

**William Jennings Bryan Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2006**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm75014217>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms006014>

Prepared by Joseph D. Sullivan and Allan Teichroew  
Revised and expanded by Brian McGuire

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2006  
Revised 2010 April

## Collection Summary

**Title:** William Jennings Bryan Papers

**Span Dates:** 1877-1940

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1896-1925)

**ID No.:** MSS14217

**Creator:** Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925

**Extent:** 18,000 items

**Extent:** 59 containers and 7 oversize

**Extent:** 24.8 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm75014217>

**Summary:** Author, lawyer, orator, United States representative from Nebraska, and secretary of state. Correspondence, military papers and other material relating mainly to the presidential campaign of 1896, the Spanish-American War, Bryan's efforts to preserve world peace during World War I, his career as a lecturer for the Chautauqua Institution and its affiliates, and his interest in prohibition, political and monetary reform, and religious issues.

## 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

Baker, Newton Diehl, 1871-1937--Correspondence.  
Baruch, Bernard M. (Bernard Mannes), 1870-1965--Correspondence.  
Bernstorff, Johann Heinrich, Graf von, 1862-1939--Correspondence.  
Bok, Edward William, 1863-1930--Correspondence.  
Booth, Evangeline, 1865-1950--Correspondence.  
Borah, William Edgar, 1865-1940--Correspondence.  
Bryan, C. W. (Charles Walter), 1863-1927--Correspondence.  
Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925.  
Burluson, Albert Sidney, 1863-1937--Correspondence.  
Carnegie, Andrew, 1835-1919--Correspondence.  
Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933--Correspondence.  
Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948--Correspondence.  
Fuller, Paul, -1947--Correspondence.  
Glynn, Martin Henry, 1871-1924--Correspondence.  
Hargreaves, Grace Bryan.  
Hitchcock, Gilbert M. (Gilbert Monell), 1859-1934--Correspondence.  
Hull, Cordell, 1871-1955--Correspondence.  
Jones, Oliver Morton, 1867- --Correspondence.  
Jordan, David Starr, 1851-1931--Correspondence.  
Kellogg, Frank B. (Frank Billings), 1856-1937--Correspondence.  
Kirchwey, George W. (George Washington), 1855-1942--Correspondence.  
Kitchin, Claude, 1869-1923--Correspondence.  
La Follette, Robert M. (Robert Marion), 1855-1925--Correspondence.  
Lansing, Robert, 1864-1928--Correspondence.  
Lind, John, 1854-1930--Correspondence.  
Lloyd George, David, 1863-1945--Correspondence.  
Long, Boaz Walton, 1876-1962--Correspondence.  
McAdoo, W. G. (William Gibbs), 1863-1941--Correspondence.  
McCormick, Vance Criswell, 1872-1946--Correspondence.  
McPherson, Aimee Semple, 1890-1944--Correspondence.

Morris, George William, 1861-1944--Correspondence.  
Mott, John R. (John Raleigh), 1865-1955--Correspondence.  
Overman, Lee S. (Lee Slater), 1854-1930--Correspondence.  
Peabody, George Foster, 1852-1938--Correspondence.  
Robins, Raymond, 1873-1954--Correspondence.  
Scott, James Brown, 1866-1943--Correspondence.  
Sheldon, Charles M., 1857-1946--Correspondence.  
Sheppard, Morris, 1875-1941--Correspondence.  
Spring Rice, Cecil, Sir, 1859-1918--Correspondence.  
Sunday, Billy, 1862-1935--Correspondence.  
Thompson, Huston--Correspondence.  
White, William Allen, 1868-1944--Correspondence.  
Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

### **Organizations**

Chautauqua Institution.  
United States. Department of State.

### **Subjects**

Monetary policy--United States.  
Peace.  
Presidents--United States--Election--1896.  
Prohibition.  
Religion.

### **Places**

Nebraska--Politics and government.  
United States--Politics and government--1865-1933.

