mills." The shred of truth with which this inaccurate accusation clothed itself was that we did buy some power at two mills a kwh from Wilson Dam, some at a much higher rate; but in no year did it exceed three percent of the total generation of our system. Other factors in the situation made the cost more than ten mills be-

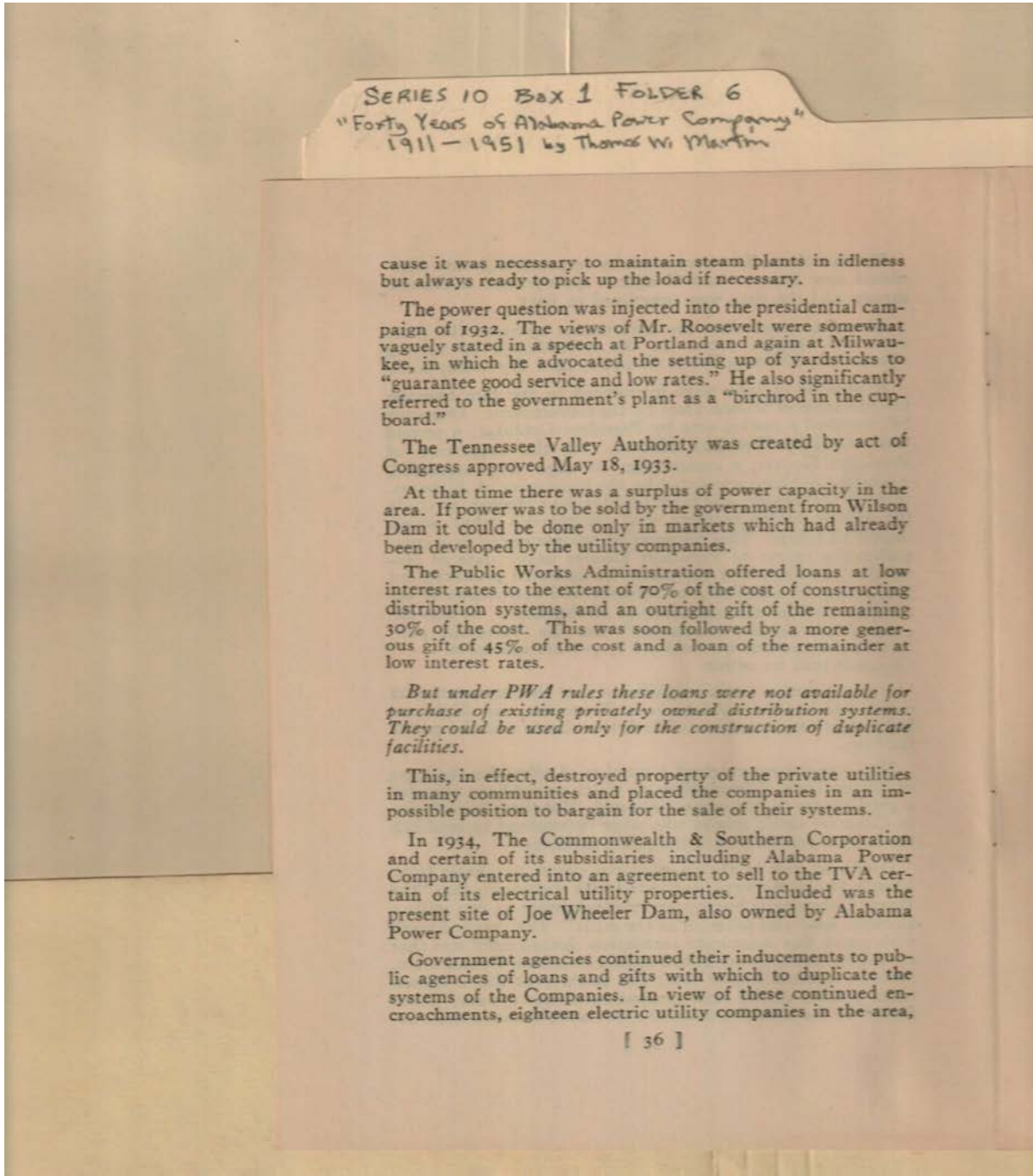
**Names:**

Coolidge, President

