Collection Summary

Title: Roy Wilkins Papers
Span Dates: 1901-1980
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1932-1980)
ID No.: MSS75939
Creator: Wilkins, Roy, 1901-1981
Extent: 28,200 items; 76 containers; 30.7 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Civil rights leader and journalist. Correspondence, memoranda, diary, manuscripts of speeches, newspaper columns, and articles, subject files, reports, minutes, committee, board, and administrative material, printed material, and other papers relating primarily to Wilkins's career with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in various positions between 1931 and 1977, especially his service as executive director (1965-1977).

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Carter, Robert L., 1917-2012--Correspondence.
Current, Gloster B. (Gloster Bryant), 1913-1997--Correspondence.
Evers, Charles, 1922--Correspondence.
Farmer, James, 1920--Correspondence.
Franklin, Chester Arthur, 1880-1955--Correspondence.
Hastie, William, 1904-1976--Correspondence.
Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973--Correspondence.
Lampkin, Daisy E. (Daisy Elizabeth), 1882-1965--Correspondence.
Marshall, Thurgood, 1908-1993--Correspondence.
Matthews, Charles H.--Correspondence.
Mitchell, Clarence M. (Clarence Maurice), 1911-1984--Correspondence.
Moon, Henry Lee, 1901-1985--Correspondence.
Morsell, John A.--Correspondence.
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.
White, Walter Francis, 1893-1955--Correspondence.
Wilkins, Aminda Badeau--Correspondence.
Wilkins, Roger W., 1932--Correspondence.
Wilkins, Roy, 1901-1981.
Wright, Herbert L.--Correspondence.

Organizations
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Subjects
African American newspapers--Sections, columns, etc.
African Americans--Civil rights.
African Americans--Education.
Newspapers--Sections, columns, etc.
Segregation.

Occupations
Civil rights leaders.
Journalists.

**Administrative Information**

**Provenance**
The papers of Roy Wilkins, civil rights leader and journalist, were given to the Library of Congress by Wilkins and his wife, Aminda Badeau Wilkins, from 1980 to 1988. Additional items were given by Mildred Bond Roxborough in 1981 and by James E. Nicholson in 1992.

**Processing History**
The papers of Roy Wilkins were first arranged and described in 1989. Additional material received in 1992 was incorporated into the collection in 1997.

**Additional Guides**

**Transfers**
Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. A sound recording and tape have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. Photographs and other illustrated items have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Wilkins Papers.

**Copyright Status**
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Roy Wilkins is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

**Access and Restrictions**
The papers of Roy Wilkins are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

**Preferred Citation**
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Roy Wilkins Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Biographical Note**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901, Aug. 30</td>
<td>Born, St. Louis, Mo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Moved to St. Paul, Minn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>A.B., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923-1932</td>
<td>Journalist and managing editor, <em>Kansas City Call</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Married Aminda Badeau</td>
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<td>1931-1949</td>
<td>Assistant to secretary, NAACP</td>
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</table>

Roy Wilkins Papers  

3
1934-1949  Editor, *Crisis*
1949     Acting executive secretary, NAACP
1950-1955 Administrator, NAACP
1955-1965 Executive secretary, NAACP
1965-1977 Executive director, NAACP
1969     Awarded Medal of Freedom
1977     Retired
1981, Sept. 8 Died, New York, N.Y.

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Roy Wilkins (1901-1981) span the years 1901-1980, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1932-1980. Included are a diary, correspondence, memoranda, appointment books, minutes, reports and other administrative records, speeches and writings, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Although the papers reflect several aspects of Wilkins's career as a journalist and civil rights leader, their focus is largely on his role as an administrator in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he began as assistant to the secretary in 1931 and served as acting secretary, administrator, executive secretary, and executive director between 1949 and 1977.