### **Occupations**

Authors.  
Cabinet officers.  
Lawyers.  
Lecturers.  
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Nebraska.

## **Provenance**

The papers of William Jennings Bryan, secretary of state, presidential candidate, congressman, author, and lecturer, were deposited in the Library of Congress by his wife, Mary Baird Bryan, from 1926 to 1929. Other members of the family donated additional papers, 1929-1945, and in 1942 converted the deposit to a gift. Another group of Bryan's papers, consisting chiefly of his correspondence with Woodrow Wilson, was purchased, 1970-1974. One item was transferred from the Copyright Office in 1982, and another was received by gift from Ralph L. Miller in 1985.

## **Processing History**

The Bryan Papers were processed in 1975 and 1979 and expanded in 1999. The finding aid was revised in 2006.

## **Transfers**

Phonograph records of lectures and readings by William Jennings Bryan and others have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, where they are identified as part of this collection.

## Related Material

Repositories other than the Library of Congress that have collections relating to William Jennings Bryan include Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, and the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

## Copyright Status

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

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Jennings Bryan 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, William Jennings Bryan Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

| Date          | Event  |
|---------------|--|
| 1860, Mar. 19 | Born, Salem, Ill.  |
| 1881          | A.B., Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill.   |
| 1883          | LL.B., Union College of Law, Chicago, Ill.<br>Admitted to the Illinois bar   |
| 1883-1887     | Practiced law, Jacksonville, Ill.  |
| 1884          | Married Mary Elizabeth Baird<br>A.M., Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill.   |
| 1887-1891     | Practiced law, Lincoln, Neb.   |
| 1891-1895     | Member, U.S. House of Representatives  |
| 1894          | Unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate   |
| 1894-1896     | Editor, <i>Omaha World Herald</i>  |
| 1896          | Wrote the "silver plank" in the party platform at the Democratic national convention, Chicago, Ill.<br>Nominated for president by the Democratic Party |
| 1897-1925     | Lectured primarily for Chautauqua and its affiliates on political, governmental, and religious issues  |
| 1898          | Organized and commanded the Third Regiment, Nebraska Volunteer Infantry  |
| 1900          | Nominated for president by the Democratic Party  |
| 1901          | Established <i>The Commoner</i> , Lincoln, Neb.  |
| 1908          | Nominated for president by the Democratic Party  |
| 1913-1915     | Secretary of state   |
| 1925, July 26 | Died after the Scopes trial, Dayton, Tenn.   |

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) span the years 1877-1940, with nearly one-third relating to the presidential campaign of 1896 and the greater part of the remainder dated between 1913 and 1925. The collection consists of the following series: [General Correspondence](#); [Special Correspondence](#); [Subject File](#), [Speech, Article, and Report File](#); [Miscellany](#); [Biographer's Papers](#); and an [Addition](#).

The correspondence for 1896 and early 1897 relates to public opinion and reaction to Bryan's nomination and campaign. Other items in the [General Correspondence](#) reflect his support of the Spanish-American War, his efforts to preserve world peace before the American entry into World War I, his career as a lecturer sponsored primarily by Chautauqua and its affiliates, and his interest in prohibition, political and monetary reform, and religious issues.

The [Special Correspondence](#) contains three volumes of letterbooks, 1883-1891, two volumes of carbon copies consisting largely of outgoing correspondence encompassing Bryan's two years as secretary of state, 1913-1915, and namesake and children's letters. The [Subject File](#) includes muster rolls and discharge documents from the Spanish-American War as well as material pertaining to the Panama Canal and the evolution trial of John Thomas Scopes in Dayton, Tennessee.

[Miscellaneous](#) material, scrapbooks, cartoons, a travel album, and newspaper clippings on Bryan's death, together with addresses, reports, editorials, printed matter, memorabilia, photographs, and an unpublished biography prepared by Bryan's daughter, Grace Bryan Hargreaves, complete the collection.

