Joseph C. Swidler Papers

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Prepared by Bradley E. Gernand and T. Michael Womack with the assistance of Deloris C. Butler
Revised and expanded by John R. Monagle
Collection Summary

Title: Joseph C. Swidler Papers
Span Dates: 1931-1997
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1958-1977)
ID No.: MSS42093
Creator: Swidler, Joseph C. (Joseph Charles), 1907-
Extent: 32,200 items ; 93 containers ; 37.2 linear feet
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Language: Collection material in English
Summary: Attorney and public power industry official. Articles, correspondence, legal papers, memoranda, newspaper clippings, printed matter, reports, and speeches relating primarily to Joseph C. Swidler's career as an attorney and government official.

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

Organizations
Institute for Public Policy Alternatives.
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.
New York (State). Public Service Commission.
Tennessee Valley Authority.
United Nations.

Subjects
Allegiance.
Electric power failures--Northeastern States.
Energy policy--United States.
Interconnected electric utility systems--United States.
Lawyers--United States.
Loyalty.
Power resources--Law and legislation--United States.
Water resources development.

Places
New York (State)--Politics and government.

Occupations
Lawyers.
Public officials.

Administrative Information

Provenance
Processing History

The papers of Joseph C. Swidler were arranged and described in 1996. Additional material was processed in 2001.

Transfers

A sound recording has been transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where it is identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Joseph C. Swidler is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Joseph C. Swidler 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, Joseph C. Swidler Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1907, Jan. 28</td>
<td>Born, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Ph.B., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>J.D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-1931</td>
<td>Attorney, David E. Lilienthal law firm, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-1933</td>
<td>Attorney, Booth &amp; Swidler law firm, Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate editor, Public Utilities and Carriers Service, Commerce Clearing House, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Assistant solicitor, Interior Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married Janet Elizabeth Voss (divorced 1943)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-1937</td>
<td>Attorney, Tennessee Valley Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937-1939</td>
<td>Assistant general solicitor in charge of power matters, Tennessee Valley Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-1945</td>
<td>Solicitor, Tennessee Valley Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Counsel, Alien Property Bureau, Justice Department (on loan from Tennessee Valley Authority)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Counsel, Power Division, Office of War Utilities, War Production Board (on loan from Tennessee Valley Authority)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943-1945</td>
<td>United States Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Married Gertrude Tyrna</td>
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1945-1957  General counsel and secretary, Tennessee Valley Authority  
           Chairman of the board, Tennessee Valley Authority Retirement System

1957   Consultant on integrated river basin development, United Nations, Bureau of Economic Affairs,  
       Water Resources and Power Section

1957-1958  Attorney and consultant on utility management, Knoxville, Tenn.


1961-1965  Chairman, Federal Power Commission

1964-1965  Member, United States Water Resources Council

1966   Representative, United Nations Inter-regional Seminar on Integrated Utilization of Water  
       Resources, Moscow, USSR


1967   Consultant, United States Atomic Energy Commission  
       United States representative, International Conference on Water for Peace, Washington, D.C.


1973   Member, Commission on Critical Choices for Americans

1974-1975  Director, Institute for Public Policy Alternatives, State University of New York, Albany, N.Y.


1997, May 1  Died, Bethesda, Md.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Joseph Charles Swidler (1907-1997) span the years 1931-1997 with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1958-1977. Swidler's career, much of which is reflected in his papers, coincided with the birth and development of the modern public power system and the creation of a continental power grid. As chief energy regulator for the federal government and later head of the New York Public Service Commission, Swidler played a pivotal role during the crises regarding infrastructure in the 1960s and energy supply in the 1970s.