Hoover, President

**Types:**

speech



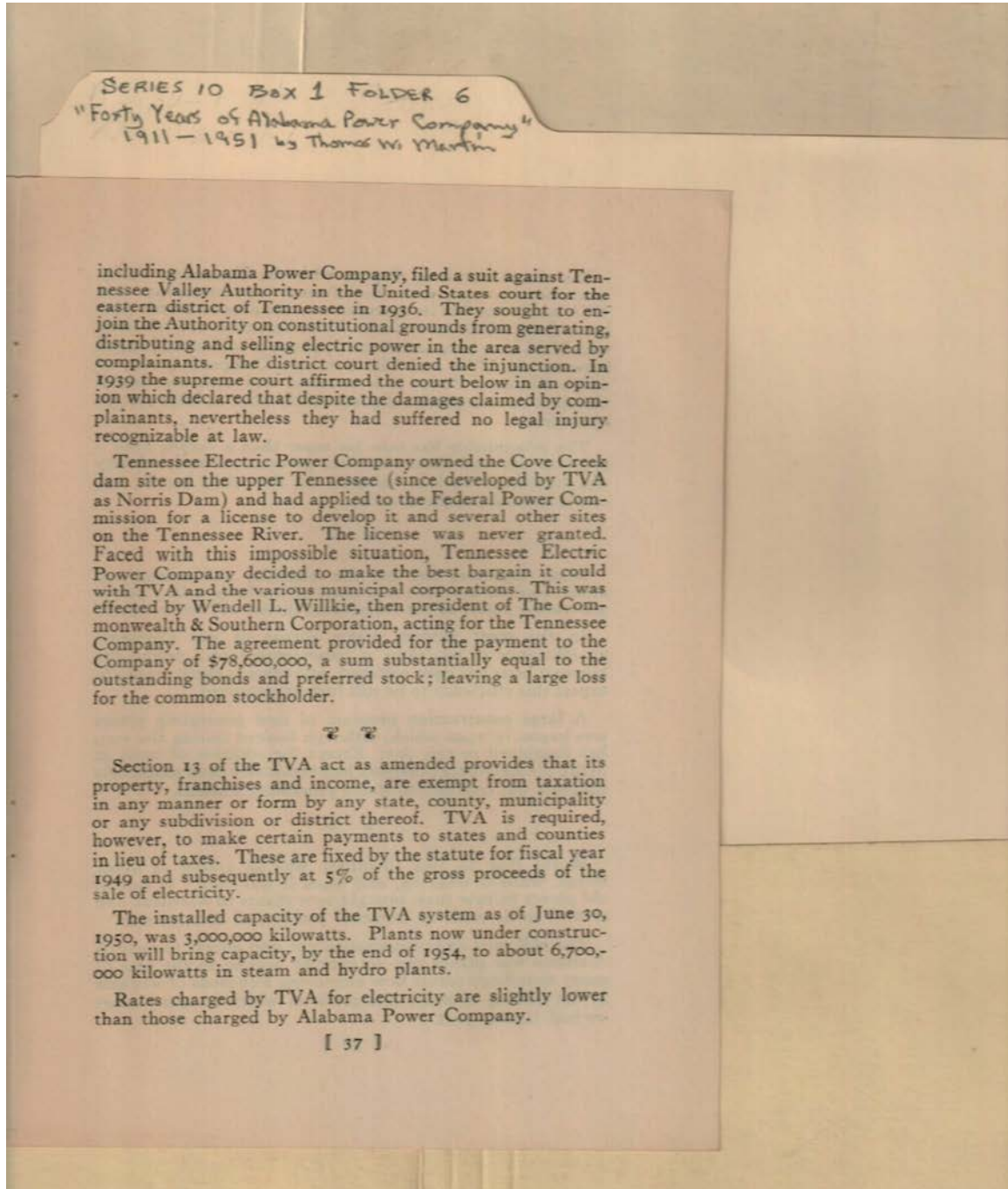
**Names:**

Roosevelt,

Tennessee Valley  
Authority Created

**Types:**

speech

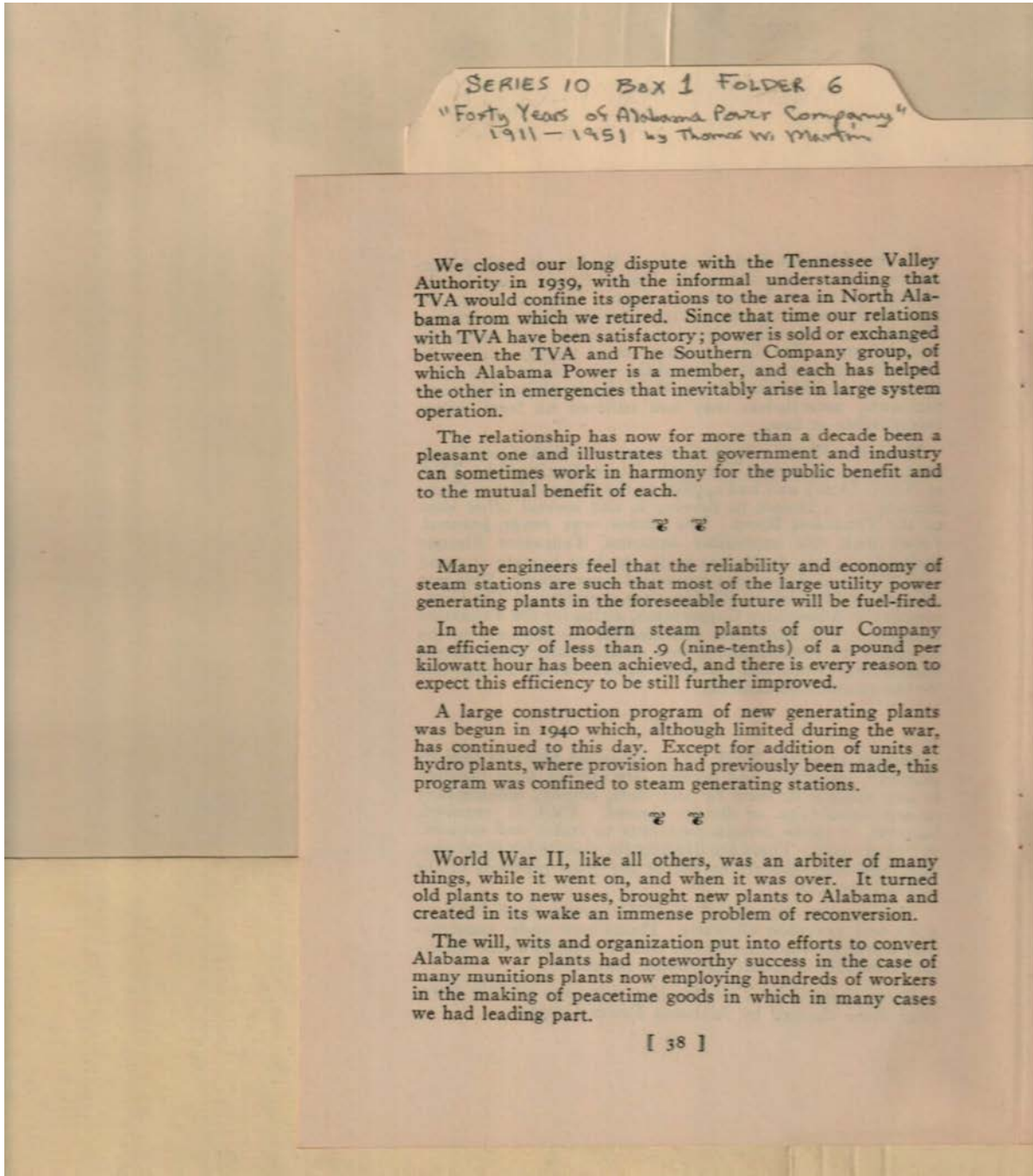


**Names:**

Willkie, Wendell L.

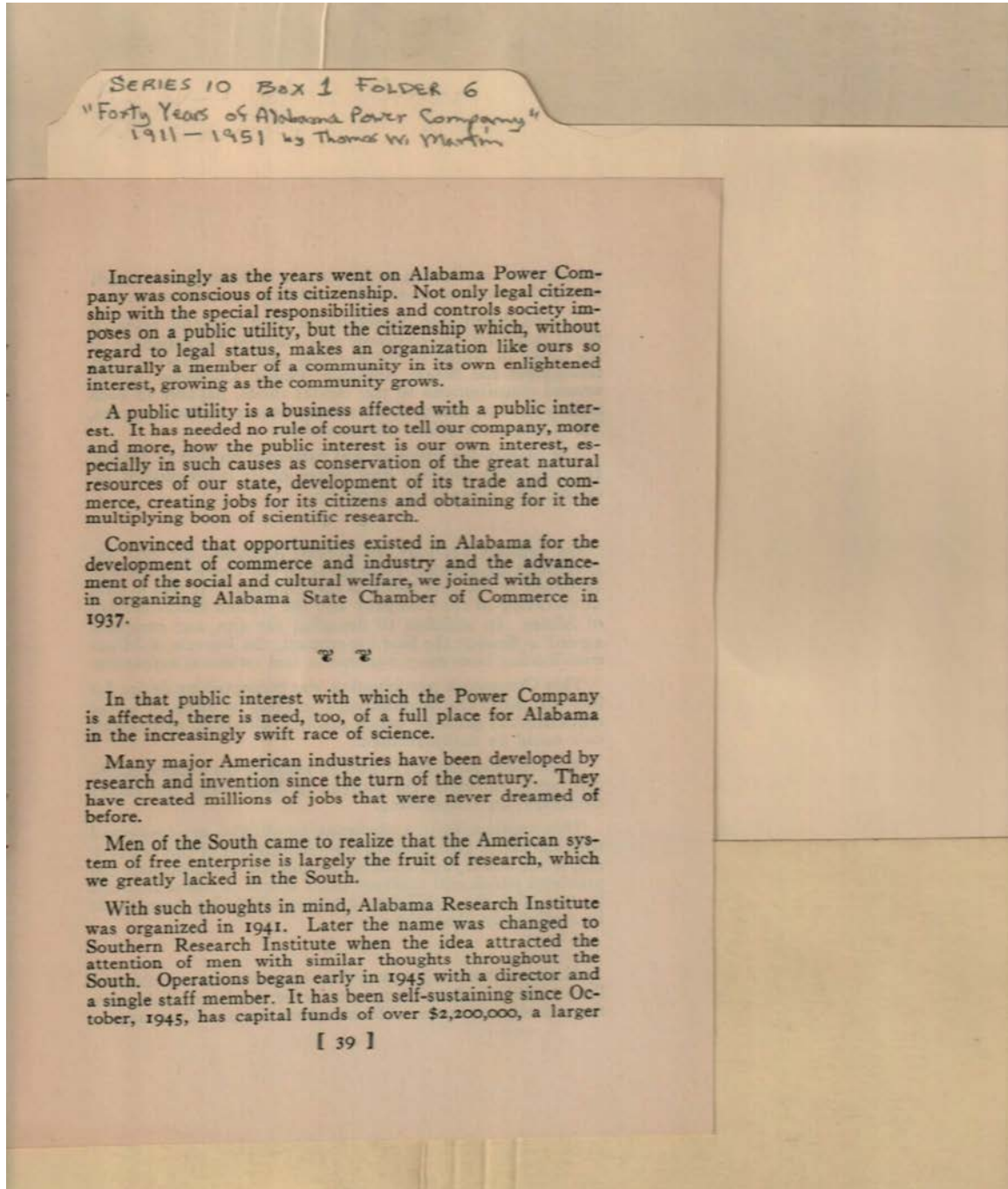
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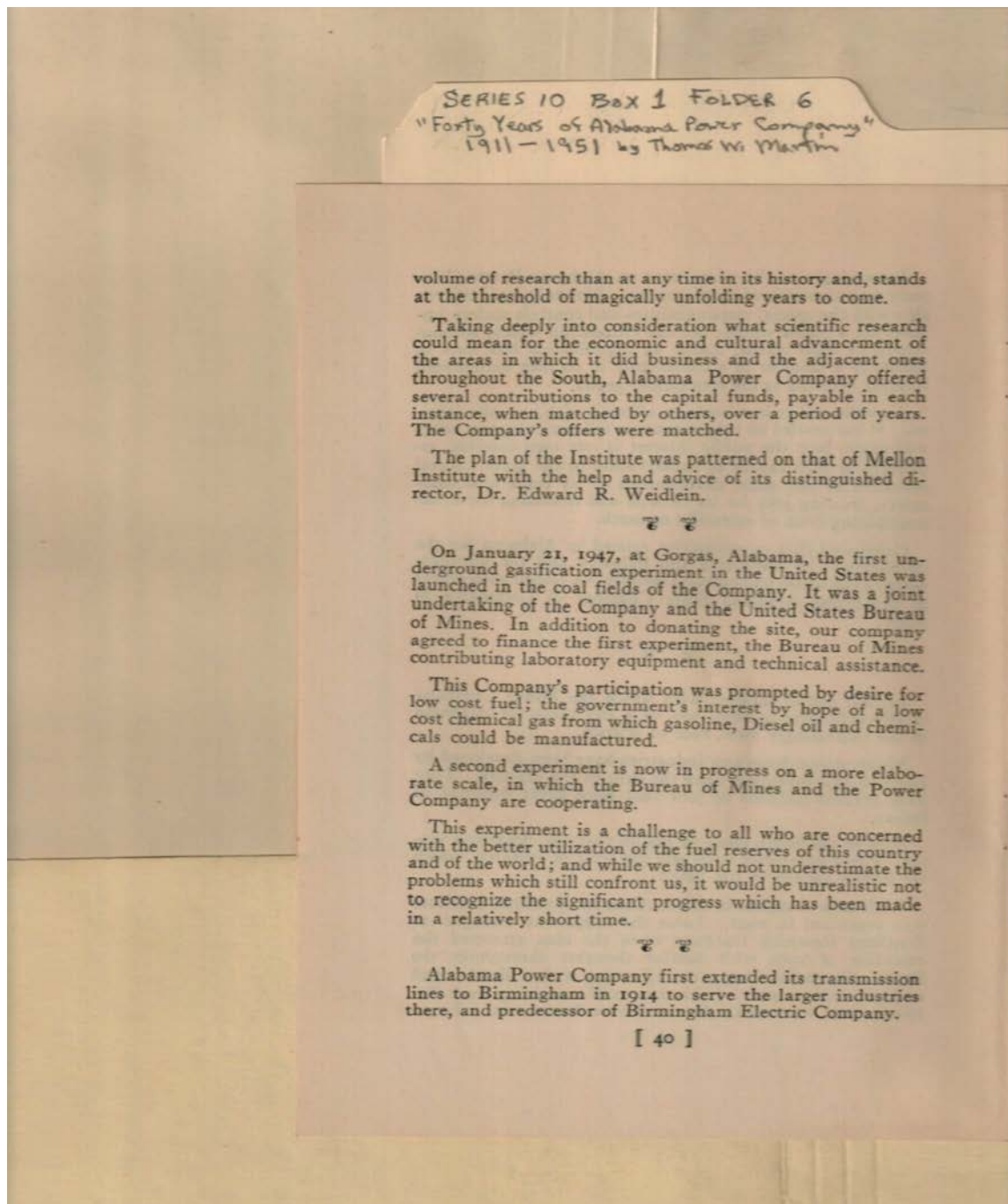


