

**Finding Aid for the
James L. Blakeney photograph albums
OBU.2025.099**



**OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

*Archives & Special Collections
Riley-Hickingbotham Library
Ouachita Baptist University
410 Ouachita Street
Arkadelphia, AR 71998*

Repository: Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University

Title: J. L. (James Lemuel) Blakeney photograph albums

Dates: 1916-circa 1931

Quantity: 0.27 c.f. (1 clamshell box)

Abstract: Photograph albums (4) kept by James Lemuel Blakeney, a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (1917) and chaplain in the United States Army for 32 years. Albums contain approximately 450 photographs documenting Blakeney's time as a student at Ouachita, his service in the Mexican Expedition against Francisco "Pancho" Villa in 1916-1917, and his service in Europe during World War I. Scenes document military camp life, fellow soldiers and chaplains, and domestic scenes with friends and family.

Identification: OBU.2025.099

Languages: English

Acquisition Information: Provenance unknown.

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Preferred Citation: J. L. Blakeney photograph albums, Archives and Special Collections, Riley-Hickingbotham Library, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

Biographical Summary

James Lemuel Blakeney was born in Conway, Faulkner County, Arkansas, on October 1, 1887. He served in the Arkansas National Guard Infantry while attending Ouachita Baptist College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. At Ouachita, Blakeney was a cadet captain and company commander in the Military Department. Following his graduation from Ouachita in 1917, he was ordained a Southern Baptist minister and also commissioned as a U.S. Army chaplain.

In 1916-1917, Blakeney served in the Mexican Expedition conducted by the US Army against the paramilitary forces of Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa. Later, he served in the European theater with the 4th US Engineers as a first lieutenant during the First World War. Blakeney was awarded the Silver Star for heroism displayed in aiding the wounded under fire in France in 1918.

In 1921, following, he graduated from the Army Chaplain's School. He did special work in the University of Utah and Oxford University, England, where he received his Doctor of Divinity degree in 1941. During World War II, Blakeney was the senior chaplain for U.S. troops in the European Theater of Operations. In 1942 he delivered a Thanksgiving message to American troops in London's Westminster Abbey, and was reportedly the first non-Episcopal clergyman to occupy that pulpit. He retired in 1946 as a U.S. Army colonel.

Upon retirement, Blakeney returned to Arkansas and worked at Ouachita Baptist College, serving as public relations secretary, student counselor and president of the Alumni Association. In December 1950, he died at the Army-Navy Hospital in Hot Springs, following a cerebral hemorrhage. He is buried in Roselawn Memorial Park in Little Rock, Arkansas, next to his wife, Mary Emily Blakeney (1890-1937).

Scope and Contents and Arrangement

Four albums containing approximately 450 photographs documenting Blakeney's time as a student at Ouachita, his service in the Mexican Expedition against Francisco "Pancho" Villa in 1916-1917, and his service in Europe during World War I. Scenes document military camp life, fellow soldiers and chaplains, and domestic scenes with friends and family.

Keywords

Arkadelphia (AR.)
Camp Dodge (IA.)
Camp Lewis (WA)
Cavalry
College students—Social life and customs
Columbus (NM.)
Deming (NM.)
Fort Bayard (NM.)
France
Germany
Jacksonville (FL.)
Mexican Expedition – 1916-1917
Military camps—New Mexico
Military chaplains
Moselle River
Mt. Hood (OR.)
Mt. Rainier (WA.)
Ouachita Baptist College
Peking, China
Pershing, John J. (1860-1948)
Rhine River
Santa Fe (NM.)
Soldiers
Temple Square (Salt Lake City, UT)
United States, Army—History—Punitive Expedition into Mexico, 1916
World War I

Processed by Lisa Speer, October 2025.

Box Contents

Box 3500

- Album 1 Album contains approximately 113 b/w candid photographs of Blakeney and his fellow students most likely at Ouachita Baptist College, Arkadelphia, AR, circa 1916-1917.
- Album 2 “Views of service on the border, June 19th 1916 to March 1917.” Album includes 118 b/w photographs of Blakeney’s time with the Arkansas National Guard in the Mexican Expedition. Scenes include camp life, fellow soldiers, military vehicles, cavalry troops, and New Mexico towns.
- Album 3 Album contains 65 b/w photographs taken during Blakeney’s service in the Mexican Expedition (1916-1917) and World War I. Scenes include camps and towns in New Mexico, France and Germany, 1917-1918.
- Album 4 Album contains approximately 162 b/w scenes of Blakeney, his fellow soldiers, friends and family members in the early 1920s. Scenes include: Camp Dodge (Iowa), Camp Lewis (Washington), and scenes in Washington State and California.

24 b/w photographs of friends, family and fellow military soldiers and chaplains, Temple Square in Salt Lake City, and Peking, China.