Most prominent among Bryan's many correspondents is Woodrow Wilson. The Wilson-Bryan correspondence is contained chiefly in the [Addition](#) series, but there are also letters between the two men in the [General Correspondence](#) and copies of letters in the State Department exchanges of the [Special Correspondence](#). Other correspondents include Newton D. Baker, Bernard M. Baruch, Count Johann von Bernstorff, Edward Bok, Evangeline Booth, William E. Borah, Charles W. Bryan, Albert S. Burluson, Andrew Carnegie, Calvin Coolidge, Josephus Daniels, Paul Fuller, Martin H. Glynn, Gilbert M. Hithcock, Cordell Hull, Ollie M. James, David Starr Jordan, Frank B. Kellogg, George W. Kirchwey, Claude Kitchin, Robert M. La Follette (1855-1925), Robert Lansing, John Lind, David Lloyd George, Boaz Long, William G. McAdoo, Vance McCormick, Aimee Semple McPherson, John R. Mott, George W. Norris, Lee S. Overman, George Foster Peabody, Raymond Robins, James Brown Scott, Charles M. Sheldon, Morris Sheppard, Sir Cecil A. Spring-Rice, Billy Sunday, Huston Thompson, and William Allen White.

## Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in eight series:

- [General Correspondence, 1879-1931](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1883-1915](#)
- [Subject File, 1898-1925](#)
- [Speech, Article, and Report File, 1877-1940](#)
- [Miscellany, circa 1877-1925](#)
- [Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934](#)
- [Addition, 1913-1921](#)
- [Oversize, 1905-1925](#)

## Description of Series

| Container     | Series   |
|---------------|--|
| BOX 1-41      | <p><b><u>General Correspondence, 1879-1931</u></b></p> <p>Letters sent and received, including letters received by Bryan's family.<br/>Arranged chronologically and alphabetically therein by name of correspondent.</p>   |
| BOX 42-45     | <p><b><u>Special Correspondence, 1883-1915</u></b></p> <p>Children's letters, letters from namesakes, letterbooks, and carbons of State Department correspondence.<br/>Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence.</p>  |
| BOX 46-48     | <p><b><u>Subject File, 1898-1925</u></b></p> <p>Correspondence, statements, muster rolls, military discharges, memoranda, and copies of documents.<br/>Arranged alphabetically by subject.</p>   |
| BOX 49-50     | <p><b><u>Speech, Article, and Report File, 1877-1940</u></b></p> <p>Handwritten, typewritten, or printed editorials, speeches, articles, statements, and reports by and about Bryan.<br/>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.</p>  |
| BOX 51-56     | <p><b><u>Miscellany, circa 1877-1925</u></b></p> <p>Reports, essays, addresses, poetry by others, a drawing and blueprint, receipts, office receipt book with campaign expenses for 1890, memorabilia, photographs, miscellaneous printed matter, and scrapbooks of cartoons, clippings, photographs, and miscellaneous material.<br/>Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</p> |
| BOX 57-58     | <p><b><u>Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934</u></b></p> <p>Correspondence of Grace Bryan Hargreaves and the typescript of her unpublished biography of Bryan.<br/>Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</p>   |
| BOX 59        | <p><b><u>Addition, 1913-1921</u></b></p> <p>Letters between Bryan and Woodrow Wilson, including correspondence referred by Bryan.<br/>Included also is one letter to B. L. Miller discussing Bryan's views on creationism.</p>   |
| BOX OV 1-OV 7 | <p><b><u>Oversize, 1905-1925</u></b></p> <p>Oversize items arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which they were removed.</p>   |