Types:  
speech





Types:  
speech

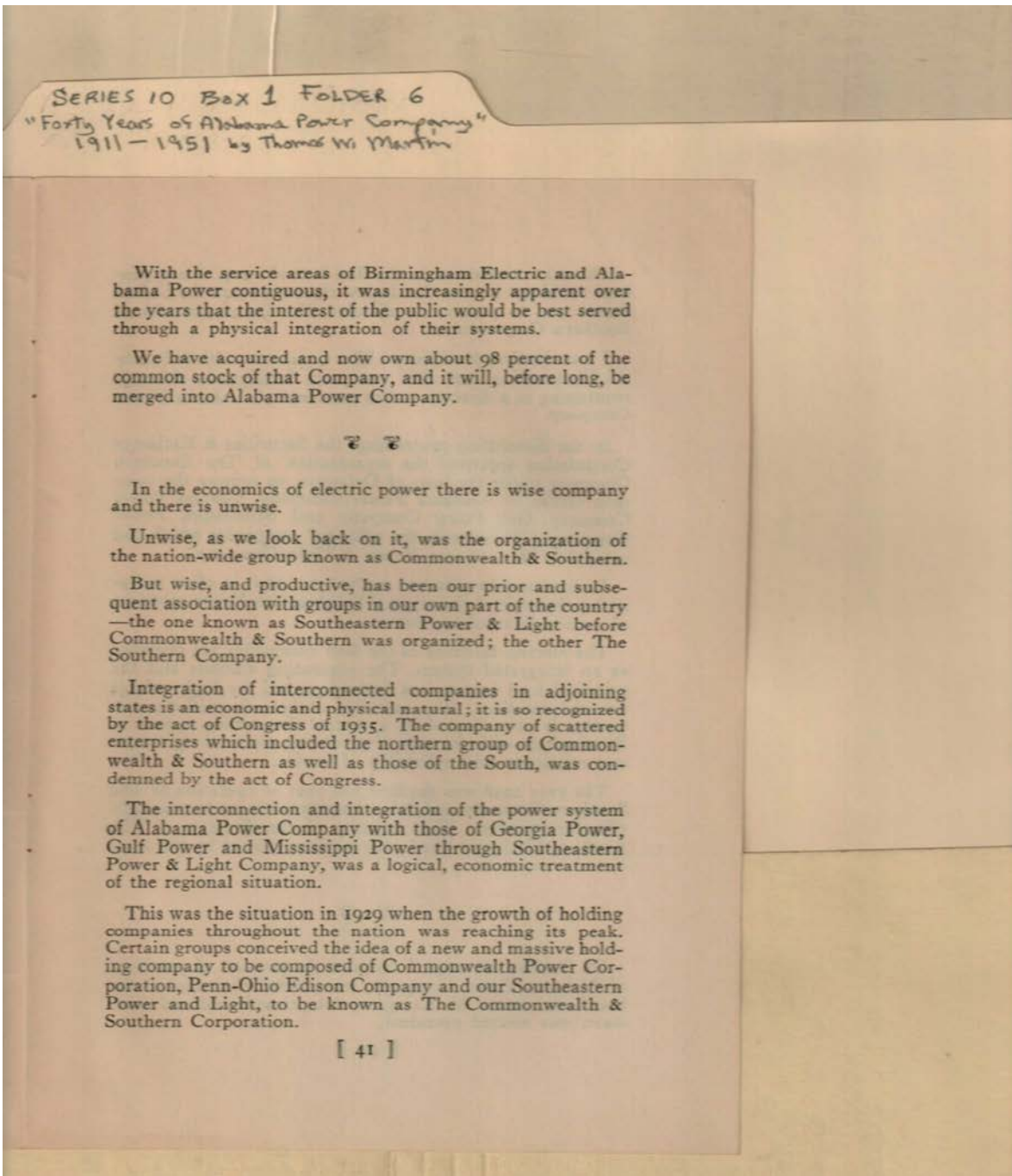


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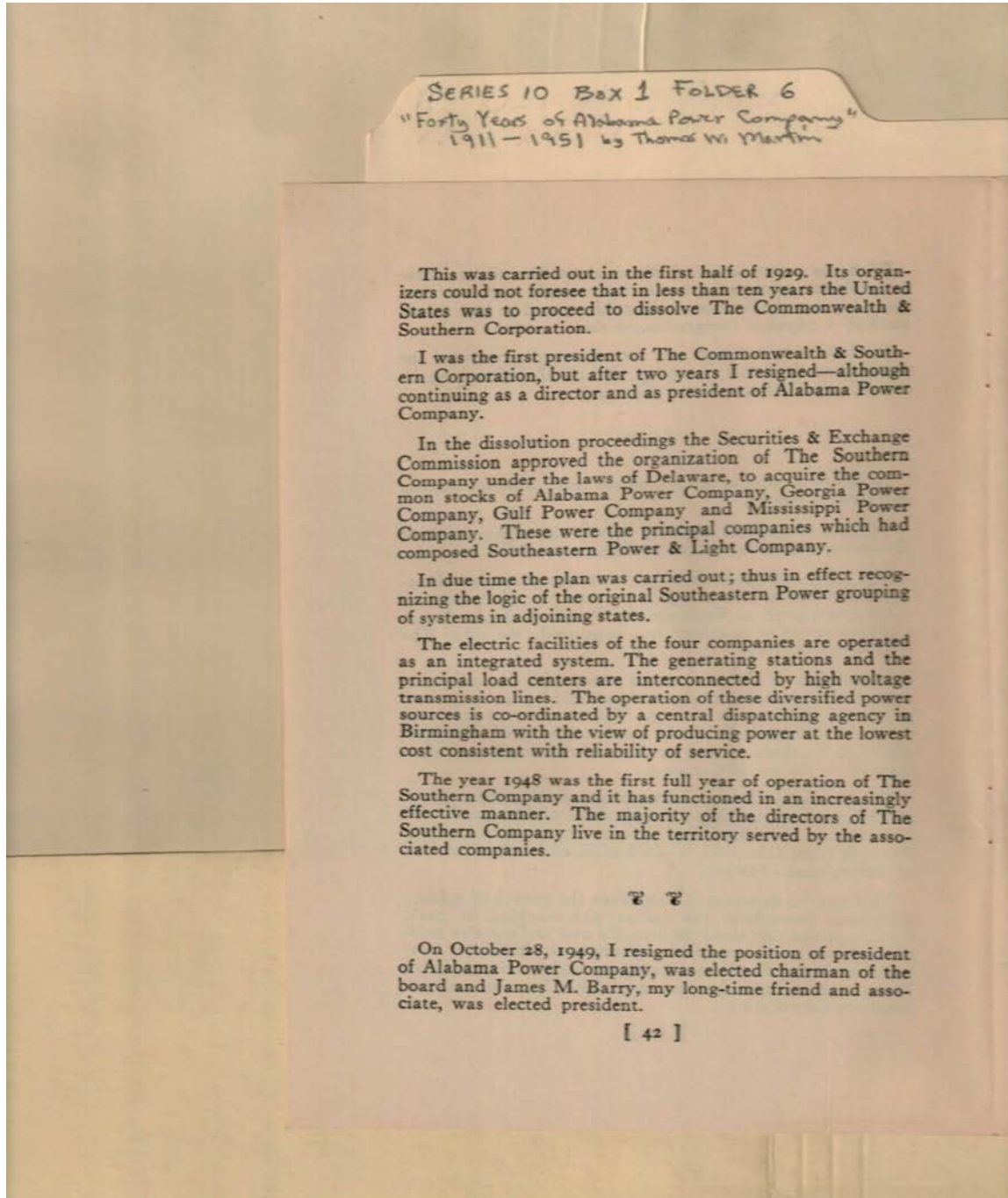
Weidlein, Edward R.,  
Dr.

