

John J. Sirica Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2001
Revised 2021 August

Collection Summary

Title: John J. Sirica Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1932-1986

Bulk Dates: 1957-1986

ID No.: MSS81883

Creator: Sirica, John J.

Extent: 38,000 items

Extent: 125 containers plus 1 classified

Extent: 49.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm93081883>

Summary: Judge and lawyer. Correspondence, memoranda, drafts of articles and books, speeches, notes, research materials calendars, case files, bench books, financial and legal material, family papers, printed material, diaries, and other papers pertaining chiefly to Sirica's career as judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, especially to cases relating to the Watergate Affair.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Ammidown, Robert Louis--Trials, litigation, etc.

Clark, Tom C. (Tom Campbell), 1899-1977--Correspondence.

Dempsey, Jack, 1895-1983.

Ervin, Sam J., Jr. (Sam James), 1896-1985--Correspondence.

Gimbel, Bernard F., 1885-1966--Correspondence.

Hoover, J. Edgar (John Edgar), 1895-1972--Correspondence.

Jaworski, Leon--Correspondence.

Johnson, Frank M. (Frank Minis), 1918-1999--Correspondence.

Kronheim, Milton S. (Milton Stanley), 1911- --Correspondence.

Lear, Norman--Correspondence.

Lindsay, John V. (John Vliet)--Correspondence.

McCord, James W., Jr. (James Walter), 1924-2017--Correspondence.

Neal, James F., 1929-2010--Correspondence.

Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994 RN : the memoirs of Richard Nixon. 1978.

Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994--Correspondence.

Prettyman, E. Barrett (Elijah Barrett), 1891-1971--Correspondence.

Rogers, William P. (William Pierce), 1913-2001--Correspondence.

Sinatra, Frank, 1915-1998--Correspondence.

Sirica, John J.

Sirica, John J. (John Joseph)--Correspondence.

Sirica, John J. To set the record straight : the break-in, the tapes, the conspirators, the pardon. 1979.

Wilson, John J. (John Johnston), 1901- --Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Congress. House. Select Committee to Investigate the Federal Communications Commission.

United States. District Court (District of Columbia)

Subjects

Administrative law.

Antitrust law.

Civil rights.

Constitutional law.
District courts--Washington (D.C.)
Practice of law--Washington (D.C.)
Trials (Murder)
Watergate Affair, 1972-1974.

Occupations

Judges.
Lawyers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of John J. Sirica, lawyer and judge, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Lucile C. Sirica, in 1993. Additional items were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2019.

Processing History

The papers of John J. Sirica were arranged and described by Connie L. Cartledge with the assistance of Sherralyn McCoy in 2001. The 2021 Addition was processed and the finding aid revised in 2021 by Rachel Telford.

Additional Description

A description of the John J. Sirica Papers appears in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division, 1993*.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Sound and video recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, including several tapes of the court proceedings of the Watergate case, *United States v. Mitchell*. Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the John J. Sirica Papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of John J. Sirica in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is controlled by Lucile Sirica.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John J. Sirica 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.

Security Classified Documents

Government regulations control the use of classified material in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish further information concerning access to and use of classified items.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John J. Sirica Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1904, 19 Mar.	Born, Waterbury, Conn.
1926	LL.B., Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
1926-1930	Private legal practice, Washington, D.C.
1930-1934	Assistant United States attorney for the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.
1934-1944	Private legal practice, Washington, D.C.
1944	General counsel, Select Committee to Investigate the Federal Communications Commission, United States House of Representatives
1949-1957	Member, law firm of Hogan and Hartson, Washington, D.C.
1952	Married Lucile M. Camalier
1957-1986	Judge, United States District Court for the District of Columbia; chief judge, 1971-1974; senior judge, 1977-1986
1973	Named <i>Time</i> magazine's man of the year Awarded American Judges Association's award of merit
1979	Published <i>To Set the Record Straight: The Break-in, the Tapes, the Conspirators, the Pardon</i> (New York: W. W. Norton. 394 pp.)
1992, 14 Aug.	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John J. Sirica (1904-1992) span the years 1932-1986 with the majority of the papers concentrated between 1957 and 1986. The bulk of the papers documents Sirica's career as judge of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, 1957-1986. The papers consist of six series: [Correspondence](#), [United States District Court File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), [2021 Addition](#), and [Classified](#).

The [Correspondence](#) series, 1957-1986, includes incoming and outgoing correspondence relating mostly to Sirica's personal interests and activities, although some of the letters also pertain to his professional career. Also included are a few letters from Sirica to his son, John J. Sirica, Jr.

Documenting Sirica's thirty years of service as a federal trial judge, papers in the [United States District Court File](#), 1952-1986, comprise almost seventy-five percent of the collection. The District Court File consists of five subseries: [Personal Case Calendars](#), [Correspondence](#), [Case File](#), [Bench Books](#), and [Office File](#). The [Personal Case Calendars](#), 1967-1970, and [Correspondence](#), 1968-1985, document some of the administrative functions of the court and Sirica's professional duties. The case calendars occasionally have notations about personal appointments.

