

Henry Robinson Luce Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
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Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2003
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Collection Summary

Title: Henry Robinson Luce Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1917-1967

Bulk Dates: 1945-1967

ID No.: MSS30767

Creator: Luce, Henry Robinson, 1898-1967

Extent: 35,000 items

Extent: 108 containers plus 2 oversize

Extent: 45 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm75030767>

Summary: Editor, publisher, and philanthropist. Correspondence and memoranda, speeches and writings, financial and property records, reports, printed matter, newspaper clippings, and biographical data relating primarily to Luce's publishing career and his involvement in political, religious, civic, and private organizations.

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

Baldwin, Raymond E. (Raymond Earl), 1893-1986--Correspondence.
Beaverbrook, Max Aitken, Baron, 1879-1964--Correspondence.
Bowles, Chester, 1901-1986--Correspondence.
Bracken, Brendan, 1901-1958--Correspondence.
Buck, Pearl S. (Pearl Sydenstricker), 1892-1973--Correspondence.
Bullitt, William C. (William Christian), 1891-1967--Correspondence.
Dulles, John Foster, 1888-1959--Correspondence.
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969--Correspondence.
Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973--Correspondence.
Judd, Walter H., 1898-1994--Correspondence.
Kissinger, Henry, 1923-2023--Correspondence.
Lodge, Henry Cabot, Jr., 1902-1985--Correspondence.
Luce, Henry Robinson, 1898-1967.
MacLeish, Archibald, 1892-1982--Correspondence.
Menzies, Robert, 1894-1978--Correspondence.
Rockefeller, Nelson A. (Nelson Aldrich), 1908-1979--Correspondence.
Selznick, David O., 1902-1965--Correspondence.
Skouras, Spyros Panagiotis, 1893-1971--Correspondence.
Swope, Herbert Bayard, 1882-1958--Correspondence.
Vandenberg, Arthur H. (Arthur Hendrick), 1884-1951--Correspondence.
Wilder, Thornton, 1897-1975--Correspondence.
Willkie, Wendell L. (Wendell Lewis), 1892-1944--Correspondence.

Organizations

China Institute in America.
Council on Foreign Relations.
Institute of Pacific Relations.
National Presbyterian Church (Washington, D.C.)
National Urban League.
Rockefeller Brothers Fund.
United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.
United China Relief (U.S.)

United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Fifty Million Fund.
United Service to China.
Yale Law School.
Yale-in-China Association.

Subjects

Christianity.
Civil rights.
Ecology.
Education.
Endowments.
International law.
Journalism.
Presbyterian Church--Washington (D.C.)
Social history.
Social problems.

Places

China--Cultural policy.
China--Politics and government.
China--Social conditions.

Occupations

Editors.
Philanthropists.
Publishers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Henry Robinson Luce, editor, publisher, and philanthropist, were given to the Library of Congress by his widow, Clare Boothe Luce, in 1971 and 1972. Additional papers were transferred from Yale University in 1980.

Processing History

The papers of Henry Robinson Luce were arranged and described by C. L. Craig in 1974. Additional material was processed by David Mathisen in 1982. The collection was rehoused and the finding aid revised by Nan Thompson Ernst with the assistance of Sherralyn McCoy, John Monagle, and Susie Moody in 2000.

Transfers

Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division and sound recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, where they are identified as part of these papers.