**Types:**

speech



Types:  
speech

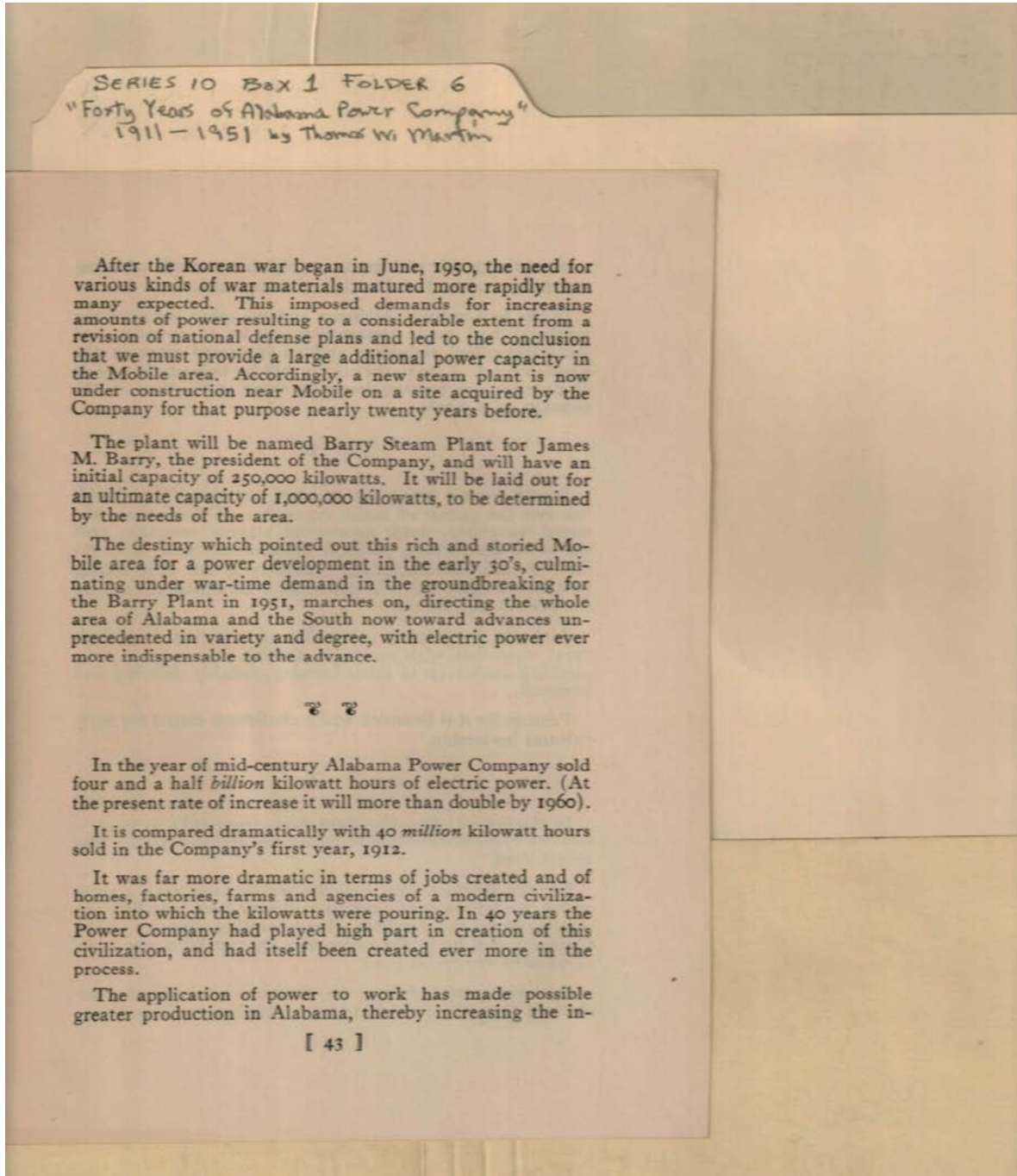


**Names:**

Barry, James M.

**Types:**

speech

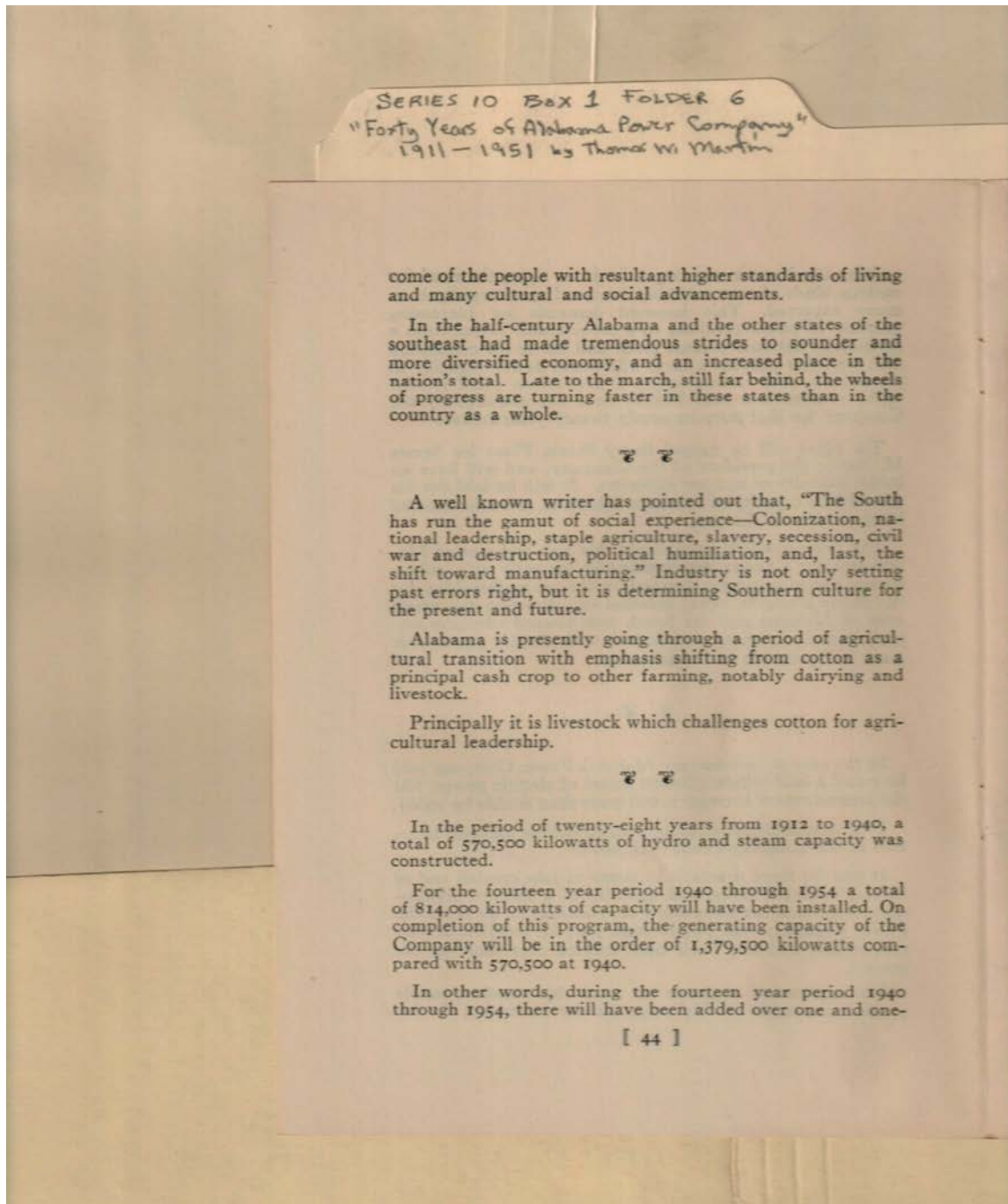


**Names:**

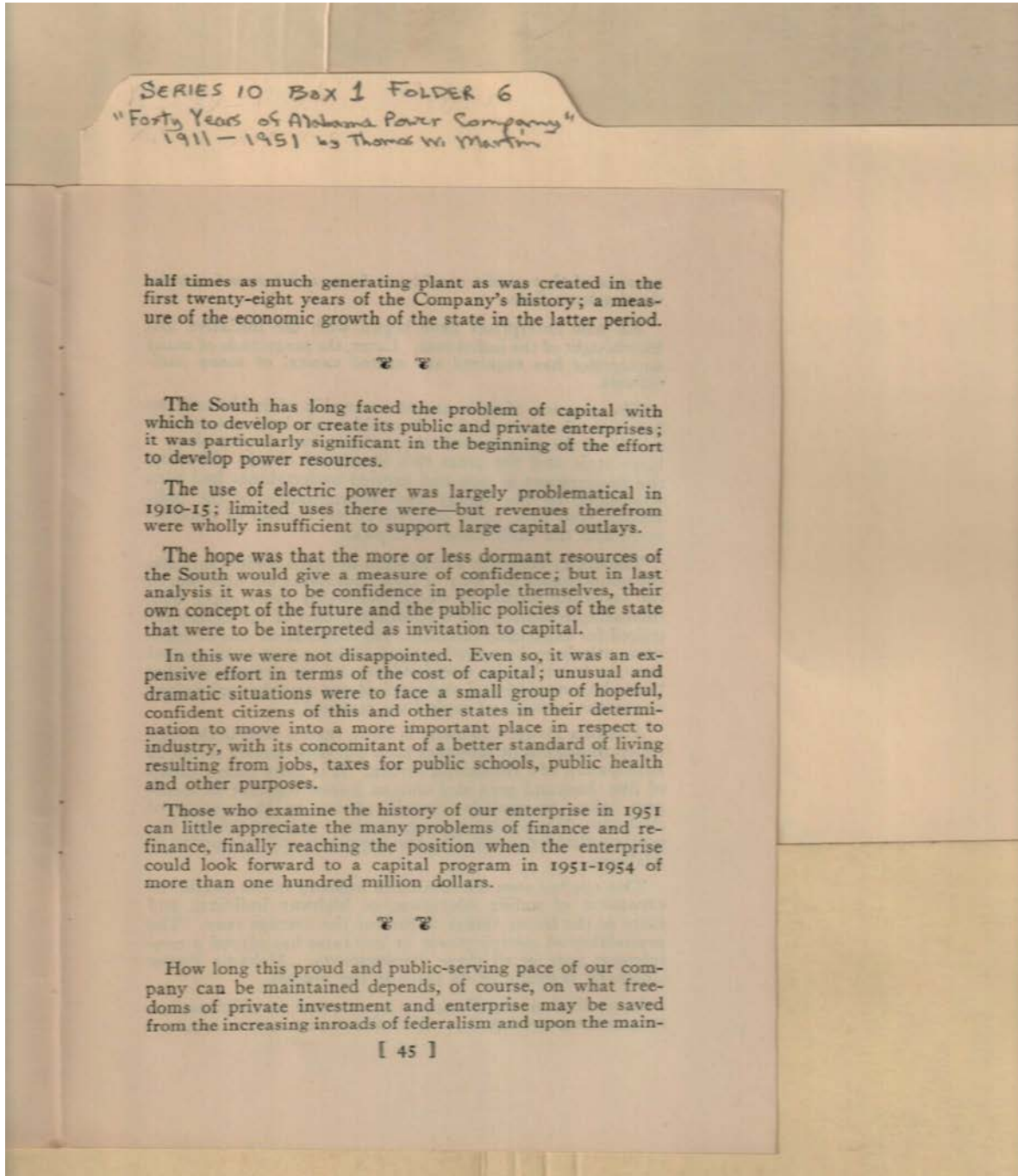
Barry, James M.

