

John McAuley Palmer Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2007

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm82035402>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010233>

Prepared by C. Langston Craig
Revised and expanded by Michael McElderry with the assistance of Jewel R. McPherson

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010
Revised 2013 March

Collection Summary

Title: John McAuley Palmer Papers

Span Dates: 1863-1977

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1949)

ID No.: MSS35402

Creator: Palmer, John McAuley, 1870-1955

Extent: 8,750 items plus 1 artifact

Extent: 25 containers

Extent: 10 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82035402>

Summary: Army officer and author. Correspondence, memoranda, subject files, drafts, biographical material, notes and research material, speeches and writings, printed matter, and miscellaneous papers relating to Palmer's career as a military officer.

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

Chandler, John Palmer--Correspondence.

Holley, I. B. (Irving Brinton), 1919- General John M. Palmer, citizen soldiers, and the army of a democracy. 1982.

Marshall, George C. (George Catlett), 1880-1959--Correspondence.

Palmer, John McAuley, 1870-1955.

Palmer, Maude Laning--Correspondence.

Pershing, John J. (John Joseph), 1860-1948--Correspondence.

Rockwell, George H.--Correspondence.

Rockwell, Mary Palmer--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Army--Officers.

Subjects

Draft.

Military history.

Military reform.

Occupations

Army officers.

Authors.

Provenance

The papers of John McAuley Palmer, army officer and author, were given to the Library of Congress by Palmer between 1950 and 1955. Additions were given by A. Conger Goodyear in 1955 and I. B. Holley via Duke University in 2006.

Processing History

The papers of John McAuley Palmer were arranged and described in 1975 with an addition in 2007. The finding aid was revised in 2013.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John McAuley Palmer is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John McAuley Palmer 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, John McAuley Palmer, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1870, 23 Apr.	Born, Carlinville, Ill.
1892	B.S., United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. Commissioned second lieutenant, Fifteenth Infantry Regiment
1893	Married Maude Laning
1899	Assigned to occupation duty in Cuba
1900	Served in the China Relief Expedition during the Boxer Rebellion
1901-1906	Instructor of chemistry, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1906-1907	Governor, Lanao district, Philippine Islands
1908-1910	Student, United States Army School of the Line and the Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kans.
1911-1912	Served on the Army General Staff where he proposed tactical reorganization of the United States Army
1916	Published <i>An Army of the People</i> . New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons
1916-1920	Returned to the Army General Staff and participated in the organization of the American Expeditionary Forces
1917	Assisted in writing the Draft Act of 1917 Selected by John J. Pershing as assistant chief of staff for operations for the American Expeditionary Forces
1918	Commanded the Fifty-eighth Infantry Brigade of the Twenty-ninth Division in assault of the Hindenburg line north of Verdun
1919-1920	Military adviser, Senate Committee on Military Affairs
1920	Assisted in writing the Defense Act of 1920
1921-1923	Aide-de-camp to John J. Pershing
1922	Promoted to brigadier general
1923-1925	Commander, Nineteenth Infantry Brigade, Canal Zone, Panama
1926	Retired
1927	Published <i>Statesmanship or War</i> . Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co.
1930	Published <i>Washington, Lincoln, Wilson</i> . Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co.
1937	Published <i>General von Steuben</i> . New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press
1940	Assisted in writing the Selective Service Act of 1940
1941	Published <i>America in Arms</i> . London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press
1941-1946	Recalled to active duty as adviser to George C. Marshall
1955, 26 Oct.	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John McAuley Palmer (1870-1955) span the years 1863-1977, with the bulk of the material dating from 1900 to 1949. The collection contains personal and family correspondence, memoranda, subject files, biographical material, speeches and writings, and other material relating to Palmer's military career. The papers include drafts and research material of Palmer's articles and books concerning American military history and advocating the creation of a peacetime citizen army based on universal military training. The collection also contains draft chapters of an unfinished memoir as well as research notebooks gathered in preparation for the uncompleted work. The collection is organized in the following series: [Chronological File](#), [World War II File](#), [Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Addition](#), and [Artifact](#).

The [Chronological File](#) contains correspondence, official memoranda, family papers, speeches and writings, and various reports and other printed matter covering Palmer's military career. The series chronicles the appointments and stations to which Palmer was assigned during his military service and documents his commitment to the establishment of a permanent national military organization. The series also contains personal and family correspondence and material relating to the research and writing of Palmer's various publications.

The [World War II File](#) contains material similar to the [Chronological File](#) and supplements many of the issues documented in that series. In November 1941, Chief of Staff George C. Marshall recalled Palmer to active duty as a special adviser on civilian reserve forces. In his capacity as a "military elder statesman," Palmer served on committees, compiled reports, and testified before Congress in support of a national citizen reserve. The World War II File reflects Palmer's efforts in his advisory role until his retirement from the military in 1946.

