Collection Summary

Title: Joseph C. Swidler Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1931-1997
Bulk Dates: 1958-1977
ID No.: MSS42093
Creator: Swidler, Joseph C. (Joseph Charles), 1907-1997
Extent: 32,200 items
Extent: 93 containers
Extent: 37.2 linear feet
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Language: Collection material in English
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81042093
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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

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.
Acquisition Information


Processing History

The papers of Joseph C. Swidler were arranged and described in 1996 by Bradley E. Gernand and T. Michael Womack with the assistance of Deloris C. Butler. Additional material was processed in 2001 by John R. Monagle.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Joseph C. Swidler is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Associate editor, Public Utilities and Carriers Service, Commerce Clearing House, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-1937</td>
<td>Assistant solicitor, Interior Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-1939</td>
<td>Married Janet Elizabeth Voss (divorced 1943)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-1945</td>
<td>Attorney, Tennessee Valley Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Assistant general solicitor in charge of power matters, Tennessee Valley Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Counsel, Alien Property Bureau, Justice Department (on loan from Tennessee Valley Authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-1945</td>
<td>Counsel, Power Division, Office of War Utilities, War Production Board (on loan from Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valley Authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-1945</td>
<td>United States Navy</td>
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1944  Married Gertrude Tyrna
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
1973     Chairman, New York Public Service Commission, Albany, N.Y.
1974-1975  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 of 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**
- **Federal Power Commission, 1959-1966**
- **New York Public Service Commission, 1969-1974**
- **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.


BOX 21-56       Subject File, 1969-1974
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BOX 57-63       Speeches and Statements File, 1970-1974
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BOX 77-80       Miscellany, 1934-1977
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                Arranged alphabetically by type of material or name of person, organization, or subject.
Addition, 1931-1997
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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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Arranged chronologically and thereunder alphabetically by event.

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Arranged alphabetically by subject.

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