The [Case File](#) subseries, 1952-1986, includes correspondence and memoranda, chiefly between Sirica and other judges, lawyers, the court clerk, and staff, as well as extensive legal material such as opinions, orders, motions, briefs, and transcripts. Papers in this subseries consist mainly of photocopies rather than original items and are organized by category into Watergate cases and other cases. Making up the bulk of the case files, the Watergate files provide extensive documentation of the court proceedings relating to the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate apartment complex (*United States v. Liddy*) and the cover-up of the burglary by high ranking government officials, including the president of the United States (*United States v. Mitchell*). In addition, there are related cases involving the subpoena of documents and tapes from President Richard M. Nixon and the transfer of grand jury reports to the House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee (*In re Grand Jury Subpoena Duces Tecum to Nixon* and *In re Report and Recommendation of June 5, 1972 Grand Jury Concerning Transmission of Evidence to the House of Representatives*).

The remaining case files indicate the variety of cases heard by Sirica on antitrust matters, constitutional law, civil rights, government regulations, and other issues. Many of these files are incomplete and often contain only one or two items, except for two antitrust cases (electrical equipment cases and *Riss & Co. v. Association of Am. R.R.*) and the murder trial of Robert Louis Ammidown (*United States v. Ammidown*).

The final two subseries of the United States District Court File consist of Bench Books and an Office File. The Bench Book subseries, 1957-1983, contains Sirica's notes about the cases which came before his court. The Office File subseries, 1954-1986, relates to Sirica's administrative and professional duties. This subseries also documents some of the many awards and honors Sirica received throughout his career.

Papers in the Speeches and Writings File, 1949-1986, pertain mainly to Sirica's book on Watergate, *To Set the Record Straight: the Break-in, the Tapes, the Conspirators, the Pardon*. Also worthy of mention is a file containing the beginning pages of an autobiography.

The Miscellany series, 1932-1985, consists chiefly of material documenting Sirica's private legal practice and his service as general counsel, 1944, to the Select Committee to Investigate the Federal Communications Commission. In addition, the Miscellany series contains correspondence, 1953-1982, documenting the judge's friendship with former heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey.

Among the more significant and frequent of Sirica's correspondents are Tom C. Clark, Jack Dempsey, Sam J. Ervin, Bernard F. Gimbel, J. Edgar Hoover, Leon Jaworski, Frank Minis Johnson, Milton S. Kronheim, Norman Lear, John V. Lindsay, James W. McCord, Jr., James F. Neal, Richard M. Nixon, E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., William P. Rogers, Frank Sinatra, and John J. Wilson.

The 2021 Addition, 1973-1978, consists of diaries kept by Sirica containing daily entries and observations, largely relating to the Watergate Affair. Also included is a copy of President Richard M. Nixon's memoir, lightly annotated by Sirica.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- Correspondence, 1957-1986
- United States District Court File, 1952-1986
- Speeches and Writings File, 1949-1986
- Miscellany, 1932-1985
- 2021 Addition, 1973-1978
- Classified, 1973

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-12	<p><u>Correspondence, 1957-1986</u></p> <p>Correspondence and memoranda, including attachments and enclosures, between Sirica and family, friends, lawyers, judges, acquaintances, and the general public. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or subject and therein chronologically by date.</p>
BOX 12-105	<p><u>United States District Court File, 1952-1986</u></p>
BOX 12	<p><u>Personal Case Calendars, 1967-1970</u></p> <p>Calendars maintained by Sirica's staff documenting the day-to-day business of Sirica's court and his other administrative duties. Arranged chronologically by year.</p>
BOX 13-15	<p><u>Correspondence, 1968-1985</u></p> <p>Correspondence and memoranda between Sirica and lawyers, judges, court staff, and the general public relating to his activities as a federal district judge. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or subject and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 15-90	<p><u>Case File, 1952-1986</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, bench books, opinions, orders, briefs, motions, transcripts, dockets, stipulations, interrogatories, reports, notes, lists, printed matter, and other legal papers pertaining to Sirica's professional activities. A systematic sample was taken of the Watergate public correspondence; fifteen percent of that correspondence was retained. Arranged by category into Watergate cases and other cases. The former is arranged alphabetically by type of material, and the latter alphabetically by case title.</p>
BOX 90-95	<p><u>Bench Books, 1957-1983</u></p> <p>Bound volumes containing Sirica's notes about cases that came before his court. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 95-105	<p><u>Office File, 1954-1986</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, background information, invitations, jury instructions, notes, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization, subject, or type of material.</p>
BOX 106-117	<p><u>Speeches and Writings File, 1949-1986</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, research material, book drafts, book reviews, articles, notes, financial and legal papers, and printed matter relating chiefly to Sirica's post-Watergate speeches and writings. Filed in two categories: speeches that are arranged chronologically and writings arranged alphabetically.</p>
BOX 117-123	<p><u>Miscellany, 1932-1985</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, case files, family papers, financial and legal papers, background information, and printed matter relating primarily to Sirica's early career as a lawyer. Arranged alphabetically by name of person, topic, or type of material.</p>

