

Alan Tower Waterman Papers
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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
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Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010
Revised 2022 August

Collection Summary

Title: Alan Tower Waterman Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1912-1967

Bulk Dates: 1940-1963

ID No.: MSS54197

Creator: Waterman, Alan Tower, 1892-1967

Extent: 17,700 items

Extent: 59 containers plus 1 classified

Extent: 23.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78054197>

Summary: Physicist and science administrator. Correspondence, diary notes, speeches, articles, travel itineraries, subject file, and biographical material chiefly relating to Waterman's activities as an administrator of scientific research organizations including his years as deputy chief of the United States Office of Naval Research and as director of the United States National Science Foundation.

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

Bronk, Detlev W. (Detlev Wulf), 1897-1975.

Bush, Vannevar, 1890-1974.

Compton, K. T. (Karl Taylor), 1887-1954.

Conant, James Bryant, 1893-1978.

DuBridge, Lee A. (Lee Alvin), 1901-1994.

Gamow, George, 1904-1968.

Libby, Willard F.

Lovell, Bernard, 1913-2012.

Mead, Margaret, 1901-1978.

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1904-1967.

Shapley, Harlow, 1885-1972.

Waterman, Alan Tower, 1892-1967.

Wiener, Norbert, 1894-1964.

Zacharias, Jerrold Reinach, 1905-1986.

Organizations

American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford, Calif.)

College Entrance Examination Board

Cosmos Club (Washington, D.C.)

National Science Foundation (U.S.)

United States. Office of Naval Research.

Yale University--Faculty.

Subjects

Artificial satellites.

International Geophysical Year, 1957-1958.

Physics--Study and teaching.

Research.

Science--Societies, etc.

Occupations

Administrators.
Physicists.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Alan Tower Waterman, physicist and science administrator, were given to the Library of Congress during the years 1968-1975 by his widow, Mary Mallon Waterman, and by Lee Anna Embrey Blick, an assistant at the National Science Foundation. Some items were transferred from the Prints and Photographs Division to the Manuscript Division in 2009.

Processing History

The papers of Alan Tower Waterman were arranged and described in 1975 by Grover Batts and Thelma Queen. The collection was expanded and revised from 1996 to 1997 by Nan Thompson Ernst and Brian McGuire. The finding aid was revised in 2010. Material transferred to the Manuscript Division was processed as an addition in 2022 by Pang H. Xiong.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Sound recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Alan Tower Waterman Papers. Patrons are encouraged to contact these divisions in advance of a research visit.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Alan Tower Waterman in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions. In addition, many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

National Security Classified Information

Government regulations control the use of security classified items in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified material.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Alan Tower Waterman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1892, June 4	Born, Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y.
1913	A.B., Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1914	M.A., Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1916	Ph.D., Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1916-1917	Instructor of physics, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
1917	Married Mary Mallon
1917-1919	Lieutenant, Meteorological Section, United States Army Signal Corps
1919-1923	Instructor of physics, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1923-1930	Assistant professor of physics, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1931-1948	Associate professor of physics, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1933-1942	Chief reader, College Entrance Examination Board
1935-1942	Member, editorial board, <i>American Journal of Science</i>
1942-1943	Vice chairman, Division D, National Defense Research Committee, Washington, D.C.
1943-1946	Deputy chief (1943-1945) and chief (1945-1946), Office of Field Services, Office of Scientific Research and Development, Washington, D.C.
1946-1951	Deputy chief and chief scientist, Office of Naval Research, Arlington, Va.
1948	Awarded Presidential Medal for Merit
1951-1963	Director, National Science Foundation, Alexandria, Va.
1963	Awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom
1963-1967	Consultant, National Academy of Sciences
1967, Nov. 31	Died, Bethesda, Md.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Alan Tower Waterman (1892-1967) cover the years from 1912 to 1967, with the greater part concentrated in the period 1940-1963. The collection includes diary notes, correspondence, memoranda, reports, speeches and articles, and miscellaneous biographical material documenting Waterman's career as an administrator of scientific research organizations. The papers are in English and arranged into eight series: [Diary Notes](#), [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speech and Article File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Additions](#), and [Classified](#).

Waterman was trained as a physicist and devoted the early years of his career, 1919-1942, to teaching physics at Yale University. During World War II, Waterman headed the Office of Field Services for the Office of Scientific Research and Development, coordinating the work of civilian scientists on weaponry and other military applications, particularly in the Pacific theater. After World War II, the navy initiated a series of grants to universities for fundamental scientific research, and Waterman was placed in charge of the program as chief scientist and deputy chief of the Office of Naval Research. The success of this program led to congressional legislation in 1950 creating the National Science Foundation and to the appointment of Waterman as its director by President Harry S. Truman. The great majority of Waterman's papers details his administrative work for these organizations.

As chief scientist with the Office of Naval Research, Waterman assured universities that the government was not attempting to control academic research but did need to advance scientific knowledge in the technological age. His views on the role of government-sponsored research are stated in his [speeches and articles](#). In addition to the [General Correspondence](#) series, a group of papers designated by Waterman as "[Diary Notes](#)" provides summaries of conversations relating to his management of the Office of Naval Research and the National Science Foundation. Highlights of the National Science Foundation records concern the International Geophysical Year, 1957-1958, and the nation's early satellite program.