The collection consists of six series and an addition. The first four series are arranged by agency name in an order reflecting the chronology of Swidler's career in public service. A Law Practice series, representing material from his private practice, is divided into sections and arranged alphabetically by name of law firm. A Miscellany series is placed at the end.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) series consists chiefly of printed matter, including congressional testimony, legal opinions, and reports. Correspondence deals largely with Swidler's termination from the authority.
The **Federal Power Commission** series consists of correspondence, memoranda, and reports chronicling the rapid growth of the energy industry during the 1960s, including the planning and creation of the first regional and national power grids, the disruptive power outages of November 1965 in the northeastern United States, power generating, power supply and reliability, and energy prices and pricing. Included in the commission's travel files is an unpublished report regarding the Soviet Union's state energy system in 1962.

The **New York Public Service Commission** under Swidler's leadership was one of the foremost state utility authorities. Correspondence, memoranda, reports, and speeches in the series record his administration of the commission. Subjects include the environmental movement, energy policies of the city of New York, proposed power utility sites and activities, and the state government's position on energy conservation. Swidler's activities with the **National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners** are also reflected in the series.

In 1974, at the invitation of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, Swidler left the Public Service Commission to become head of the **Institute for Public Policy Alternatives**. The institute was intended to be a think tank for the State University of New York system. One year later, however, the plan was canceled by a new governor. Files in the series reflect the start-up of the institute and the research it initiated.

The **Law Practice** series reflects Swidler's tenure with the private firms of Denney, Leftwich & Osborn; Leva, Hawes, Symington, Martin & Oppenheimer; Swidler & Belnap; and Swidler & Freeman.

The **Miscellany** series contains biographical and family material as well as papers from Swidler's service on the Atomic Energy Commission, International Conference on Water for Peace, the United Nations Inter-regional Seminar on International Utilization of Water Resources, and other conferences and commissions.

An **Addition** reflects aspects of Swidler's tenure with the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Federal Power Commission, and the New York Public Service Commission as well as with his various law firms. The Tennessee Valley Authority section consists primarily of material relating to loyalty hearings regarding accusations of membership in the Communist party during the 1930s through 1950s with Swidler as both witness and defendant. The Federal Power Commission section contains material relating to congressional hearings, speeches, newspaper clippings on the November 1965 electric power failure in the Northeast United States, and Swidler's appointment, efforts at reappointment, and resignation from the commission. The New York Public Service Commission section consists of material relating to congressional hearings and speeches. The Law Practice section contains material from several private firms including Leva, Hawes, Symington, Martin & Oppenheimer and Swidler & Berlin. A miscellany section contains autobiographical material, an oral history transcript, and personal correspondence.

**Organization of the Papers**

The collection is arranged in seven series:

- Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1957
- Institute for Public Policy Alternatives, 1974-1975
- Law Practice, 1958-1978
- Miscellany, 1934-1977
- Addition, 1931-1997
Description of Series

Container  

**Series**

BOX 1-5  
**Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1957**
Correspondence, legal opinions, reports, and testimony.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and thereunder chronologically.

BOX 6-20  
**Federal Power Commission, 1959-1966**

BOX 6-15  
**Subject File, 1959-1966**
Correspondence, memoranda, and reports.
Arranged alphabetically.

BOX 15-20  
**Speeches and Statements File, 1961-1965**
Speeches and statements, with related correspondence.
Arranged chronologically and thereunder alphabetically by event.

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**New York Public Service Commission, 1969-1974**

BOX 21-56  
**Subject File, 1969-1974**
Correspondence, memoranda, printed matter, and reports.
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BOX 57-63  
**Speeches and Statements File, 1970-1974**
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BOX 63-66  
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BOX 67  
**Writings File, 1970-1973**
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BOX 67-71  
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Arranged alphabetically by subject.

BOX 72-77  
**Law Practice, 1958-1978**
Correspondence, legal papers, memoranda, and reports.
Arranged alphabetically by name of legal practice and thereunder alphabetically by subject or type of material.

BOX 77-80  
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Arranged alphabetically by type of material or name of person, organization, or subject.
Addition, 1931-1997
Articles, an autobiography, correspondence, memoranda, newspaper clippings, reports, speeches, and miscellaneous material.
Arranged in accordance with similar material in the main body of the collection and thereunder alphabetically by type of material or name of person, organization, or subject.
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