Related Material

The papers of [Clare Boothe Luce](#), also in the Manuscript Division, include Luce family papers and other material relating to the life and career of her husband, Henry Robinson Luce.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Henry Robinson Luce in these papers and other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Henry Robinson Luce 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, Henry Robinson Luce Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1898, Apr. 3	Born, Shantung Province, China, in Presbyterian mission house
1908-1912	Attended Chefoo School, Chefoo [Yantai], China
1912-1913	Attended St. Alban's School north of London, England
1913-1916	Attended Hotchkiss School, Lakeville, Conn.
1920	B.A., Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1920-1921	Student, Oxford University, Oxford, England
1921-1922	Reporter, <i>Chicago Daily News</i> and <i>Baltimore Sun</i>
1923	Cofounded <i>Time</i> with Briton Hadden Married Lila Holz (divorced 1935)
1930	Founded <i>Fortune</i>
1930-1938	Editor-in-chief, Time Publications
1931	First "March of Time" radio program
1935	First "March of Time" newsreel Married Clare Boothe Brokaw
1936	Founded <i>Life</i>
1938	Editorial director, Time, inc.
1940	Organizer, United China Relief
1944	Initiated Commission on Freedom of the Press
1947	Awarded Order of Auspicious Star (China)
1952	Founded <i>House and Home</i>
1954	Founded <i>Sports Illustrated</i>
1964	Retired from Time/Life
1967, Feb. 28	Died, Phoenix, Ariz.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Henry Robinson Luce (1898-1967) span the years 1917-1967 with the bulk of the material dated 1945-1967. The collection is organized in seven series: [Special Correspondence](#), [Business and Social Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Financial Papers](#), [Miscellany](#), and an [Addition](#). Although the papers primarily document Luce's work with organizations, they also reflect his other professional and personal concerns as well. As head of the Time-Life-Fortune publishing empire, Luce's concerns touched many aspects of political, social, and cultural history in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. Luce believed that America should serve as a democratic example in the world, and his internationalist perspective is documented throughout the collection, most particularly in files on China and international law.

With three exceptions – deeds from Mepkin plantation in South Carolina dated 1917, army records from 1920, and speeches from 1928 onward – the earliest date of papers is 1933 by which time Luce was already a successful editor

and publisher and was beginning to devote more of his time to interests outside Time/Life. There is no material for the earlier years when Luce was beginning his publishing endeavors. From 1933 to 1967, there are papers on Luce's households, finances, travels, and his advisory and philanthropic activities, but the bulk of the collection dates after 1945 and relates to activities ancillary to his publishing concerns. Papers relating to Time, inc., were retained by the corporation.

The Henry Luce Papers were received at the Library in approximately twenty major sections, with subdivisions corresponding closely with the administrative structure of Luce's office. Although the integrity of this arrangement has been retained, the present organization of the seven series is a simplification of the original order. A large portion originally consisted of files from Luce's office assistants, or personal assistants, in particular, Edward K. C. ("Kip") Finch, Russell Bourne, and Emmeline Nollen. There is evidence, too, that Allen Grover and C. D. Jackson, officials of Time/Life, were entrusted with Luce's personal and financial affairs. From these people come numerous memoranda for Luce's attention, drafts of correspondence, and responses to his requests for research on a particular subject. Much of the Luce correspondence in the collection was handled by one of his assistants. There is, however, correspondence composed by Luce himself scattered throughout the collection. Notations in pencil on memoranda or on incoming correspondence were Luce's method of suggesting syntactic improvement or to relay the gist of his own thoughts on a subject.

The [Special Correspondence](#) series consists of social notes and generally brief correspondence with enclosures from well-known figures of the century seeking favors or an exchange of ideas. Some of these letters are social notes; others relate to organizations or briefly discuss political issues. A note from President Dwight D. Eisenhower, for example, states that he would like to discuss a specific matter with Luce, but there is no record of the actual discussion. The series also includes substantive correspondence, both personal and business, from individuals such as Raymond E. Baldwin, Baron Max Aitken Beaverbrook, Chester Bowles, Brendan Bracken, Pearl S. Buck, William C. Bullitt, John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, Walter Judd, Henry Cabot Lodge (1902-), Henry Kissinger, Archibald MacLeish, Robert G. Menzies, Nelson Rockefeller, David O. Selznick, Spyros P. Skouros, Herbert Bayard Swope, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Thornton Wilder, and Wendell L. Willkie. Copies of Luce's replies are usually absent.

The [Business and Social Correspondence](#) series includes invitations and requests to sponsor or serve on committees; attend conferences, dinners, and luncheons; appear on radio and television; write letters of recommendation or articles; schedule appointments; and contribute money. Articles, books, and other gifts sent to Luce are documented through his thank-you notes.

