

**Robert A. Nisbet Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2008**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm95083025>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008034>

Prepared by Nan Thompson Ernst

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2008  
Revised 2010 April

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Robert A. Nisbet Papers

**Span Dates:** 1949-1994

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1953-1990)

**ID No.:** MSS83025

**Creator:** Nisbet, Robert A.

**Extent:** 1,500 items

**Extent:** 3 containers

**Extent:** 1 linear foot

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm95083025>

**Summary:** Educator and author. Correspondence, contracts with publishers, reviews, promotional material, research material, and other papers relating mainly to Nisbet's books.

## 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

Adams, James Luther, 1901-1994--Correspondence.

Bell, Daniel, 1919-2011--Correspondence.

Eliot, T. S. (Thomas Stearns), 1888-1965--Correspondence.

Himmelfarb, Gertrude--Correspondence.

Kirk, Russell--Correspondence.

Kohn, Hans, 1891-1971--Correspondence.

Lipset, Seymour Martin--Correspondence.

Niebuhr, Reinhold, 1892-1971--Correspondence.

Nisbet, Robert A.

Potter, David Morris--Correspondence.

Rieff, Philip, 1922-2006--Correspondence.

Riesman, David, 1909-2002--Correspondence.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. (Arthur Meier), 1917-2007--Correspondence.

### Subjects

Authors and publishers.

Book editors.

Historiography.

Sociology.

### Occupations

Historians.

Sociologists.

## Provenance

The papers of Robert A. Nisbet, educator and author, were given to the Library of Congress by Nisbet in 1994 and 1996.

## Processing History

The papers of Robert A. Nisbet were arranged and described in 1997. The finding aid was revised in 2008.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert A. Nisbet is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Robert A. Nisbet 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, Robert A. Nisbet Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1913, Sept. 30	Born, Los Angeles, Calif.
1936-1939	A.B., M.A., and Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, Calif.
1936	Married Emily Heron (divorced 1970)
1939-1952	Faculty, Social Institutions and Sociology Department, University of California, Berkeley, Calif.
1943-1945	U.S. Army staff sergeant serving in the Pacific during World War II
1953	Published <i>Quest for Community: A Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom</i> . New York: Oxford University Press
1953-1972	Professor of sociology, University of California, Riverside, Calif.
1953-1963	Dean, College of Letters and Sciences, University of California, Riverside, Calif.
1960-1963	Vice chancellor, University of California, Riverside, Calif.
1963-1964	Guggenheim fellow
1965	Published <i>Emile Durkheim: Selected Essays</i> . Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall
1966	Published <i>The Sociological Tradition</i> . New York: Basic Books
1968	Published <i>Tradition and Revolt: Historical and Sociological Essays</i> . New York: Random House
1969	Published <i>Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development</i> . New York: Oxford University Press
1970	Published <i>The Social Bond: An Introduction to the Study of Society</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf Married Caroline Burks Kirkpatrick
1971	Published <i>The Degradation of the Academic Dogma: The University in America, 1945-1970</i> . New York: Basic Books
1972-1974	Professor of sociology and history, University of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.
1973	Published <i>The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought</i> . New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Edited <i>Social Change</i> , a volume in the <i>Key Concepts in the Social Sciences</i> series, edited by Philip Rieff and Bryan Wilson. New York: Harper and Row
1974	Published <i>The Sociology of Emile Durkheim</i> . New York: Oxford University Press
1974-1978	Albert Schweitzer professor of humanities, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1975	Published <i>Twilight of Authority</i> . New York: Oxford University Press
1976	Published <i>Sociology as an Art Form</i> . New York: Oxford University Press
1978	Albert Schweitzer professor of humanities emeritus, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. Coeditor with T. B. Bottomore, <i>A History of Sociological Analysis</i> . New York: Basic Books
1978-1980	Resident scholar, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.

- 1980 Adjunct scholar, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.  
Published *History of the Idea of Progress*. New York: Basic Books
- 1982 Published *Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- 1986 Published *Conservatism: Dream and Reality*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press
- 1987 Published *The Making of Modern Society*. New York: New York University Press
- 1988 Published *The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America*. New York: Harper & Row
- 1990 Published *Roosevelt and Stalin: The Failed Courtship*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway
- 1992 Published *Teachers and Scholars: A Memoir of Berkeley in Depression and War*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers
- 1996, Sept. 9 Died, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Robert Alexander Nisbet (1913-1996) span the years 1949-1994 with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1953-1990. The collection almost exclusively concerns Nisbet's books on the history and philosophy of social and political thought. It is organized in two groupings: a Books File and Miscellany.

