

# Albert Patterson FBI File (MC 320)

## Biographical Note

Albert Patterson (1894-1954) was a prominent Alabama attorney and politician. As the Democratic nominee for state attorney general in 1954, Patterson promised to "clean up" Phenix City, in Russell County, Alabama, which was largely run by organized crime and corrupt politicians. On June 18, 1954, soon after his primary victory, Patterson was murdered, shocking the state government into action. Patterson had predicted that it would take the state 10 years to accomplish the eradication of Phenix City's institutionalized vice and corruption. His murder sparked changes that achieved that goal in only seven months.

On the evening of June 18, 1954 Patterson left his law office in Phenix City's Coulter Building at about 9:00 p.m. As he was entering his car in a nearby parking lot, an assailant approached the car and shot him three times. Patterson stumbled back to the sidewalk and died within minutes. The assailant was not identified by the people who rushed to help Patterson.

The actual investigation into the murder was supervised and conducted under the direction of Acting Attorney General Bernard Sykes, Jr. with a staff of civilian investigators and attorneys. Phenix City and Russell County were placed under limited martial law declared by Governor Gordon Persons. National Guard Units operated both the Sheriff's Office and the Phenix City Police Department.

Albert Frederick Fuller, former Chief Deputy Sheriff of Russell County, was convicted of this crime and sentenced to serve a life sentence.

## Scope and Content

This material contains six folders arranged chronologically from June 1954 through 1958. The bulk of the material is from June-July 1954, encompassing the investigation of the murder of Albert Patterson in Phenix City, Alabama on the night of June 18, 1954. The material is a copy of the original file held by the FBI.

1954-1958, 2008 1 box (.3 l.f.)

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## Provenance

This collection came to the CSU Archives in October of 2013 when the Columbus Public Library closed its archival collection and donated the material to the CSU Archives. The deed of gift is signed by the current library director, R. Alan Harkness. The Public Library identifier was 02/MC 058.

## Note to Researchers

See also:

[CSU Collection MC5](#)- student papers on Albert Patterson and Hugh Bentley

General Biographical Vertical File

[Hugh Bentley/Phenix City Cleanup Collection \(SMC 20\)](#)

General Oral History Collection (MC 303)

## **Box and Folder List**

- Folder 1: Letter requesting the FBI file on Albert Patterson, 2008
- Folder 2: June 1954
- Folder 3: July 1954
- Folder 4: August-September 1954
- Folder 5: October-December 1954
- Folder 6: February 1955-December 1958