BOX 124-125

2021 Addition, 1973-1978

Diaries containing daily entries and general observations, largely relating to the Watergate Affair. Topics covered include court proceedings, jury selection, planning for deposition of President Richard M. Nixon, sentencing, autobiography drafts and notes, meetings and events, and Nixon's televised interview with David Frost. Also included is a lightly annotated copy of Nixon's memoir.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX CL 1

Classified, 1973

Government classified documents containing sensitive security information.

Correspondence, memoranda, and transcripts organized and described according to the series, boxes, and folders from which the items were removed.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-12	Correspondence, 1957-1986 Correspondence and memoranda, including attachments and enclosures, between Sirica and family, friends, lawyers, judges, acquaintances, and the general public. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or subject and therein chronologically by date.
BOX 1	Congratulatory Judicial appointment, 1957 (9 folders)
BOX 2	Senior status, 1977-1978 (4 folders) Sirica to others, 1962-1986 (2 folders) Cooke, Jack Kent, 1980-1986 General 1957 (3 folders)
BOX 3	1958-1961 (12 folders)
BOX 4	1962-1967 (10 folders)
BOX 5	1968-1973 (11 folders)
BOX 6	1974 (4 folders) 1975 Jan.-Sept. (4 folders)
BOX 7	Oct.-Dec. 1976-1977 (8 folders) 1978 Jan.-Feb.
BOX 8	Mar.-Dec. (2 folders) 1979-1980 (7 folders)
BOX 9	1981-1984 (9 folders)
BOX 10	1985-1986, undated (4 folders) Get well, selected samples 1961 1976

Correspondence, 1957-1986

Container	Contents
	Feb. 3-11 (3 folders)
BOX 11	12-28 (2 folders)
	Mar.-July (4 folders)
	Undated
	1977
	1984
BOX 12	Oct. Nov.-Dec. (3 folders)
	Undated
	1985
BOX 12-105	United States District Court File, 1952-1986
BOX 12	Personal Case Calendars, 1967-1970 Calendars maintained by Sirica's staff documenting the day-to-day business of Sirica's court and his other administrative duties. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 12	1967-1970 (2 folders)
BOX 13-15	Correspondence, 1968-1985 Correspondence and memoranda between Sirica and lawyers, judges, court staff, and the general public relating to his activities as a federal district judge. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or subject and therein chronologically.
BOX 13	Administrative 1971-1973 (8 folders)
BOX 14	1974 Fund-raising, 1974-1985 (2 folders)
	General, 1968-1981, undated (3 folders)
	Johnson, Frank Minis, 1973-1979
	Postal rate case, 1975-1976 (4 folders)
BOX 15	Threatening letters, 1973-1977 (2 folders)
BOX 15-90	Case File, 1952-1986 Correspondence, memoranda, bench books, opinions, orders, briefs, motions, transcripts, dockets, stipulations, interrogatories, reports, notes, lists, printed matter, and other legal

United States District Court File, 1952-1986

Container

Contents

papers pertaining to Sirica's professional activities. A systematic sample was taken of the Watergate public correspondence; fifteen percent of that correspondence was retained. Arranged by category into Watergate cases and other cases. The former is arranged alphabetically by type of material, and the latter alphabetically by case title.

BOX 15

Watergate cases *For additional material see Container 110, To Set the Record Straight*
Cases

In re Caddy, 1972

In re Grand Jury Subpoena Duces Tecum to Nixon

Appellate court documents, 1973, undated *For additional material see Container 19, Bench Book*

(3 folders)

General

1971

1973

Mar.-July

BOX 16

Aug.-Dec.

(3 folders)

1974, undated

(3 folders)

In re Report & Recommendation of June 5, 1972, Grand Jury Concerning Transmission of Evidence to the House of Representatives

Appellate court documents, 1974

BOX 17

General, 1974

(2 folders)

In re United States Senate Select Comm. on Presidential Campaign Activities

1973-1974, undated

(4 folders)

Mitchell v. Jaworski, 1974

Senate Select Comm. on Presidential Campaign Activities v. Nixon

1973

Aug.

(2 folders)

BOX 18

Sept.-Dec.

(2 folders)

1974, undated

United States v. Liddy

Appellate court documents

1973

(2 folders)

1974

Jan.-Feb.

BOX 19

Mar.-Dec.