**Types:**

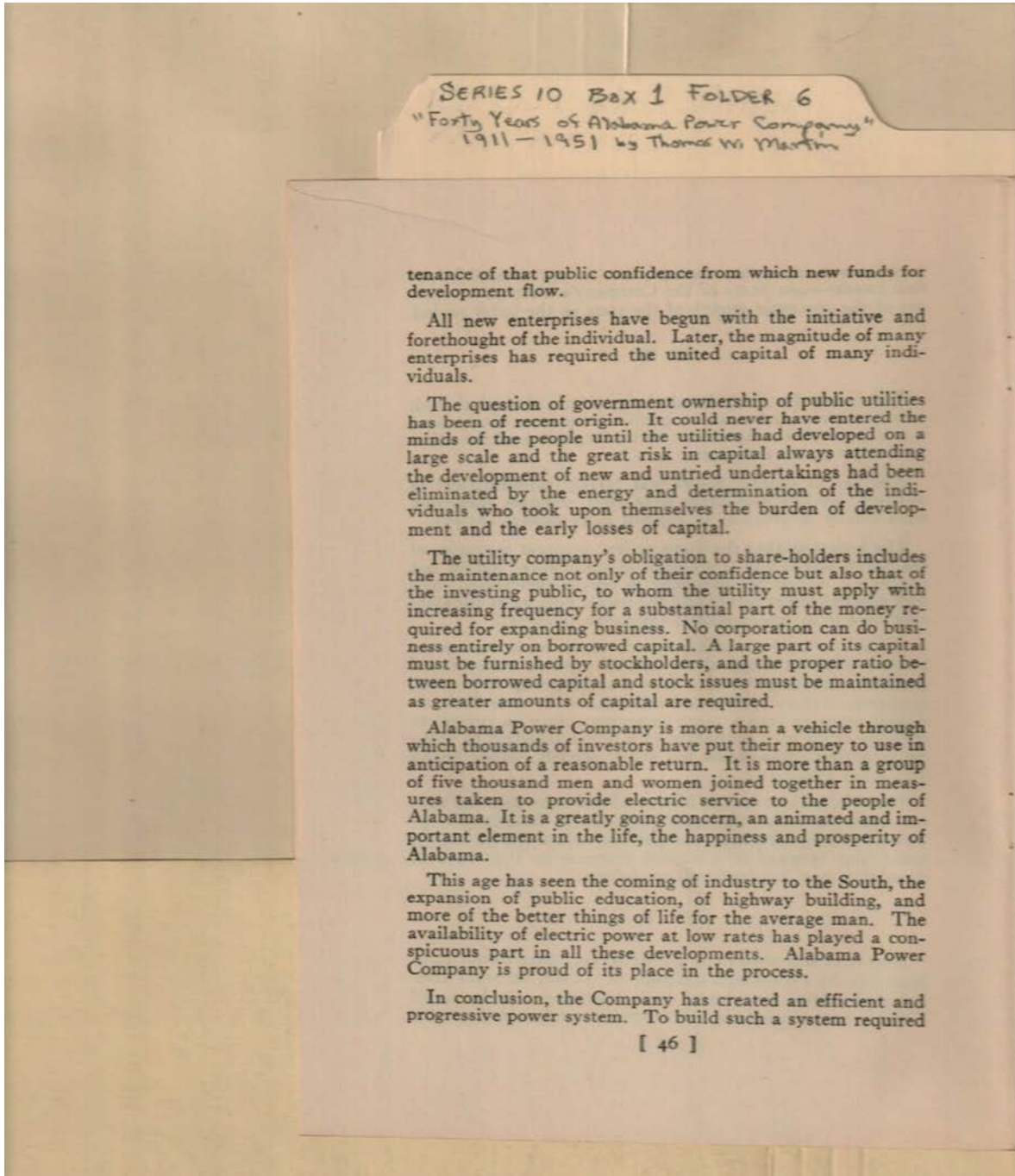
speech



Types:  
speech



Types:  
speech



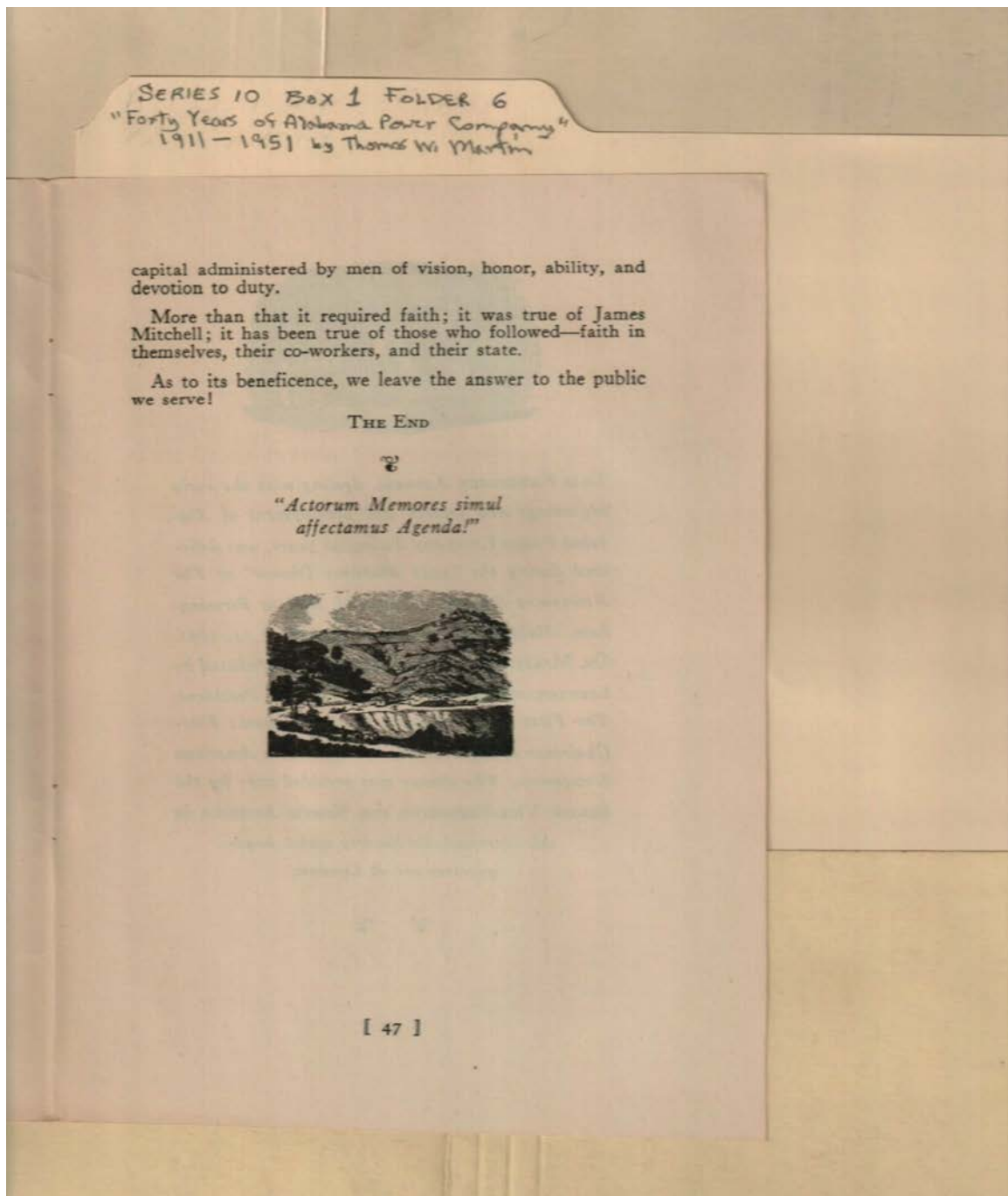
Types:  
speech



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**Names:**

Mitchell, James

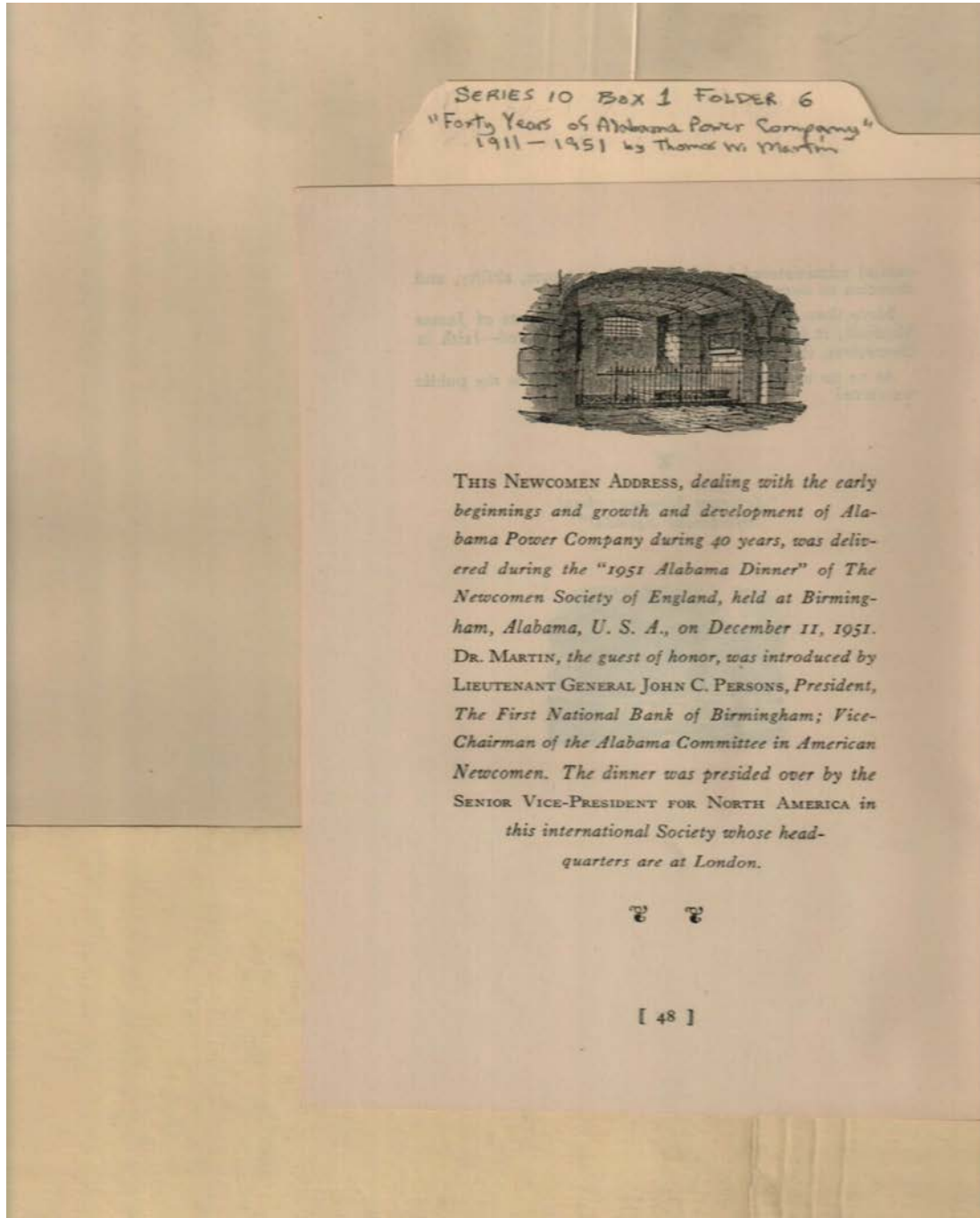
**Types:**

speech