The [Writings File](#) contains correspondence, research material, drafts, reviews, and other items relating to Palmer's published and unpublished writings. While most of his writings were in the field of military history, Palmer's themes were more concerned with achieving contemporary military reforms based on the concept of the citizen army. The Writings File contains material relating to all of Palmer's published historical volumes as well as draft chapters of a partial memoir, "An Old Soldier's Memories." The series also includes a set of research notebooks assembled as background material for chapters of the memoir that were left unfinished. Identified by Palmer as "Chapter Notes," the notebooks contain items gathered largely from the [Chronological File](#) and include personal and family correspondence, memoranda, rough drafts of chapters, notes, printed matter, and excerpts from Palmer's other writings.

The [Miscellany](#) series includes material relating to Palmer's postwar activities including his statements in support of universal military training and the citizen reserve before the President's Advisory Commission on Universal Military Training, 1947, and the Defense Department's Committee on Civilian Components, 1948.

The [Addition](#) series consists of material assembled by Palmer's biographer, I. B. Holley, in preparation for his book *General John M. Palmer, Citizen Soldiers, and the Army of a Democracy*. The book includes the only published account of Palmer's memoir, and the Addition contains Holley's correspondence, drafts, notes, research material, and other items referencing the book's publication. Palmer's daughter Mary Palmer Rockwell contributed primary documents to Holley's effort including correspondence and miscellaneous items from George C. Marshall and John J. Pershing, both of whom were friends of Palmer and his daughter. In addition to Rockwell, other family correspondents include John Palmer Chandler (grandson), Maude Laning Palmer (wife), and George H. Rockwell (son-in-law).

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [Chronological File, 1886-1949](#)
- [World War II File, 1941-1946](#)
- [Writings File, 1906-1949](#)
- [Miscellany, 1919-1951](#)
- [Addition, 1863-1977](#)
- [Artifact, 1917](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-13	<p><u>Chronological File, 1886-1949</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, family papers, speeches and writings, reports, research material, drafts, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 13-14	<p><u>World War II File, 1941-1946</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, reports, printed matter, and miscellaneous items relating to Palmer's return to active duty as military adviser to George C. Marshall during World War II.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 14-20	<p><u>Writings File, 1906-1949</u></p> <p>Correspondence, research material, drafts, notes, outlines, book reviews, printed matter, and miscellaneous items relating to the research and writing of Palmer's articles and books, including preliminary drafts and research of his unfinished memoirs.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and subject.</p>
BOX 21-22	<p><u>Miscellany, 1919-1951</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by subject.</p>
BOX 22-25	<p><u>Addition, 1863-1977</u></p> <p>Correspondence, family papers, speeches and writings, research material, drafts, notes, outlines, biographical material, address books, printed matter, and miscellaneous items collected by I. B. Holley while researching and writing his biography of Palmer, <i>General John M. Palmer; Citizen Soldiers, and the Army of a Democracy</i>.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and subject.</p>
BOX VA 1	<p><u>Artifact, 1917</u></p> <p>Medal.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-13	Chronological File, 1886-1949 Correspondence, memoranda, family papers, speeches and writings, reports, research material, drafts, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1886-1913 (18 folders)
BOX 2	1914-1916 (8 folders)
BOX 3	1917-1918 (5 folders)
BOX 4	1919 (7 folders)
BOX 5	1920 (5 folders)
BOX 6	1921-1923 (8 folders)
BOX 7	1924-1927 (9 folders)
BOX 8	1928-1932 (10 folders)
BOX 9	1933-1940 (11 folders)
BOX 10	1941-1943, Jan. (8 folders)
BOX 11	1943, Feb.-1944, Oct. (9 folders)
BOX 12	1944, Nov.-1945 (7 folders)
BOX 13	1946-1949, undated (7 folders)
BOX 13-14	World War II File, 1941-1946 Correspondence, memoranda, reports, printed matter, and miscellaneous items relating to Palmer's return to active duty as military adviser to George C. Marshall during World War II. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 13	Chronological file
BOX 13	1941-1943, Jan. 16
BOX 14	1943, Jan. 22-1946 (5 folders)