1975-1981, undated

Bench book, 1972-1974

Docket, 1972-1977

General

1972

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	1973
	Jan.
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BOX 22	1974-1975, undated (3 folders)
	Grand jury indictment, 1972
	Hunt, E. Howard, motion to withdraw plea of guilt and to dismiss proceedings, 1973
	Jury
	Instructions, 1973
	Selection, 1972-1973, undated
	McCord, James W., Jr.
	Miscellaneous motions, 1973, undated
	New trial material, 1973-1975, undated
	Press, 1974, undated
	Pretrial documents, 1972
	Sentences
	Barker, Bernard L., Eugenio R. Martinez, Frank Sturgis, and Virgilio Gonzalez, motion to reduce, 1973-1975
BOX 23	Bureau of Prisons' reports, 1973
	Hunt, E. Howard, Jr., 1975, undated
	Liddy, G. Gordon
	General, 1976-1977, undated
	Motion to reduce sentence, 1975-1977, undated (2 folders)
	McCord, James W., Jr., motion to reduce sentence, 1973-1975, undated
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	Transcript, 1973
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	Appellate court documents, 1973-1978 (5 folders)
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BOX 28	Motions and memoranda to dismiss the indictment, 1973-1974 (2 folders) Publicity, 1974 (2 folders) Severance, 1974 Disqualification of judge 1974 (1 folder)
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BOX 30	26A-37A, 1973 General, 1970-1975 List of exhibits and tapes played to jury, undated General 1972-1973 (2 folders) 1974 Jan.-May (2 folders)
BOX 31	May-Dec. (7 folders) 1975-1977 (2 folders)
BOX 32	Undated Government Discovery, 1974 Motions and memoranda in opposition to dismiss indictment, 1974 Publicity, 1974 Severance, 1974 Indictment, 1974, undated (2 folders) Jury Instructions Final charge Defendants' and government's recommendations, 1974 (2 folders)

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	Ehrlichman, John D. 1974-1975 (5 folders)
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BOX 42	July-Dec. (5 folders) White House tapes <i>See also Container 29, Exhibits</i> Advisory Panel on White House Tapes General, 1974 (2 folders)
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BOX 44	General, 1973-1974, undated (5 folders) Release of, 1975-1978, undated (2 folders) Transcripts 1972-1973
BOX 45	1973 (2 folders) Correspondence Professional, 1973-1978 (4 folders) Public, selected samples

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	1972
	1973
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BOX 46	Oct.-Nov. (7 folders)
BOX 47	Dec. (2 folders)
	Undated
	1974
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BOX 48	May-Sept. (8 folders)
BOX 49	Oct.-Dec. (5 folders)
	Undated
	1975
	Jan.-Feb. (2 folders)
BOX 50	Mar.-Dec. (2 folders)
	1976-1985, undated (4 folders)
	Miscellaneous
	Anderson, Jack, disclosure of grand jury transcripts, 1973-1974
	Baldwin, Alfred, III, unsealing of statement, undated
	Digest of appellate action on cases, undated (2 folders)
BOX 51	(2 folders)
	Liddy, G. Gordon, 1973, 1981-1982, undated
	McCord v. Bailey, 1977-1982
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	Cokas v. Perkins, 1966
	Cutler v. Kennedy, 1979
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	District of Columbia v. Landmark Servs., 1976
	District of Columbia v. Moxley, 1979
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	District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency v. 40 Parcels of Land, Squares 325, 326, 351, & 352, 1959
	Doe v. Mathews, 1976
	Douglas Aircraft Co. v. Weeks, 1959
	East Tenn. Research Corp. v. Tennessee Valley Auth., 1976
	Edwards v. United States, 1964
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BOX 67	1965-1973, undated (8 folders) Meetings 1963 Feb.-May (2 folders)
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BOX 70	Foundation on Economic Trends v. Heckler, 1984-1986

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Godbold v. Overholser, 1962
Golin v. Physicians Int'l Press, 1970
Graham v. Clusen, 1977
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Guaranty Sav. & Loan Ass'n v. Federal Home Loan Bank Bd., 1971
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Speeches and Writings File, 1949-1986

Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, research material, book drafts, book reviews, articles, notes, financial and legal papers, and printed matter relating chiefly to Sirica's post-Watergate speeches and writings.

Filed in two categories: speeches that are arranged chronologically and writings arranged alphabetically.

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Speeches

By Sirica

1958-1974

(6 folders)

1975

Apr.-Aug.

(4 folders)

BOX 107

Sept.-Nov.

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1976-1977

(7 folders)

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1978-1981, undated

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By others, 1973-1981, undated

Correspondence

1975

Jan.-July

(2 folders)

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By Sirica

"After the Dam Broke," *New York Times*, 24 Apr. 1979

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Miscellany, 1932-1985

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2021 Addition, 1973-1978

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