The Books File includes material relating to twenty books written or edited by Nisbet and it is arranged alphabetically by title. It includes correspondence with editors and readers, contracts with publishers, copies of reviews, promotional material, and research material. There are no drafts of the books or other preliminary or supplementary documents concerning creation of the text except for an early outline of *Quest for Community* and a fragment in the *Twilight of Authority* file.

The correspondence and reviews in the Books File reflect the debate surrounding Nisbet's ideas. Nisbet paid close attention to the nature of community and to distinctions between state and society. Influenced by Alexis de Tocqueville, Nisbet also theorized about the future of democracy by studying the American experience. Correspondents who wrote to Nisbet about his books, especially the first, *Quest for Community*, include James Luther Adams, Daniel Bell, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Hans Kohn, Russell Kirk, Irving Kristol, Folke Leander, Seymour Martin Lipset, Reinhold Niebuhr, David Morris Potter, Philip Rieff, David Riesman, and Arthur M. Schlesinger (1917- ).

The Miscellany contains a letter appointing Nisbet as the Albert Schweitzer professor emeritus in the humanities at Columbia University and a letter inviting him to address the Jowett Society of the University of Oxford in Great Britain.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Books file
BOX 1	<i>Conservatism: Dream and Reality</i>
BOX 1	Contract and correspondence, 1984-1987
BOX 1	Reviews and promotion, 1986-1988
BOX 1	<i>The Degradation of the Academic Dogma: The University in America, 1945-1970</i>
BOX 1	Contract and correspondence, 1968-1973
BOX 1	Reviews, 1971
BOX 1	<i>Emile Durkheim: Selected Essays, 1962-1972</i>
BOX 1	<i>A History of Sociological Analysis</i>
BOX 1	Contract and correspondence, 1975-1979
BOX 1	Reviews and promotion, 1978-1979
BOX 1	<i>History of the Idea of Progress</i>
BOX 1	First edition
BOX 1	Contract and correspondence, 1978-1980
BOX 1	Reviews, promotion, and discussion, 1979-1980 (2 folders)
BOX 1	Reprint, 1992-1994
BOX 1	<i>The Making of Modern Society, 1985-1988</i>
BOX 1	<i>Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary</i>
BOX 1	Harvard University Press, 1980-1986
BOX 1	Reviews and promotion, 1982-1983
BOX 2	<i>The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America</i>
BOX 2	Background and supporting material, 1987-1990, undated
BOX 2	Contract and correspondence, 1986-1990
BOX 2	Reviews and promotion, 1988-1990
BOX 2	<i>Quest for Community: a Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom</i>
BOX 2	First edition
BOX 2	General correspondence, 1953-1963
BOX 2	Oxford University Press
BOX 2	Contract and royalties, 1952-1976
BOX 2	Correspondence and outline, 1949-1955
BOX 2	Reviews, 1953-1956
BOX 2	Reprints, 1969-1990
BOX 2	<i>Roosevelt and Stalin: The Failed Courtship, 1988-1991</i>
BOX 2	<i>The Social Bond: An Introduction to the Study of Society, 1967-1976, undated</i>
BOX 2	<i>Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development</i>
BOX 2	Contract and correspondence, 1966-1969, undated
BOX 2	Reviews and promotion, 1969-1970
BOX 2	<i>The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought, 1967-1976, undated</i>
BOX 2	<i>The Sociological Tradition</i>
BOX 2	Contract and correspondence, 1962-1975

## Container List

### Container

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BOX 2	Reviews and promotion, 1966-1968
BOX 3	<i>Sociology as an Art Form</i> , 1973-1980
BOX 3	<i>The Sociology of Emile Durkheim</i> , 1971-1976
BOX 3	<i>Teachers and Scholars: A Memoir of Berkeley in Depression and War</i> , 1992-1993
BOX 3	<i>Tradition and Revolt: Historical and Sociological Essays</i> , 1967-1976, undated
BOX 3	<i>Twilight of Authority</i>
BOX 3	Contract, correspondence, and writing fragment, 1972-1979, undated
BOX 3	Reviews and promotion, 1975-1977
BOX 3	Miscellany
BOX 3	Letters, 1978, undated