Family letters in the *Correspondence* series in the collection consist largely of letters between Roy Wilkins and his wife, Amanda Badeau Wilkins, and with their nephew, Roger Wilkins. General correspondence spans the years 1939-1979 and covers many of the principal activities and issues in which Wilkins was engaged from the onset of World War II to the presidency of Jimmy Carter. Featured are the inner workings and operations of the NAACP, Wilkins's relationship to other leaders in the organization, particularly Walter Francis White, and the broadening movement among African Americans after 1945 for equal rights in every sphere of American life. In addition to White, prominent or frequent correspondents include Robert L. Carter, Gloster B. Current, Charles Evers, James Farmer, C. A. Franklin, William Hastie, Lyndon B. Johnson, Daisy E. Lampkin, Thurgood Marshall, Charles H. Matthews, Clarence M. Mitchell, Henry Lee Moon, John A. Morsell, Richard M. Nixon, Arthur Barnett Spingarn, Harry S. Truman, and Herbert L. Wright.

The *NAACP File* contains topical and administrative files as well as personal material relating to Wilkins's association with the organization. Among the subjects documented are the civil rights mobilization drive of 1950, an interview Wilkins conducted with Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952, copies of Wilkins's Federal Bureau of Investigation file obtained by him through a freedom of information request, and controversy surrounding an unflattering portrayal of Wilkins and the NAACP by Lewis Steel in a *New York Times Magazine* of 1968. Significant also are items pertaining to the relationship of W. E. B. DuBois to the organization, as reflected in Wilkins's response to an article by DuBois in 1948, and numerous files pertaining to the NAACP's role in the desegregation and civil rights efforts of the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to state and local matters within the organization, the NAACP's involvement in improving education for African Americans nationwide is recorded in various files relating to schools in Arkansas, California, New York, and other jurisdictions.

The *Speeches and Writings* series includes drafts and published copies of articles and newspaper columns by Wilkins, especially "The Roy Wilkins Column" released nationally by the Register and Tribune Syndicate and columns he wrote for the *New Amsterdam News*. Also in the series is an extensive file of speeches Wilkins delivered around the country in the cause of equal rights between 1946 and 1978.

Contained in a small *addition* to the collection are a few items of correspondence, a diary Wilkins kept in January and February 1935, the handwritten text of a speech he delivered to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in Washington, D.C., on 28 January 1969, and additional writings.
Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- **Correspondence, 1939-1979**
- **NAACP Files, 1921-1979**
- **Speeches and Writings, 1943-1978**
- **Miscellany, 1915-1977**
- **Addition, 1901-1980**
Description of Series

**Container**  
**Series**

**BOX 1-11**  
**Correspondence, 1939-1979**  
Letters sent and received by Wilkins with enclosures.  
Divided between family and general correspondence. Family letters are arranged alphabetically by person and chronologically therein. General correspondence includes letters of both a personal and official nature and is organized chronologically by year and alphabetically therein. Daily mail sheets which register the writer and purpose of incoming letters are included for some years of the general correspondence.

**BOX 12-35**  
**NAACP Files, 1921-1979**  
Correspondence, minutes, and reports; committee, board, and administrative material; financial records, itineraries, and travel expense sheets; office notes and messages; procedural memoranda, statistical data, subject files, and other material pertaining to the NAACP and related organizations.  
Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.

**BOX 35-63**  
**Speeches and Writings, 1943-1978**  
Notes, outlines, drafts, and near-print and printed copies of Wilkins's speeches, talks, statements, newspaper columns, and articles with related matter such as correspondence and background data. Also includes an incomplete bibliography, a speech and engagement calendar, and a television script by Wilkins.  
Organized alphabetically by type of presentation and therein chronologically.

**BOX 63-71**  
**Miscellany, 1915-1977**  
Personal subject files, financial records, certificates and citations, and printed and near-print matter pertaining to Wilkins and his association with the NAACP, and related organizations.  
Arranged alphabetically by type or subject of material.