Among the prominent scientists appearing in the correspondence are Detlev W. Bronk, Vannevar Bush, K. T. Compton, James Bryant Conant, Lee A. Dubridge, George Gamow, Willard Frank Libby, Bernard Lovell, Margaret Mead, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Harlow Shapley, Norbert Wiener, and Jerrold Zacharias. The [General Correspondence](#) also contains papers

relating to many organizations in which Waterman was active, particularly the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C.

A [Subject File](#) contains papers relating to Waterman's years as a reader and chief examiner in physics for the College Entrance Examination Board and a collection of his travel itineraries and vouchers for the years 1940-1965.

[Additions](#) to the collection include the 1997 Addition and the 2022 Addition. The 1997 Addition includes declassified documents from World War II, a collection of Waterman's speeches and statements, articles by Waterman and others, and miscellaneous correspondence. The 2022 Addition includes administrative paperwork related to Waterman's service with the United States Army Signal Corps, 1917-1919.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- [Diary Notes, 1947-1963](#)
- [Family Correspondence, 1949-1965](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1920-1967](#)
- [Subject File, 1935-1965](#)
- [Speech and Article File, 1917-1966](#)
- [Miscellany, 1918-1967](#)
- [Additions, 1912-1964](#)
- [Classified, 1951](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-2	<p><u>Diary Notes, 1947-1963</u></p> <p>Mainly summaries of conversations in person or by telephone concerning professional matters. Chronologically arranged.</p>
BOX 3	<p><u>Family Correspondence, 1949-1965</u></p> <p>Letters exchanged by members of the Waterman family. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.</p>
BOX 3-38	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1920-1967</u></p> <p>Correspondence with individuals and organizations mostly concerning professional matters. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.</p>
BOX 39-42	<p><u>Subject File, 1935-1965</u></p> <p>College Entrance Examination Board records, presidential medal, and travel records. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.</p>
BOX 43-51	<p><u>Speech and Article File, 1917-1966</u></p> <p>Speech and article texts with indexes and lists. Arranged alphabetically by title.</p>
BOX 52-55	<p><u>Miscellany, 1918-1967</u></p> <p>Includes biographical material, personnel records, appointment books, financial records, and printed matter. Arranged by document type.</p>
BOX 56-59	<p><u>Additions, 1912-1964</u></p> <p>Articles, correspondence, memoranda, military records, a caption, speeches and statements, and other papers. Arranged alphabetically by subject or document type and chronologically thereunder.</p>
BOX CL 1	<p><u>Classified, 1951</u></p> <p>Material containing security classified information. Organized and described according to the series, container, and folder from which the items were removed.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-2	Diary Notes, 1947-1963 Mainly summaries of conversations in person or by telephone concerning professional matters. Chronologically arranged.
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BOX 3	Family Correspondence, 1949-1965 Letters exchanged by members of the Waterman family. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 3	Cooley, Anne Waterman (daughter)
BOX 3	Cooley, William C.
BOX 3	Mallon, H. N. (brother-in-law)
BOX 3	Waterman, Alan T., Jr. (son)
BOX 3	Waterman, Guy (son)
BOX 3-38	General Correspondence, 1920-1967 Correspondence with individuals and organizations mostly concerning professional matters. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
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BOX 3	Allen, Raymond
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BOX 3	American Association for the Advancement of Science
BOX 3	1948-1958
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BOX 10	American Institute of Electrical Engineers
BOX 10	American-Philippine Science Foundation
BOX 10	American Physical Society
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BOX 10	American Rocket Society
BOX 10	Anderson, Robert B.
BOX 10	Atoms for Peace Awards
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General Correspondence, 1920-1967

Container	Contents
BOX 11	1957-1966
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BOX 12	Barden, John
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BOX 12	Bell, David
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BOX 12	British Association for the Advancement of Science
BOX 12	Bronk, Detlev W.
BOX 12	Brownell, Samuel M.
BOX 12	Brundage, Percival F.
BOX 12	Bugher, John C.
BOX 12	Bundy, McGeorge
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BOX 12	"Ba-Bo" miscellaneous
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BOX 13	Cattell, Jaques
BOX 13	Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
BOX 13	1950-1953
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BOX 16	Center for Strategic Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
BOX 16	Civil Service Executive Programs
BOX 16	Clapp, Verner W.
BOX 16	College Entrance Examination Board
BOX 16	Compton, Arthur
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BOX 16	Conant, James Bryant
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BOX 16	Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.
BOX 16	B-H
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BOX 17	Critical Issues Council
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BOX 17	Daddario, Emilio Q.
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General Correspondence, 1920-1967

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BOX 19	Henry Holt and Co.
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General Correspondence, 1920-1967

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General Correspondence, 1920-1967

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General Correspondence, 1920-1967

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BOX 59	Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., rank in courses, 1912-1913
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BOX CL 1	Classified, 1951 Material containing security classified information. Organized and described according to the series, container, and folder from which the items were removed.
BOX CL 1	General correspondence
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