

Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2010**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78051664>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010315>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2011

Revised 2023 October

Collection Summary

Title: Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1895-1968

Bulk Dates: 1922-1968

ID No.: MSS51664

Creator: Lynd, Robert Staughton, 1892-1970

Creator: Lynd, Helen Merrell Lynd, 1896-1982

Extent: 4,000 items

Extent: 15 containers

Extent: 6 linear feet

Extent: 8 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78051664>

Summary: Sociologist and educator (Robert Staughton Lynd). Sociologist (Helen Merrell Lynd). Family and general correspondence, writings and lectures, notes, research material, student papers, and miscellaneous biographical and genealogical material chiefly relating to the Lynds' sociological research and writings, especially their study of "Middletown," Muncie, Indiana.

Online Content: Selected documents from the Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd Papers are available on the Library of Congress website at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010315.001>.

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

Brinton, Crane, 1898-1968--Correspondence.

Diamond, Sigmund--Correspondence.

Erikson, Erik H. (Erik Homburger), 1902-1994--Correspondence.

Lynd, Helen Merrell, 1896-1982. Robert Staughton and Helen Merrell Lynd papers. 1895-1968.

Lynd, Robert Staughton, 1892-1970.

Lynn family.

Merton, Robert King, 1910-2003--Correspondence.

Riesman, David, 1909-2002--Correspondence.

Organizations

Columbia University.

Sarah Lawrence College.

Social Science Research Council (U.S.)

Subjects

Academic freedom.

Internal security.

Social sciences.

Sociology.

Universities and colleges--New York (State)

Titles

Helen Merrell Lynd papers

Robert Staughton Lynd papers

Occupations

Educators.

Sociologists.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Robert Staughton Lynd, sociologist and educator, and Helen Merrell Lynd, sociologist, were given to the Library of Congress by Helen Merrell Lynd in 1969.

Processing History

The collection was processed in 1969 and revised in 1981. The finding aid was revised again in 2010.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd 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

The Lynd Papers 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.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on eight reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Online Content

Selected documents from the Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd Papers are available on the Library of Congress website at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010315.001>.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Robert Staughton Lynd

Date	Event
1892, Sept. 26	Born, New Albany, Ind.
1914	B.A. Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1914-1918	Editor, <i>Publishers' Weekly</i>
1919	Manager, advertising and publicity, Charles Scribner's Sons
1920	Assistant publisher, B. W. Huebsch, Inc., and the <i>Freeman</i>
1921	Married Helen Merrell (died 1982)
1922	Missionary and writer, Elk Basin, Wyo., oil fields
1923	B.D., Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y.
1923-1926	Director, Small City Study, Institute of Social and Religious Research

1926-1927	Assistant director, Division of Educational Research, Commonwealth Fund
1927-1931	Assistant to chairman, later permanent secretary, Social Sciences Research Council
1929	Published with Helen Merrell Lynd <i>Middletown, a Study in Contemporary American Culture</i> . New York: Harcourt, Brace
1931	Ph.D., Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1931-1960	Professor of sociology, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1937	Published with Helen Merrell Lynd <i>Middletown in Transition; a Study in Cultural Conflicts</i> . New York: Harcourt, Brace
1939	Published <i>Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture</i> . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press
1970, Nov. 1	Died, New York, N.Y.

Helen Merrell Lynd

Date	Event
1896, Mar. 17	Born, La Grange, Ill.
1919	B.A., Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.
1921	M.A., Columbia University, New York, N.Y. Married Robert Staughton Lynd (died 1970)
1929	Published with Robert Staughton Lynd <i>Middletown, a Study in Contemporary American Culture</i> . New York: Harcourt, Brace
1929-1964	Engaged in research and writing Lecturer, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y, and Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N.Y.
1937	Published with Robert Staughton Lynd <i>Middletown in Transition; a Study in Cultural Conflicts</i> . New York: Harcourt, Brace
1944	Ph.D., Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1945	Published <i>England in the Eighteen-Eighties: Toward a Social Basis for Freedom</i> . New York: Oxford University Press Published <i>Field Work in College Education</i> . New York: Columbia University Press
1958	Published <i>On Shame and the Search for Identity</i> . New York: Harcourt, Brace
1965	Published <i>Toward Discovery</i> . Bronxville, N.Y.: Sarah Lawrence College
1982	Died, Warren, Ohio

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Robert Staughton Lynd (1892-1970) and Helen Merrell Lynd (1896-1982), husband and wife, span the years 1895-1968, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1922-1968. Included in the collection is a small [Correspondence](#) series containing some family letters plus a larger number of personal and professional letters. The Lynds apparently kept few copies of outgoing correspondence; most of the letters in this series date from 1950 onward and nearly all were written by others.

Also in the Lynd papers is a [Writings](#) file treating selected examples of their production as authors, lecturers, teachers, and reviewers. Material concerning "Middletown," a sociological study of Muncie, Indiana, comprises the largest portion of the Writings and is mainly devoted to background research data the pair gathered while surveying the city. There are, in addition, numerous reviews of both the 1929 *Middletown* volume and the follow-up study, *Middletown in Transition*, published eight years later. Popular reaction to the books was strong in Muncie, and samples of the response can be found in the general correspondence of this part of the Writings.