The [Subject File](#) is the largest series in the collection. Focusing on Luce's involvement with national and international organizations as director, trustee, sponsor, patron, chairman, committee member, donor, or contributor, it documents the degree to which Luce participated in the life of a particular organization. By far the largest areas of interest for Luce relate to Chinese cultural, social, and political history, Christianity and philanthropy in the United States, and international law. Papers on the latter are confined to the [Subject File](#), with cross-references to the [Speeches and Writings](#). The papers pertaining to China are also primarily located in the [Subject File](#). These extensive files range from Luce's support for Christian missionary work and educational institutions to war relief campaigns as the Chinese fought to expel Japanese forces during World War II and later as Nationalist forces battled the Communists for control of the country. Additional material located in the [Business and Social Correspondence](#) series is filed with miscellaneous correspondence in reference to China. China is also the subject of many speeches in the [Speeches and Writings File](#). Files on Christianity and philanthropy are found in the [Subject File](#) under the names of organizations, such as those related to Presbyterians.

Luce's other interests evident in the [Subject File](#) include innovative approaches to education discussed in files for Kirkland College, Pro Deo, and Yale Luce Professorship. The Institute for Pacific Relations and Rockefeller Brothers Fund files concern world politics. Ecology is a subject of the Mepkin Plantation papers, Valley Beautiful Citizens Council, and Strip Mining Research files. Civil rights for minorities are represented in the National Urban League material.

The [Speeches and Writings File](#) includes speeches dated 1928-1967. Luce's principal subjects are China, religion, philosophy, and international law. Since some of the speeches are handwritten or have first and second drafts, Luce's thoughts and ideology emerge from the texts. Also included in this series is a book manuscript written in 1966 in which Luce recalls three decades of American history and the men of political and economic power whom he knew and consulted. The manuscript complements an earlier publication, "The American Century," which, though not included among the writings in this series, is the subject of correspondence constituting the Addition. Portions of the unpublished book were incorporated into *The Ideas of Henry Luce* edited by John K. Jessup and published in 1969. A brief diary, circa 1940-1947, details a meeting with Franklin D. Roosevelt; handwritten notes and fragments from this period are of a philosophical nature.

The [Financial Papers](#) series includes financial and property records. The [Miscellany](#) series includes biographical material, honorary degrees, awards, citations, and files concerning the management of household, office, and personal affairs such as gifts and travel.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in eight series:

- [Special Correspondence, 1935-1967](#)
- [Business and Social Correspondence, 1933-1967](#)
- [Subject File, 1933-1967](#)
- [Speeches and Writings File, 1928-1967](#)
- [Financial Papers, 1917-1967](#)
- [Miscellany, 1920-1967](#)
- [Addition, 1941](#)
- [Oversize, 1945-1960](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-3	<p><u>Special Correspondence, 1935-1967</u></p> <p>Correspondence with occasional attachments and related material from friends, acquaintances, and well-known figures of the day. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder.</p>
BOX 3-20	<p><u>Business and Social Correspondence, 1933-1967</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent with related material. Generally includes correspondence, invitations, requests, and thank you notes. Arranged alphabetically by category of correspondence, and chronologically within category. More personal correspondence is indicated by name of correspondent.</p>
BOX 20-70	<p><u>Subject File, 1933-1967</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received, printed matter, minutes, reports, clippings, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 70-83	<p><u>Speeches and Writings File, 1928-1967</u></p> <p>Speeches and articles with related correspondence and attachments, drafts and final copies of speeches, and memoirs and notes. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 83-99	<p><u>Financial Papers, 1917-1967</u></p> <p>Bank statements, accounts, budgets, correspondence, and memoranda relating to personal financial affairs and property management. Arranged alphabetically by type of material or subject and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 100-107	<p><u>Miscellany, 1920-1967</u></p> <p>Biographical data, office file relating to management of Luce's properties and staff, honorary degrees and awards, guest and gift lists, correspondence, memoranda, and printed material relating to travels. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 107-108	<p><u>Addition, 1941</u></p> <p>Correspondence relating to Luce's article, "The American Century," published in <i>Life</i>, 1941.</p>
BOX OV 1-OV 2	<p><u>Oversize, 1945-1960</u></p> <p>Cash books. Arranged alphabetically by name of financial institution.</p>

Container List

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	Mundt, Karl, 1945
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BOX 3-20	Business and Social Correspondence, 1933-1967 Letters received and copies of letters sent with related material. Generally includes correspondence, invitations, requests, and thank you notes. Arranged alphabetically by category of correspondence, and chronologically within category. More personal correspondence is indicated by name of correspondent.
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