# Container List

| <b>Container</b> | <b>Contents</b>   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>BOX 1-41</b>  | <b>General Correspondence, 1879-1931</b><br>Letters sent and received, including letters received by Bryan's family.<br>Arranged chronologically and alphabetically therein by name of correspondent. |
| <b>BOX 1</b>     | 1879, 1 Aug.-1890, 31 July  |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | 1890, 1 Aug.-1893, 28 Feb.  |
| <b>BOX 3</b>     | 1893, 1 Mar.-1896, 30 Apr.  |
| <b>BOX 4</b>     | 1896<br>1 May-30 Oct.   |
| <b>BOX 5</b>     | 31 Oct.-3 Nov.  |
| <b>BOX 6</b>     | 4 Nov.  |
| <b>BOX 7</b>     | 5 Nov.<br>6 Nov.<br>A-B   |
| <b>BOX 8</b>     | C-Q   |
| <b>BOX 9</b>     | R-Z<br>7 Nov.<br>A-H  |
| <b>BOX 10</b>    | I-Z<br>8 Nov.<br>A-D  |
| <b>BOX 11</b>    | E-Z<br>9 Nov.<br>A-H  |
| <b>BOX 12</b>    | I-W<br>10 Nov.<br>A-J   |
| <b>BOX 13</b>    | K-W<br>11 Nov.  |
| <b>BOX 14</b>    | 12-13 Nov.  |
| <b>BOX 15</b>    | 14-16 Nov.  |
| <b>BOX 16</b>    | 17-30 Nov.  |
| <b>BOX 17</b>    | 1-31 Dec., undated  |
| <b>BOX 18</b>    | 1897<br>1 Jan.-31 Mar.  |
| <b>BOX 19</b>    | 1 Apr.-30 June  |
| <b>BOX 20</b>    | 1897, 1 July-1898, 16 May   |
| <b>BOX 21</b>    | 1898, 17 May-June   |
| <b>BOX 22</b>    | 1898, 2 July-1899, 29 Apr.  |
| <b>BOX 23</b>    | 1899, 1 May-30 Dec.   |
| <b>BOX 24</b>    | 1900<br>1 Jan.-16 July  |

## General Correspondence, 1879-1931

| Container | Contents   |
|-----------|--|
| BOX 25    | 17 July-12 Nov.  |
| BOX 26    | 1900, 13 Nov.-1901, 31 May   |
| BOX 27    | 1901, 1 June-1908, 9 Nov.  |
| BOX 28    | 1908, 10 Nov.-1912, 31 Dec.  |
| BOX 29    | 1913, 1 Jan.-1914, 30 Apr.   |
| BOX 30    | 1914, 1 May-1915, 31 Dec.  |
| BOX 31    | 1916, 1 Jan.-1917, 31 Dec.   |
| BOX 32    | 1918, 1 Jan.-1919, 31 Dec.   |
| BOX 33    | 1920, 1 Jan.-1921, 31 Mar.   |
| BOX 34    | 1921, 1 Apr.-31 Dec.   |
| BOX 35    | 1922, 1 Jan.-31 Aug.   |
| BOX 36    | 1922, 1 Sept. -1923, 28 Feb.   |
| BOX 37    | 1923<br>1 Mar.-30 June   |
| BOX 38    | 1 July-31 Dec.   |
| BOX 39    | 1924, 1 Jan.-24 June   |
| BOX 40    | 1924, 25 June-1931, 30 June  |
| BOX 41    | Undated  |
| BOX 42-45 | <b>Special Correspondence, 1883-1915</b><br>Children's letters, letters from namesakes, letterbooks, and carbons of State Department correspondence.<br>Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence. |
| BOX 42    | Children's letters, 1896<br>General letterbooks<br>1883-1886<br>(2 vols.)  |
| BOX 43    | 1891<br>Letters from namesakes<br>1896-1898  |
| BOX 44    | 1896-1898  |
| BOX 45    | State Department letterbooks, 1913-1915<br>(2 vols.)   |
| BOX 46-48 | <b>Subject File, 1898-1925</b><br>Correspondence, statements, muster rolls, military discharges, memoranda, and copies of documents.<br>Arranged alphabetically by subject.                                |
| BOX 46    | Bennett, Philo S., case regarding will<br>Correspondence, 1900-1905<br>Miscellany, n.d<br>Probate certificates, trial pleadings and transcripts<br>1903  |
| BOX 47    | 1904-1905<br>Democratic convention material, 1904-1908<br>Panama Canal, 1904, 1921   |