**BOX 72-76**  
**Addition, 1901-1980**  
Appointment books, a diary, correspondence interviews, research notes, writings, and printed matter.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **BOX 1-11** | **Correspondence, 1939-1979**  
Letters sent and received by Wilkins with enclosures. 
Divided between family and general correspondence. Family letters are arranged alphabetically by person and chronologically therein. General correspondence includes letters of both a personal and official nature and is organized chronologically by year and alphabetically therein. Daily mail sheets which register the writer and purpose of incoming letters are included for some years of the general correspondence. |
| **BOX 1** | Family  
Wilkins, Aminda Badeau (wife), 1943-1973  
Wilkins, Nellie G. (stepmother), 1952-1963  
Wilkins, Roger (nephew), 1947-1976, undated  
Wilkins, William D. and Mayfield (parents), 1944-1955  
General  
Daily mail sheets  
1957  
1974-1978  
(4 folders) |
| **BOX 2** | 1939, 1943-1949  
(8 folders) |
| **BOX 3** | 1950-1952  
(5 folders) |
| **BOX 4** | 1953-1956  
(5 folders)  
1957  
A-L  
(2 folders) |
| **BOX 5** | M-Z  
1958-1959  
(2 folders)  
1960  
A-G  
(2 folders) |
| **BOX 6** | H-Z  
(3 folders)  
1961-1962  
(3 folders) |
| **BOX 7** | 1963-1966  
(5 folders) |
| **BOX 8** | 1967-1971  
(5 folders) |
| **BOX 9** | 1972-1974  
(3 folders) |
**Correspondence, 1939-1979**

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<td>NAACP Files, 1921-1979</td>
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<td>Correspondence, minutes, and reports; committee, board, and administrative material; financial records, itineraries, and travel expense sheets; office notes and messages; procedural memoranda, statistical data, subject files, and other material pertaining to the NAACP and related organizations.</td>
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<td>BOX 12</td>
<td>Affiliations and honorary membership lists, undated</td>
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<td>Alabama, 1957-1965</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
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<td>Clippings re Little Rock, 1957</td>
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<td>Faubus, Orval, 1958</td>
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<td>General, 1957</td>
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<td>Sharecroppers, 1921</td>
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<td>Atlanta Compromise School Plan, Atlanta, Ga.</td>
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<td>BOX 14</td>
<td>Baxter, Julia, report on black history, 1963</td>
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<td>Biographical data on Wilkins, 1928-1970, undated</td>
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<td>Black Expo ’71, 1971</td>
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<td>Bluefield, W. Va., 1960</td>
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<td>Attendance reports, 1953-1971</td>
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<td>Elections</td>
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| BOX 15    | 1970-1971  
(2 folders)  
1974  
General  
1944-1962  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 16    | 1963-1967  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 17    | 1967-1970  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 18    | 1970-1977  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 19    | Membership list, 1966  
Boston, Mass., branch, 1960  
Budget Committee  
1950-1962  
(10 folders) |
| BOX 20    | 1972-1976  
(5 folders)  
Busing, 1972  
(2 folders)  
California school conditions, 1965  
(1 folder) |
| BOX 21    | Christmas seals, 1960  
Civil rights bills, 1957-1959, 1964  
(3 folders)  
Civil rights mobilization, 1950  
Council of Federated Organizations, 1964  
Committee on Branches and Youth Work, 1972  
Committee on Campus Unrest, 1971  
Committee on Pension Survey, 1973  
Committee on Tenure  
1970-1971  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 22    | 1972  
Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco, Calif., 1957  
Communism, 1950  
Constitution of the NAACP, proposed, 1945  
Council for United Civil Rights Leadership, 1963-1964  
Crisis magazine and NAACP finances, 1932  
Desegregation  
Armed forces, 1948  
Education, 1964-1966  
DuBois, W. E. B., "My Relations with the NAACP," response to, 1948  
Edwards, Isadore, resignation from board, 1973 |
<p>| BOX 23    | Eisenhower, Dwight D., interview, 1952 |</p>
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<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation file, freedom of information data on Wilkins</td>
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<td>File B, 1958-1974</td>
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<td>File C, 1963-1969</td>
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<td>Housing discrimination, 1968-1971</td>
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<td>Itineraries, Wilkins</td>
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<td>Kellar, Doris, dismissal case, 1938</td>
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<td>Lewis, Cyrus, Jr., 1959-1960</td>
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<td>Magnolia, Miss., rape case, 1957</td>
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<td>Memoranda, reports, and miscellaneous organizational records</td>
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<td>1955-1962</td>
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<td>Minority hiring plans, 1969-1972</td>
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<td>Mississippi, 1957</td>
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<td>Movies and television, 1942-1958</td>
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<td>National Black Political Convention, 1972</td>
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<td>BOX 28</td>
<td>National Urban Coalition, 1970-1974</td>
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<td>Negro newspapers, lists, 1957</td>
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Negro troops, World War II, 1948, undated
New York
  Governor's Judicial Nominating Committee, 1975
  State Commission on Education, 1962
  State Committee on Judicial Conduct, 1974
  (3 folders)
Nonprofit housing program, 1968-1969