Besides "Middletown," some of the main topics in this collection are academic and educational affairs at Columbia University and Sarah Lawrence College, where the Lynds taught; national security questions and academic freedom; the sociological discipline; and Robert Lynd's work as permanent secretary of the Social Science Research Council between 1927 and 1931. Important correspondents include Crane Brinton, Sigmund Diamond, Erik H. Erikson, Robert King Merton, and David Riesman.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1923-1967](#)
- [Writings, 1895-1967](#)
- [Miscellany, 1918-1968](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1 REEL 1	<p><u>Correspondence, 1923-1967</u></p> <p>Family and general correspondence, mostly received, and related matter. The general correspondence is arranged separately for Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 2-13 REEL 1-8	<p><u>Writings, 1895-1967</u></p> <p>Holograph, typewritten, and near-print and printed articles, lectures, book material, interview surveys, outlines, notes, reviews, and miscellaneous research data. Arranged in separate files for Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd as well as a joint file of both their material, and therein alphabetically by type of material or title.</p>
BOX 14-15 REEL 8	<p><u>Miscellany, 1918-1968</u></p> <p>Biographical and genealogical material, and student papers. Arranged alphabetically by type of material. The papers of students have not been microfilmed.</p>

Container List

Microfilm shelf no. 18,297

Container	Contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	Correspondence, 1923-1967 Family and general correspondence, mostly received, and related matter. The general correspondence is arranged separately for Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd and therein chronologically.
BOX 1 REEL 1	Family, 1939-1964, undated
BOX 1 REEL 1	General
BOX 1 REEL 1	Lynd, Robert Staughton, 1923-1967 (3 folders)
BOX 1 REEL 1	Lynd, Helen Merrell, 1937-1965, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2-13 REEL 1-8	Writings, 1895-1967 Holograph, typewritten, and near-print and printed articles, lectures, book material, interview surveys, outlines, notes, reviews, and miscellaneous research data. Arranged in separate files for Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd as well as a joint file of both their material, and therein alphabetically by type of material or title.
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Lynd, Robert Staughton, 1922-1965, undated
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Articles and papers
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Book reviews
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	By Lynd
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	By others regarding <i>Lynd's Knowledge for What?</i> (1939)
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Lectures, outlines, and notes (3 folders)
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Reminiscences
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Research projects
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	Social Science Research Council, 1927-1933 (2 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 2	Survey schedules, Montclair, N.J.
BOX 3 REEL 2	Seminar topics
BOX 3 REEL 2	Miscellaneous research material and printed matter
BOX 3 REEL 2	Lynd, Helen Merrell, 1933-1967, undated
BOX 3 REEL 2	Articles, talks, and miscellaneous
BOX 3 REEL 2	1933-1967 (6 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 3	Undated (2 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 3	Book manuscripts
BOX 4 REEL 3	<i>On Shame and the Search for Identity</i> (5 folders)
BOX 5	(4 folders)

Writings, 1895-1967

Container

Contents

REEL 3-4	
BOX 5 REEL 3	Book notes
BOX 5 REEL 3	<i>England in the Eighteen-Eighties</i> (2 folders)
BOX 6	(2 folders)
REEL 3-4	
BOX 6 REEL 3-4	Book reviews
BOX 6 REEL 3-4	<i>England in the Eighteen-Eighties</i>
BOX 6 REEL 3-4	<i>On Shame and the Search for Identity</i>
BOX 6 REEL 3-4	Miscellaneous notes, research material, and printed matter (3 folders)
BOX 7 REEL 4	Lynd, Robert Staughton, and Helen Merrell Lynd, 1895-1967, undated
BOX 7 REEL 4	<i>Middletown</i>
BOX 7 REEL 4	Comments on manuscript
BOX 7 REEL 4	General correspondence, 1923-1960 (2 folders)
BOX 7 REEL 4	Research files
BOX 7 REEL 4	Background, 1895-1947
BOX 7 REEL 4	Clubs (2 folders)
BOX 8	(4 folders)
REEL 5	
BOX 8 REEL 5	General notes
BOX 8 REEL 5	Individual biographies (2 folders)
BOX 9 REEL 5-6	Interview schedules (4 folders)
BOX 9 REEL 5-6	Ku Klux Klan (2 folders)
BOX 10 REEL 6	Leisure activities (2 folders)
BOX 10 REEL 6	Ministerial Association
BOX 10 REEL 6	Organized labor
BOX 10 REEL 6	Working conditions (2 folders)
BOX 11	(4 folders)
REEL 6-7	
BOX 11 REEL 6-7	Reviews, 1929-1967, undated (3 folders)
BOX 12	(5 folders)
REEL 7-8	
BOX 13 REEL 8	<i>Middletown in Transition</i>
BOX 13 REEL 8	Corrected galley
BOX 13 REEL 8	General correspondence, 1937-1941
BOX 13 REEL 8	Review, 1937-1967, undated (5 folders)

Writings, 1895-1967

Container	Contents
BOX 13 REEL 8	Talk to Rotary Club, Muncie, Ind., 1935
BOX 14-15 REEL 8	Miscellany, 1918-1968 Biographical and genealogical material, and student papers. Arranged alphabetically by type of material. The papers of students have not been microfilmed.
BOX 14 REEL 8	Biographical and genealogical data, 1918-1968
BOX 14 not filmed	Student papers (6 folders)
BOX 15 not filmed	(6 folders)