World War II File, 1941-1946

Container

Contents

BOX 14	Military elder statesman, 1943-1945
BOX 14-20	Writings File, 1906-1949 Correspondence, research material, drafts, notes, outlines, book reviews, printed matter, and miscellaneous items relating to the research and writing of Palmer's articles and books, including preliminary drafts and research of his unfinished memoirs. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and subject.
BOX 14	Articles and other writings, 1943-1948, undated
BOX 14	Books
BOX 14	<i>America in Arms</i>
BOX 14	Book reviews, 1941, undated
BOX 14	Correspondence, 1941-1944, undated
BOX 14	<i>An Army of the People</i> , 1915-1924, undated
BOX 14	<i>General von Steuben</i>
BOX 14	Book reviews, 1937-1938
BOX 15	General, 1933-1939 (3 folders)
BOX 15	Schmidt, Theodor, 1930-1932, undated (2 folders)
BOX 15	<i>Statesmanship or War</i> , book reviews, 1927
BOX 15	<i>Washington, Lincoln, Wilson</i>
BOX 15	Book reviews, 1930
BOX 16	Correspondence, 1930
BOX 16	Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929-1940
BOX 16	Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1926-1928
BOX 16	Literary projects, 1932-1933, 1940
BOX 16	Memoirs, "An Old Soldier's Memories"
BOX 16	Chapters 1-21, draft, circa 1949
BOX 16	Copy (3 folders)
BOX 17	Original (3 folders)
BOX 17	Chapters 22-35, "Chapter Notes," research notebooks, 1906-1923
BOX 17	Vol. 4 (2 folders)
BOX 17	Vol. 5 (1 folder)
BOX 18	Vol. 5 (1 folder)
BOX 18	Vols. 6-9 (6 folders)
BOX 19	Vols. 10-15 (6 folders)
BOX 20	Vols. 16-21 (6 folders)

Writings File, 1906-1949

Container	Contents
BOX 20	<i>Saturday Evening Post</i> , 1944-1945
BOX 21-22	Miscellany, 1919-1951 Correspondence, memoranda, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 21	Committee on Civilian Components
BOX 21	Background material, 1919-1920, 1927, 1940-1947, undated
BOX 21	General, 1947-1948, undated
BOX 21	"Edgewild," N.H., 1929-1939
BOX 21	Hughes, Charles Evans, 1944
BOX 21	Library of Congress, 1950-1951
BOX 21	Marshall, George C., 1944-1950, undated
BOX 21	Notes and other items, 1923, 1947-1951, undated
BOX 22	President's Advisory Commission on Universal Military Training, 1946-1947 (3 folders)
BOX 22	Printed matter, 1941-1945 (2 folders)
BOX 22-25	Addition, 1863-1977 Correspondence, family papers, speeches and writings, research material, drafts, notes, outlines, biographical material, address books, printed matter, and miscellaneous items collected by I. B. Holley while researching and writing his biography of Palmer, <i>General John M. Palmer, Citizen Soldiers, and the Army of a Democracy</i> . Arranged alphabetically by type of material and subject.
BOX 22	Address books, undated
BOX 22	Biographical material, 1950
BOX 22	Family papers
BOX 22	Chandler, John Palmer (grandson), 1945
BOX 22	Palmer, John McAuley (grandfather), 1863
BOX 22	Palmer, Maude Laning (wife), 1944, 1951
BOX 23	Rockwell, George H. (son-in-law) and Mary Palmer (daughter), 1924, 1942-1945, 1951, undated (2 folders)
BOX 23	General correspondence, 1944-1955
BOX 23	Holley, I. B., <i>General John M. Palmer, Citizen Soldiers, and the Army of a Democracy</i>
BOX 23	Carnegie Corp. of New York, 1951-1959
BOX 23	Correspondence
BOX 23	Miscellaneous, 1951-1970, undated (2 folders)
BOX 23	Rockwell, George H. and Mary Palmer, 1951-1964, undated
BOX 23	Drafts of chapter 49, "Military Elder Statesman," 1952, undated
BOX 23	Duke University, Durham, N.C., 1952-1962, undated
BOX 23	Interviews, 1952-1960, undated
BOX 23	Library of Congress, 1951-1960, undated
BOX 23	Miscellany, 1966-1968, undated
BOX 23	Notes and research material, 1951-1968, 1974-1977, undated

Addition, 1863-1977

Container	Contents
BOX 24	Outlines, 1951-1959, undated
BOX 24	Social Science Research Council, 1954-1958
BOX 24	Marshall, George C. and Katherine Tupper, 1921, 1941-1955, undated
BOX 24	Miscellany, 1951, undated
BOX 24	Pershing, John J.
BOX 24	Correspondence, 1919-1932, undated
BOX 24	Funeral, 1948
BOX 24	Report of the organization and operations of the American Expeditionary Forces, 1918
BOX 24	Speeches and writings
BOX 24	Articles and other writings
BOX 24	Miscellaneous, 1922, 1942, undated
BOX 24	"The Organization of Peace," 1934
BOX 24	Brandt & Brandt, 1938-1950, undated
BOX 25	Memoirs
BOX 25	Notes and research material, undated
BOX 25	Outlines, undated
BOX 25	Research notebooks, 1906, 1912-1919 (5 folders)
BOX 25	Shine, James, 1922-1935, undated
BOX 25	Notes and research material, 1932-1933, undated
BOX 25	Poems, 1924, undated
BOX 25	Printed matter, 1921
BOX 25	Yale University Press, 1941-1951
BOX VA 1	Artifact, 1917 Medal.
BOX VA 1	Chronological file
BOX VA 1	1917, May 28
BOX VA 1	Medal, Cercle national de armées de terre & de mer