**BOX 29**
Office notes, messages, and miscellaneous calling cards and fragments, 1952-1977, undated
  (3 folders)
Organizational and Procedural Survey, Lennon/Rose Co., 1963-1965
  (2 folders)
Publicity, 1959-1976
Reorganization plan, 1955
Reparations to black Americans, 1969-1970
Republican convention and Richard M. Nixon, 1960
Retirement
  Official correspondence, 1976-1977
  Public response
  1976

**BOX 30**
1977
  (2 folders)
Riverdale Children's Association, New York, N.Y., 1948-1953
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1949-1950
Savage, Phillip, 1971
Senate filibuster rule, circa 1956-1960
  (2 folders)

**BOX 31**
South African visit, 1972
  (2 folders)
Special Contribution Fund, 1964, 1975-1978
  (2 folders)
Special greetings
  Illness, 1976
  Seventieth birthday, 1971
  Seventy-fifth birthday, 1976
Steel, Lewis, dismissal, 1968
  (3 folders)

**BOX 32**
Stevenson, Adlai E. (1900-1965), 1952
Taconic Foundation, Assessment Project, 1963
  (2 folders)
Task Force Committee on Economic Advancement and Civil Rights, 1964
Testimony re nomination of labor secretary Peter Brennan, 1976
Travel expenses, Wilkins
  1958-1969
  (4 folders)

**BOX 33**
1970-1977
  (3 folders)
Union negotiations, 1946-1966
(3 folders)

BOX 34
Virginia laws, 1954-1957
White, Walter F.
Return to duty, 1949-1950
Syndicated column
1946-1951
(6 folders)

BOX 35
1952-1954
(3 folders)
Zale Award, 1973

BOX 35-63
Speeces and Writings, 1943-1978
Notes, outlines, drafts, and near-print and printed copies of Wilkins's speeches, talks, statements, newspaper columns, and articles with related matter such as correspondence and background data. Also includes an incomplete bibliography, a speech and engagement calendar, and a television script by Wilkins.
Organized alphabetically by type of presentation and therein chronologically.

BOX 35
Bibliography (incomplete), 1956-1969
Articles and essays
America, 1951
American Magazine, 1951-1952
Association Press, 1943
Atlantic Monthly, 1958
Bankers Magazine, 1969
Cardinal, 1964
Catholic Inter-Racial Review, undated
Congress Bi-Weekly, undated
Controversy Magazine, 1969
Crisis, undated
Debate and Understanding, 1975

BOX 36
Democratic National Committee handbook (Rex Stout), 1944
Ebony, 1970
Freedomways, 1964-1965
Harvard Law Review, 1974
Instructor, 1952
Interracial Review, 1947
Journal of Negro Education, 1945
Kansas City Star, 1948
Look, 1969
McCall's, 1964
NAACP, 1945, 1972, undated
Negro Digest, 1946, 1964
New Amsterdam News, 1950
New York Herald Tribune, 1945-1954
New York Times, 1943-1972
Speeches and Writings, 1943-1978

Container  Contents

Newsweek, undated
100 Years of Emancipation, by Robert A. Goldstein, 1963
Picture Magazine, 1944
Saturday Review, 1964
Scholastic Magazine, 1965
Seventeen, 1965-1969

Articles and essays
United States Information Service, 1969
What the Negro Wants, by Rayford Logan, 1944
Womans Press, 1946
Yale Political Review, 1963
Unidentified, 1943-1971, undated