## Subject File, 1898-1925

| Container | Contents  |
|-----------|---|
|           | Scopes, John Thomas, evolution trial, Dayton, Tenn., 1925<br>Correspondence<br>Miscellany   |
| BOX 48    | Spanish-American War, Nebraska Volunteers<br>Discharge lists, 1898, undated<br>Discharge requests and approvals, 1898<br>By commanding officer<br>By soldier<br>Muster rolls, 1898  |
| BOX 49-50 | <b>Speech, Article, and Report File, 1877-1940</b><br>Handwritten, typewritten, or printed editorials, speeches, articles, statements, and reports by and about Bryan.<br>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.  |
| BOX 49    | Editorials, <i>The Commoner</i> , 1901-1923, undated<br>Reports, undated<br>Speeches<br>1877-1925   |
| BOX 50    | Undated<br>Speeches and articles concerning Bryan, 1896-1940, undated   |
| BOX 51-56 | <b>Miscellany, circa 1877-1925</b><br>Reports, essays, addresses, poetry by others, a drawing and blueprint, receipts, office receipt book with campaign expenses for 1890, memorabilia, photographs, miscellaneous printed matter, and scrapbooks of cartoons, clippings, photographs, and miscellaneous material.<br>Arranged alphabetically by type of material. |
| BOX 51    | Addresses, speeches, statements, theses, and poetry by others<br>Memorabilia  |
| BOX 52    | Memorabilia<br>Photographs  |
| BOX 53-55 | Printed matter<br>Newspaper clippings   |
| BOX 56    | Pamphlets, brochures, etc.<br>Receipts, including campaign expenses of 1890<br>Scrapbooks <i>See Oversize</i><br>Album of trip to the Philippines, 1905-1906<br>Cartoons<br>(3 vols.)<br>Newspaper clippings re death of Bryan, 1925<br>(3 vols.)   |
| BOX 57-58 | <b>Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934</b><br>Correspondence of Grace Bryan Hargreaves and the typescript of her unpublished biography of Bryan.<br>Arranged alphabetically by type of material.   |

## Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934

| Container     | Contents  |
|---------------|---|
| BOX 57        | Correspondence of Grace Bryan Hargreaves, 1924-1934<br>Drafts<br>Vol. 1<br>Chapters 1-7<br>Notes on other chapters  |
| BOX 58        | Vol. 2<br>Chapters 1-2, 5-6, 8-9, 20, and appendix<br>Notes   |
| BOX 59        | <b>Addition, 1913-1921</b><br>Letters between Bryan and Woodrow Wilson, including correspondence referred by Bryan.<br>Included also is one letter to B. L. Miller discussing Bryan's views on creationism. |
| BOX 59        | Miller, B. L., letter to Bryan expressing views on creationism, 1921<br>Wilson, Woodrow, political and diplomatic file including letters referred by Bryan to Wilson,<br>1913-1915                          |
| BOX OV 1-OV 7 | <b>Oversize, 1905-1925</b><br>Oversize items arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from<br>which they were removed.   |
| BOX OV 1      | Album of trip to the Philippines, 1905-1906 (Container 56)  |
| BOX OV 2      | Cartoons (Container 56)<br>1906-1907  |
| BOX OV 3      | 1913<br>Vol. 1  |
| BOX OV 4      | Vol. 2  |
| BOX OV 5      | Scrapbooks regarding death of Bryan, 1925 (Container 56)<br>Vol. 1  |
| BOX OV 6      | Vol. 2  |
| BOX OV 7      | Vol. 3  |