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

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**Names:**

Martin, Dr.

Persons, John C.,  
General

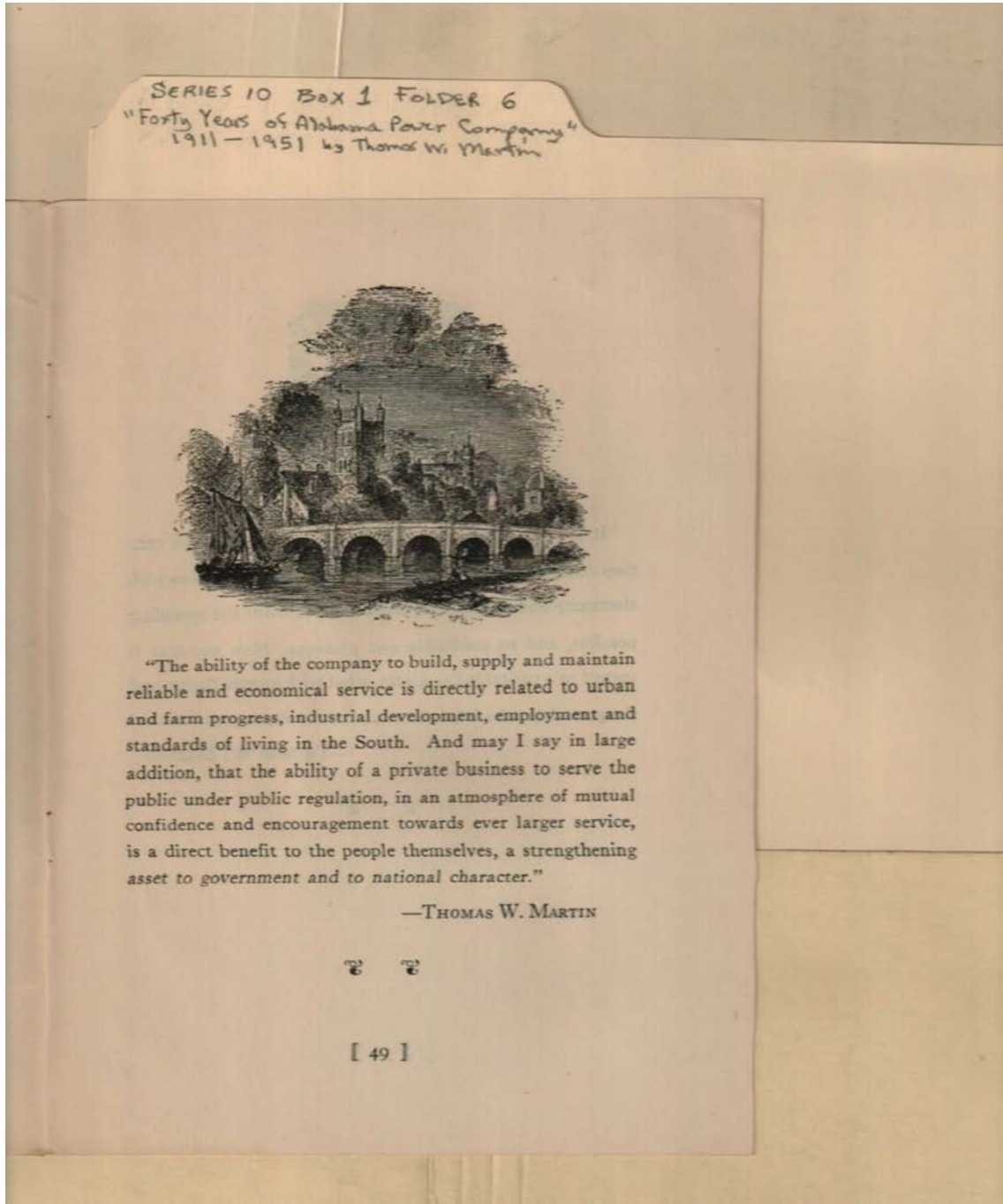
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

Image 51 r10\_01-06-000-0054 [Contents](#) [Index](#) [About](#)



