

Lester Hood Woolsey Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

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Revised 2023 October

Collection Summary

Title: Lester Hood Woolsey Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1831-1958

Bulk Dates: 1909-1928

ID No.: MSS46433

Creator: Woolsey, Lester Hood, 1877-1961

Extent: 33,000 items

Extent: 110 containers

Extent: 52 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mmm78046433>

Summary: Lawyer, diplomat, and geologist. Correspondence, memoranda, diaries, treaty papers, minutes and resolutions of conferences, articles, and annotated printed material chiefly from Woolsey's service in the Department of State, including during World War I and while practicing international law with Robert Lansing.

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

Anderson, Jane, 1888-1972--Correspondence.

Bell, Daniel W. (Daniel Wafena)--Correspondence.

Bonyng, Robert W. (Robert William), 1863-1939--Correspondence.

Dulles, John Foster, 1888-1959--Correspondence.

Foster, John W. (John Watson), 1836-1917--Correspondence.

Howe, Avery J.--Correspondence.

Hudson, Manley O. (Manley Ottmer), 1886-1960--Correspondence.

Lansing family--Correspondence.

Lansing, Robert, 1864-1928--Correspondence.

Lansing, Robert, 1864-1928.

Mackay, Clarence H. (Clarence Hungerford), 1874-1938--Correspondence.

Martin, H. H. (Harold Hudson), 1877- --Correspondence.

McCloy, John J. (John Jay), 1895-1989--Correspondence.

Moore, John Bassett, 1860-1947--Correspondence.

Peaslee, Amos J. (Amos Jenkins), 1887-1969--Correspondence.

Polk, Frank L. (Frank Lyon), 1871-1943--Correspondence.

Sabla, Theodore Joly de--Correspondence.

Woolsey, Lester Hood, 1877-1961.

Yardley, Edward--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Department of State.

Subjects

Americans--Spain.

International law.

Sabotage.

World War, 1914-1918--Claims.

World War, 1914-1918--Diplomatic history.

Places

Spain--History--Civil War, 1936-1939--Prisoners and prisons.

United States--Foreign relations--1913-1921.

Occupations

Diplomats.
Geologists.
Lawyers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Lester Hood Woolsey, lawyer, diplomat and geologist, were given to the Library of Congress by his daughters, Elizabeth Woolsey Nyborg (Mrs. Wesley Nyborg) and Ruth Woolsey Findley (Mrs. William Findley), in 1961.

Processing History

The collection was processed in 1962. The finding aid was revised in 2011. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Additional Guides

Notes concerning the Woolsey Papers appeared in the Library's *Information Bulletin* 21, no. 4 (Jan. 22, 1969), and the material was described in the *Library of Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* 19, no. 3 (June 1962): 129-140.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Lester Hood Woolsey Papers 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 papers of Lester Woolsey 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, Lester Hood Woolsey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1877, Aug. 3	Born, Stone Ridge, N.Y.
1901	B.A., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1908	LL.B., George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
1903	Married Grace Hamblin
1902-1907	Assistant geologist, U.S. Geological Survey
1908-1909	Examiner of claims, U.S. Land Office
1909-1913	Attorney, State Department
1911	Secretary on behalf of U.S., International Fur Seal Conference, Washington, D/C.
1913-1915	Assistant solicitor, Office of the Counselor, State Department

1915-1916	Attached to office of secretary of state
1917-1920	Solicitor, State Department
1919	Technical delegate, U.S. Peace Conference, Paris, France
1920-1928	Law partner with Robert Lansing
1922	International law expert for Chinese government in Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments
1923-1924	Counsel for Chile in Tacna-Arica arbitration
1961, June 20	Died, Providence, R.I.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Lester Hood Woolsey (1877-1961) span the years 1831-1958, with the bulk from 1909 to 1928. The collection consists primarily of a subject file from Woolsey's public service in the Department of State and while he was a partner in international law with Robert Lansing. It relates principally to American foreign relations during World War I and to international legal problems, notably sabotage claims during the postwar period. Included is correspondence, memoranda, drafts of state papers annotated by Woolsey, Lansing, and others, telegrams, treaty documents, minutes and resolutions of conferences, manuscripts of articles, diaries, and annotated printed matter. The collection is organized into eight series: [Diaries](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Special Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Printed Matter](#), [Bibliographic File](#), [John Watson Foster Correspondence](#), and [Edward Yardley Correspondence](#).

Also in the collection is a small group of correspondence and a separate file of Woolsey-Lansing correspondence for the period of their law partnership. Additional material includes family correspondence of the Lansing family dating between 1831 and 1921, as well as holograph drafts of articles, speeches, and an unpublished book by Lansing. A series of letters by various correspondents to Lansing's father-in-law, John Watson Foster, dates between 1878-1912.

Other correspondents include Jane Anderson, Daniel W. Bell, Robert W. Bonyng, John Foster Dulles, Avery J. Howe, Manley O. Hudson, Clarence H. Mackay, John J. McCloy, H. H. Martin, John Bassett Moore, Amos J. Peaslee, Frank L. Polk, and Theodore Joly de Sabla.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in eight series:

- [Diaries, 1917-1948](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1914-1958](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1920-1928](#)
- [Subject File, 1914-1958](#)
- [Printed Matter](#)
- [Bibliographical File](#)
- [John Watson Foster Correspondence, 1878-1912](#)
- [Edward Yardley Correspondence, circa 1933](#)

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BOX 2-5	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1914-1958</u></p> <p>Letters received and carbons of letters sent.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 6	<p><u>Special Correspondence, 1920-1928</u></p> <p>Correspondence between Woolsey and Robert Lansing.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 7-99	<p><u>Subject File, 1914-1958</u></p> <p>Correspondence, telegrams, memoranda, notes, copies of official documents and other material.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.</p>
BOX 100-103	<p><u>Printed Matter</u></p> <p>Articles, books, and periodical issues annotated by Woolsey.</p> <p>No arrangement.</p>
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BOX 110	<p><u>Edward Yardley Correspondence, circa 1933</u></p> <p>Letters to Yardley, a law partner of Woolsey, and carbons of his replies.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically.</p>

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