BOX 37
Miscellaneous printed copies, 1943-1974, undated

Book file
"Search and Destroy," 1971-1972
(2 folders)

Newspaper columns

New Amsterdam News
Chronological index of columns, 1963-1967
Clippings, 1962-1969
Column re Adam Clayton Powell (1908-1972), 1966-1970
Correspondence, 1962-1971

Drafts
1962-1963
(2 folders)

BOX 38
1964-1969
(6 folders)

BOX 39
1970-1971
(2 folders)

Pay statements, 1962-1966

Register and Tribune Syndicate
Clippings
1964-1968
(3 folders)

BOX 40
1969-1971
(2 folders)

Correspondence
Business, 1964-1978
(3 folders)
Public mail
With replies, 1965-1976
Without replies
1965

BOX 41
1966-1969
(6 folders)

BOX 42
1970-1977
(6 folders)
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| Drafts    | Jan. 1964-June 1965  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 43    | July 1965-Mar. 1967  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 44    | Apr. 1967-Sept. 1968  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 45    | Oct. 1968-June 1970  
(7 folders) |
| BOX 46    | July 1970-Sept. 1971  
(5 folders) |
(6 folders) |
(6 folders) |
| BOX 49    | Apr. 1975-June 1976  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 50    | July 1976-Dec. 1978  
(5 folders) |
| Reprinted selections | “The Watchtower”  
Clippings, 1947-1949  
Correspondence, 1943-1948  
Drafts, 1944-1947 |
| BOX 51    | Speeches and statements  
Speech calendar and other engagements, 1955-1967, 1975  
(2 folders) |
| Invitations to speak, declined  
Jan. 1965-Aug. 1967  
(4 folders) |
| BOX 52    | Sept. 1967-Dec. 1976  
(8 folders) |
| BOX 53    | Drafts  
1946-1956  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 54    | 1957-1959  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 55    | 1960-1962  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 56    | 1963-1964  
(4 folders) |
| BOX 57    | Jan. 1965-Mar. 1966  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 58    | Apr. 1966-Apr. 1968  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 59    | May 1968-May 1971  
(6 folders) |
# Roy Wilkins Papers

## Speeches and Writings, 1943-1978

<table>
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(7 folders) |
(8 folders) |
(7 folders) |
| BOX 63    | July 1976-Dec. 1978  
(4 folders) |

Television script, 1974  
Undated, unidentified, and fragmentary, circa 1950-1977, undated

| BOX 63-71 | Miscellany, 1915-1977  
Personal subject files, financial records, certificates and citations, and printed and near-print matter pertaining to Wilkins and his association with the NAACP, and related organizations.  
Arranged alphabetically by type or subject of material. |

| BOX 63    | 409 Edgemont Avenue group, New York, N.Y., 1948-1951  
Awards and citations, circa 1950-1977, undated |
| BOX 64    | Bank statements, 1957-1964  
(2 folders) |

Calendar, reunion program of class of 1915, and draft cards, 1915, 1942-1943, 1949  
Half Moon Hotel and Cottage Colony, Jamaica, 1970-1971  
Insurance and other financial papers, 1946-1977  
Near-print reports, 1947-1969  
Printed matter, circa 1940-1975  
(2 folders) |

| BOX 65    | (5 folders) |
| BOX 66    | (5 folders) |
| BOX 67    | (4 folders) |
| BOX 68    | (4 folders) |
| BOX 69    | (6 folders) |
| BOX 70    | (3 folders) |
| BOX 71    | (2 folders) |

| BOX 72-76 | Addition, 1901-1980  
Appointment books, a diary, correspondence interviews, research notes, writings, and printed matter.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of material. |

| BOX 72    | Appointment books  
1959-1963  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 73    | 1964-1968  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 74    | 1969-1973  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 75    | 1974-1976  
(3 folders) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 76</td>
<td>Awards, certificates, citations, and tributes, 1901-1978, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, 1946-1980, undated (2 folders)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Diary, 1 Jan.-5 Feb. 1935</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviews, writings, research notes, 1918-1969, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printed matter</td>
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<td>Clippings and press releases, 1960-1978</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conference and speech programs, 1952-1978</td>
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