**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

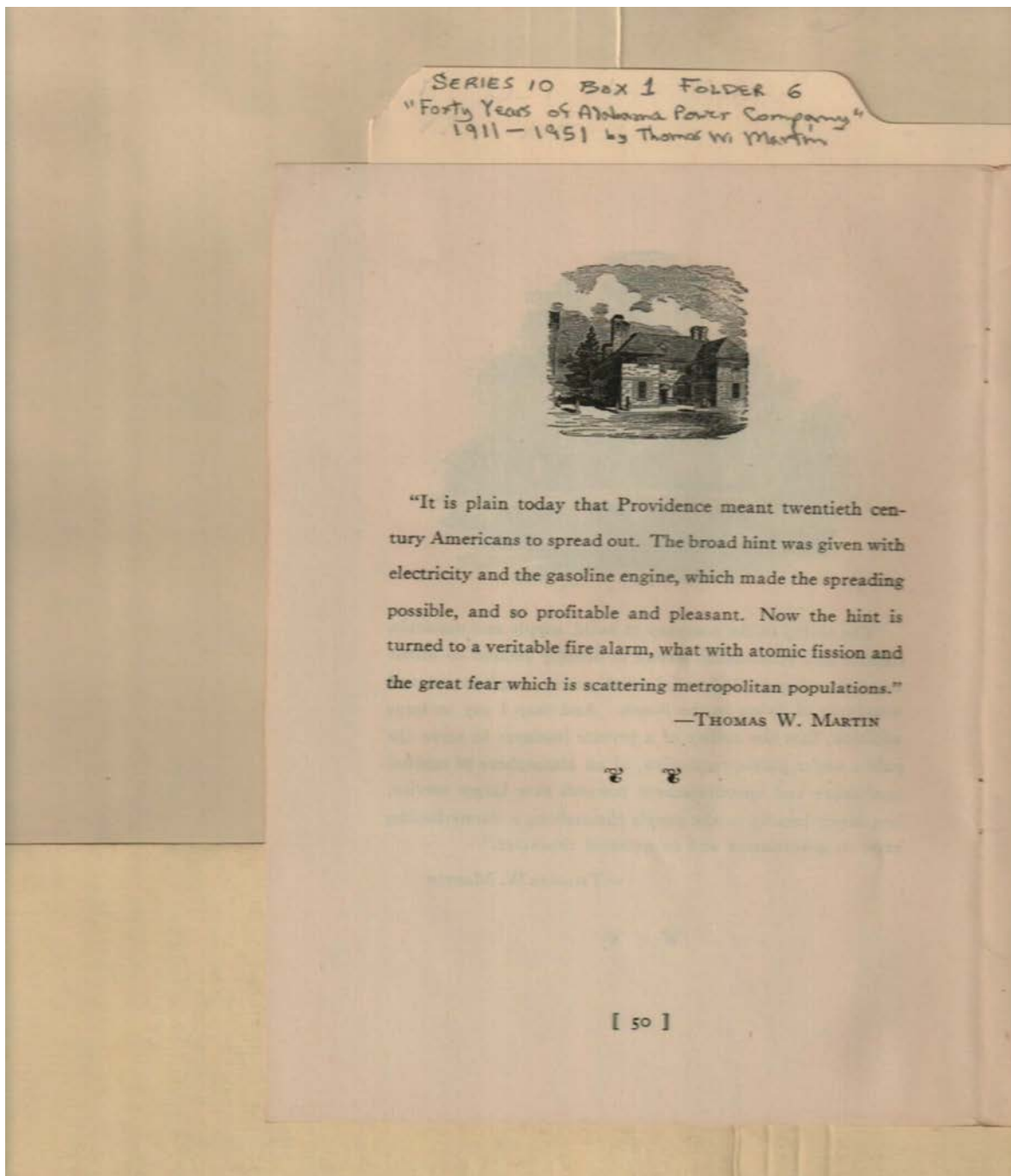
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

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**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

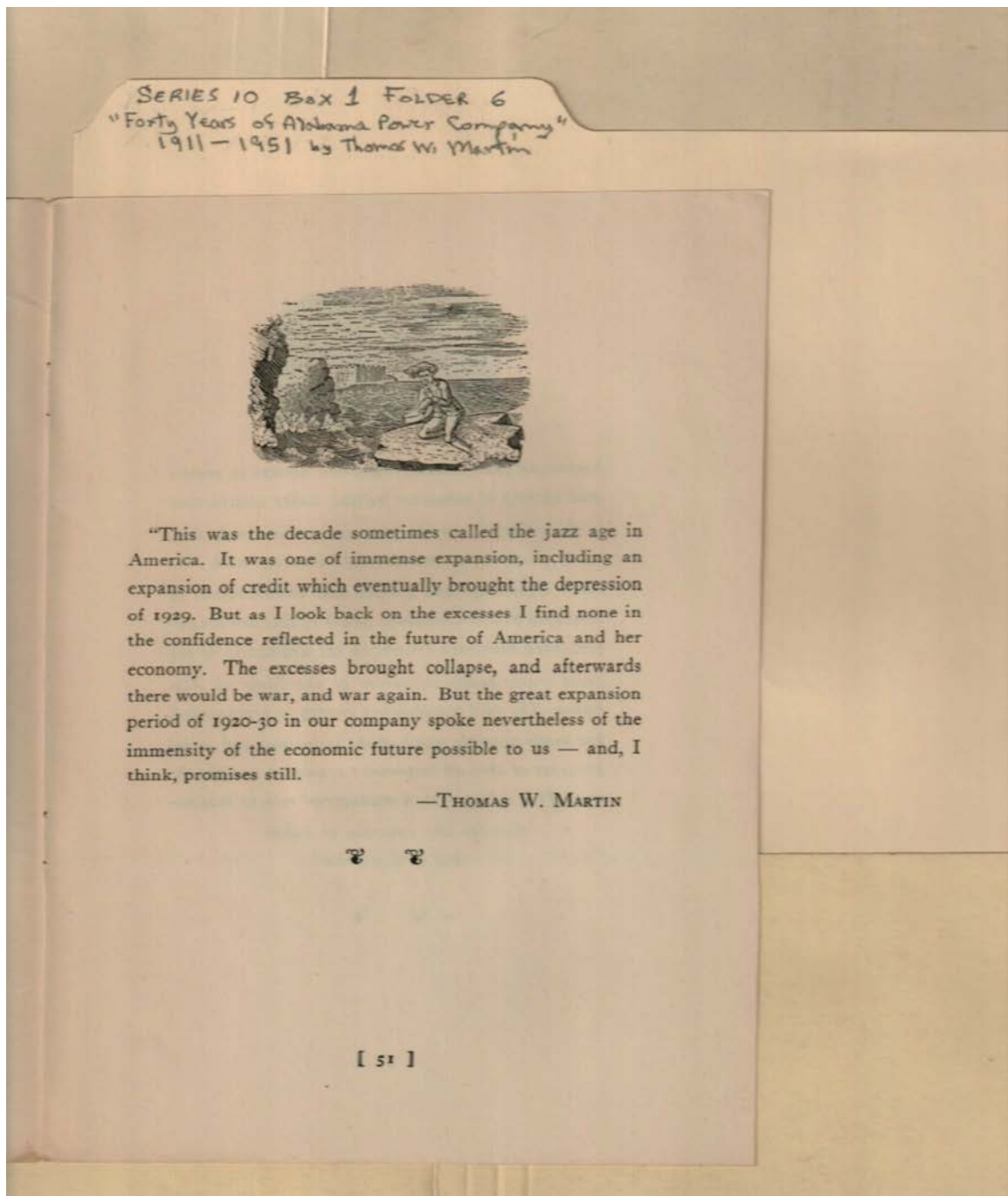
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

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**Names:**

Martin, Thomas W.

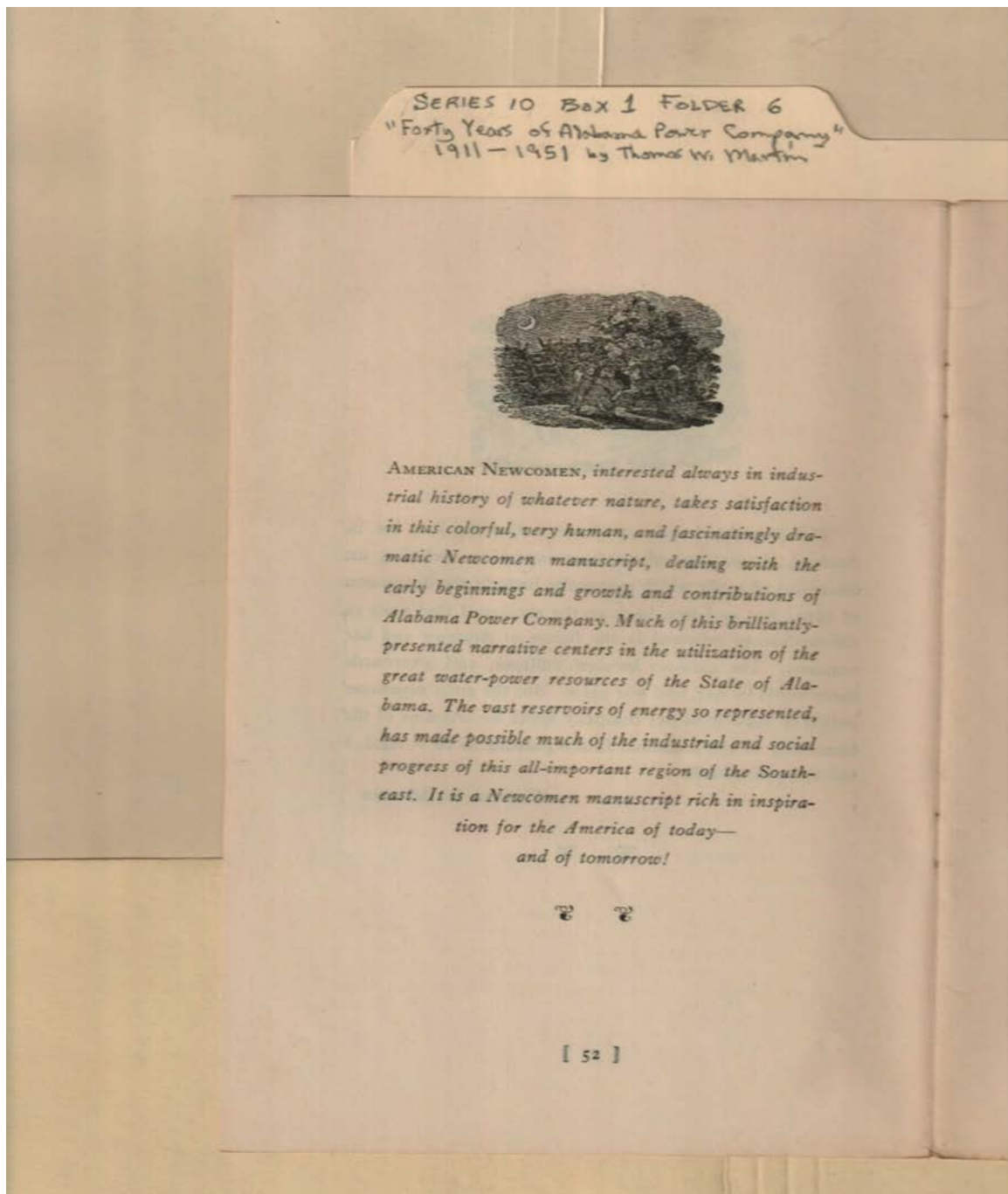
**Types:**

booklet

Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 6

Forty Years of Alabama Power Co. (1911-1951), 1952

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AMERICAN NEWCOMEN, interested always in industrial history of whatever nature, takes satisfaction in this colorful, very human, and fascinatingly dramatic Newcomen manuscript, dealing with the early beginnings and growth and contributions of Alabama Power Company. Much of this brilliantly-presented narrative centers in the utilization of the great water-power resources of the State of Alabama. The vast reservoirs of energy so represented, has made possible much of the industrial and social progress of this all-important region of the Southeast. It is a Newcomen manuscript rich in inspiration for the America of today—  
and of tomorrow!

” ”

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**Names:**

American Newcomen

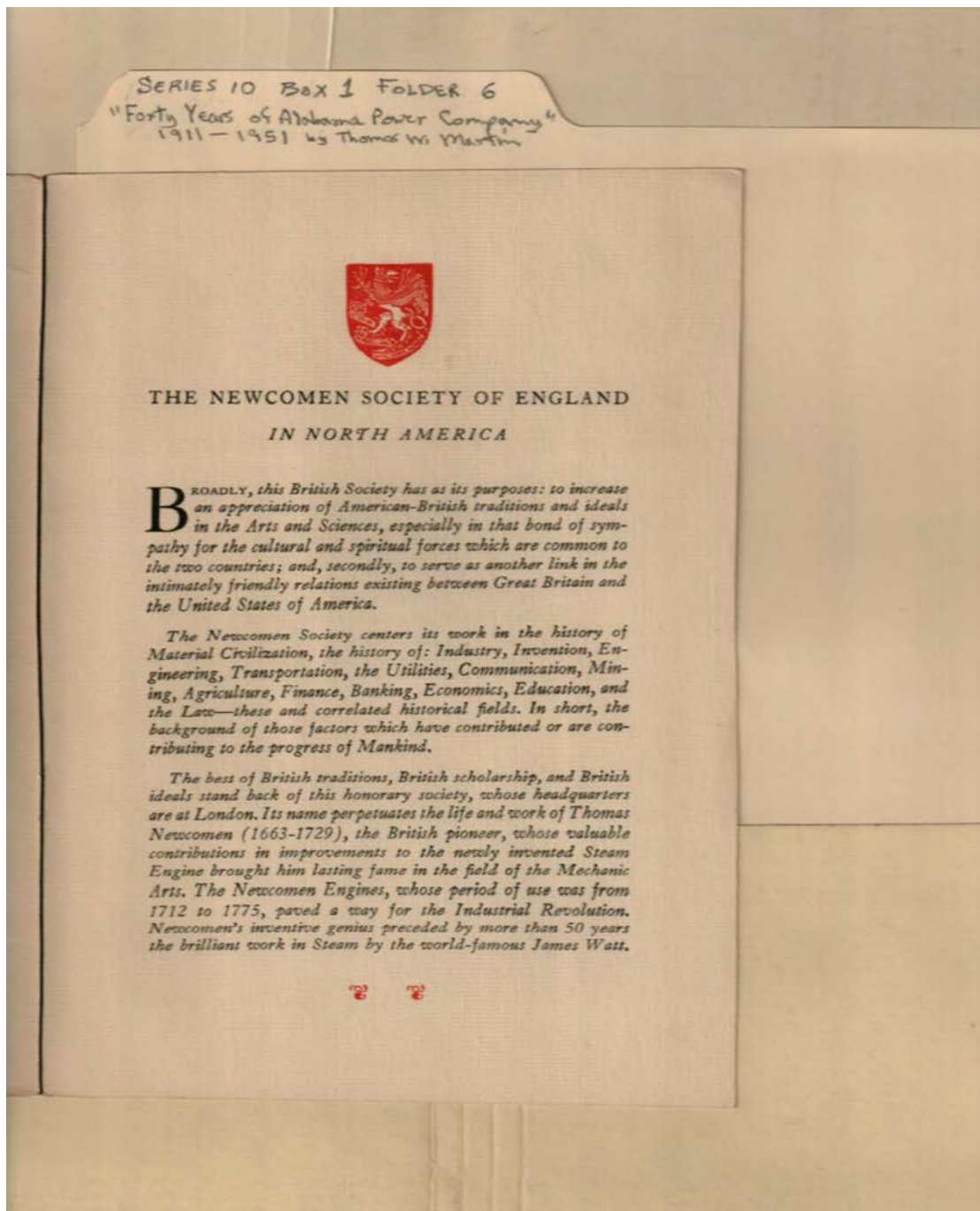
**Types:**

booklet

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**Names:**

Newcomen Society of  
England in N.

America  
Newcomen, Thomas

Watt, James

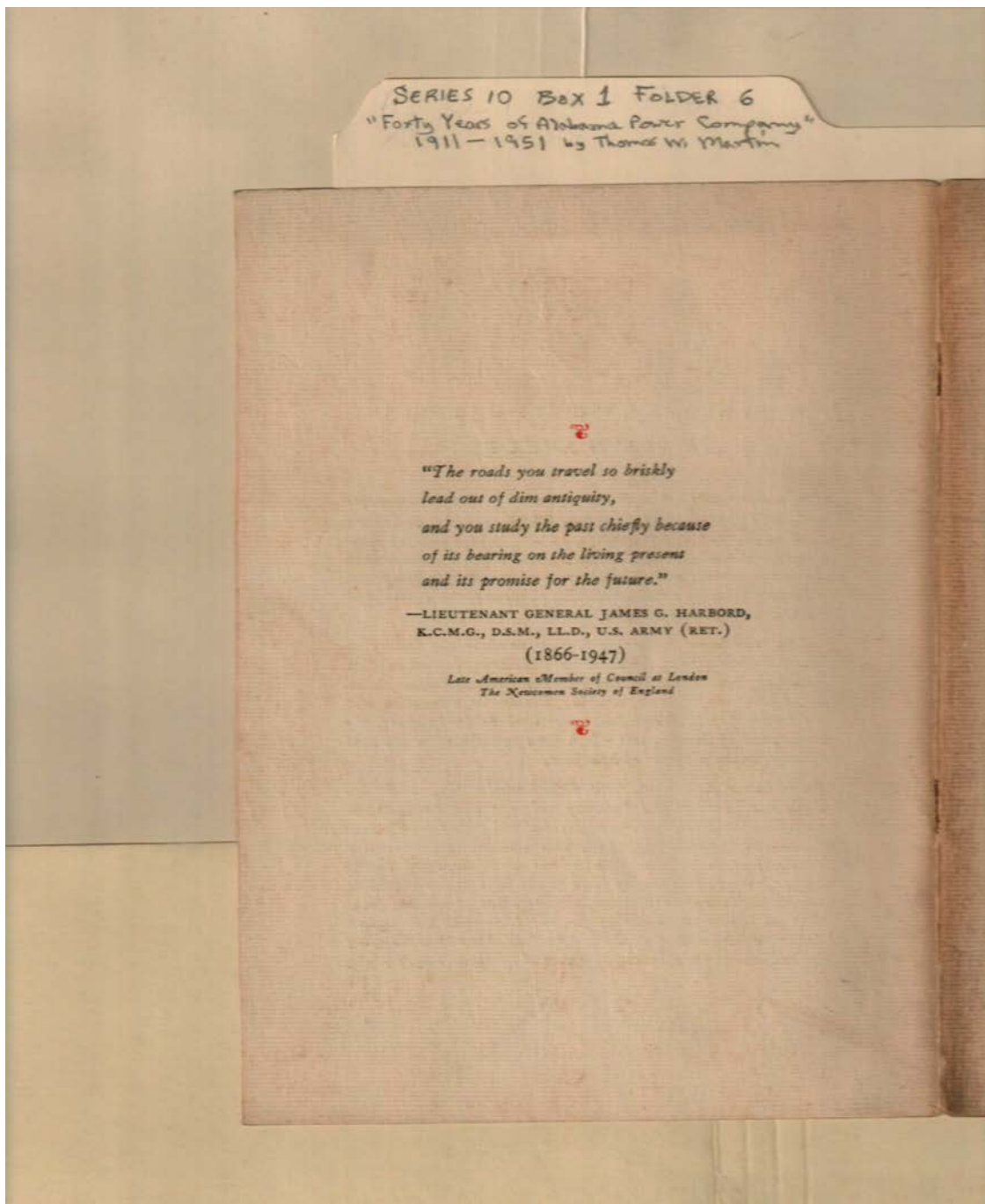
**Types:**

booklet

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**Names:**

Harbord, James G.,  
General

**Types:**

booklet



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# Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

**Preferred Citation:** Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

**Collection Scope and Content:** The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

**Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions:** None

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**Provenance:** Gift of Johanna Shields on October 28, 2006.



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