

Henry F. Pringle Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81036921>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012014>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012
Revised 2023 July

Collection Summary

Title: Henry F. Pringle Papers

Span Dates: 1932-1957

Bulk Dates: 1939-1946

ID No.: MSS36921

Creator: Pringle, Henry F. (Henry Fowles), 1897-1958

Extent: 7,500 items

Extent: 32 containers

Extent: 12.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81036921>

Summary: Journalist, historian, and government official. Personal and official correspondence, subject files consisting of correspondence, reports, minutes, lists, research data, and print and near-print material, and other papers relating principally to Pringle's biography of William H. Taft and to his work in the Office of Facts and Figures (later the Office of War Information).

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

Benét, Stephen Vincent, 1898-1943.

Bush, Vannevar, 1890-1974.

Commager, Henry Steele, 1902-1998.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969.

Farrar, John Chipman, 1896-1974.

Halder, Franz, 1884-1972.

Hamburger, Philip.

Hassett, William D., 1880-1965.

Hughes, Charles Evans, 1862-1948.

Ickes, Harold L. (Harold LeClair), 1874-1952.

MacKaye, Milton, 1901-1979.

MacLeish, Archibald, 1892-1982.

Nevins, Allan, 1890-1971.

Owen, Chandler, 1889-1967.

Palmer, Paul, 1900-1983.

Patton, George S. (George Smith), 1885-1945.

Pringle, Henry F. (Henry Fowles), 1897-1958.

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

Shaplen, Robert, 1917-1988.

Sommers, Martin.

Taft, Horace Dutton, 1861-1943.

Taft, Robert A. (Robert Alphonso), 1889-1953.

Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930.

White, E. B. (Elwyn Brooks), 1899-1985.

White, William Allen, 1868-1944.

Organizations

United States. Air Force--History--World War, 1939-1945.

United States. Office of Facts and Figures.

United States. Office of Scientific Research and Development.

United States. Office of War Information.

Subjects

Fascism.
Soldiers--Alcohol use--United States.
War propaganda.
World War, 1939-1945--Aerial operations, American.
World War, 1939-1945--African Americans.
World War, 1939-1945--Atrocities.
World War, 1939-1945--Economic aspects.
World War, 1939-1945--Propaganda.
World War, 1939-1945--United States.

Occupations

Historians.
Journalists.
Public officials.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Henry F. Pringle, journalist, historian, and government official, were given to the Library of Congress between 1943 and 1966 by Pringle, his wife, Katharine D. Pringle, and his secretary, Hester O'Neill.

Processing History

The papers of Henry F. Pringle were arranged and described in 1982. 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.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Henry F. Pringle 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, Henry F. Pringle Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1897, Aug. 23	Born, New York, N.Y.
1920	B.A., Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
1922-1924	Reporter, New York <i>Globe</i>

1924-1927	Reporter, <i>New York World</i>
1926	Married Helena Huntington Smith (divorced 1944)
1927	Published <i>Alfred E. Smith, a Critical Study</i> . New York: Macy-Masius
1927-1931	Associate editor, <i>The Outlook</i> 1931 Published <i>Theodore Roosevelt, a Biography</i> . New York: Harcourt, Brace 1932 Awarded Pulitzer Prize
1932-1936	Associate in and professor of journalism, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1939	Published <i>The Life and Times of William Howard Taft</i> . New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 2 vols
1942-1943	Chief, production and publication divisions of the Office of Facts and Figures and Office of War Information
1944	Married Katharine Douglas
1944	Awarded Guggenheim Fellowship D.C.
1945-1946	Consultant to United States Army Air Force and to secretary of war
1958, Apr. 7	Died, Washington, DC

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Henry Fowler Pringle (1917-1958) span the years 1932-1957, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1939-1946. Consisting of personal and official correspondence, reports, minutes, lists, research data, and print and near-print material, the collection focuses on government morale work during World War II and Pringle's biography of William H. Taft. The papers are organized into [Correspondence](#) and [Subject File](#) series.

A journalist and historian best known for his books on Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, Pringle kept most of the records from these and other writing projects separate from this collection. The major exception is a small amount of correspondence and research material pertaining to the Taft biography. Included are typed copies of original Taft correspondence, letters to and from Val R. Lorwin, Pringle's researcher at the Library of Congress, plus noteworthy responses from the former president's associates to the final manuscript or published edition of *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft* (1939). Prominent among the respondents were Robert A. Taft, Horace Taft, Charles Evans Hughes, Harold L. Ickes and William Allen White. A letter from Robert Taft, handwritten on thirteen pages after a detailed review of the book's galley, is especially significant because of Taft's candid and revealing assessment of Pringle's work. He was concerned about the impact of his father's criticisms of political enemies who were now valued colleagues, but he was also deeply troubled about an analysis of his father's political principles by a man whom he had come to regard as a New Dealer.

The rest of the papers deal almost solely with the Office of War Information and its predecessor agency, the Office of Facts and Figures, or with the research data Pringle collected while working as consultant to the Personal Narratives Section of the Army Air Force. The OFF-OWI materials are the official letters, memoranda, minutes, reports, and manuscripts that Pringle donated to the Library after he and a large part of his staff resigned from the information office in July 1943. Appointed chief of the Bureau of Production of the OFF in early 1942, Pringle left in a dispute over whether the emphasis in government news reporting should be on its accuracy as truth or its value as propaganda. Both the official correspondence and the subject files treat this phase of his work as well as sketching in considerable detail the plans and goals with which the OFF-OWI, under the leadership of Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish, carried out their programs. Also in the [Subject File](#) are the research and writing materials from many of the OWI projects. Important topics include a controversial report on the war and African Americans, inflation, drinking in the services, and the readiness of the navy. Another set of themes involves Axis atrocity stories and the postwar aims of the United Nations alliance. Sensitive to the rhetoric used by propagandists to justify World War I, Pringle and his aides aimed to document as carefully as they could the goals and aims of fascist dictatorships.

Included among the many writers and journalists who worked with Pringle in the Washington office or on special assignment were Chandler Owen, W. E. B. Du Bois, E. B. White, Arthur Schlesinger (1917-2001), Martin Sommers, Milton MacKaye, and Philip Hamburger. Other names that appear in these papers are Henry Steele Commager, Allan Nevins, Stephen Vincent Benét, Robert Shaplen, Paul Palmer, John Farrar, and William D. Hassett. The OWI worked closely with the Writers' Board, and files on the relationship can be found interspersed in the [Subject File](#) and in the official correspondence.

Following his mid-war resignation, Pringle spent 1945-1946 as special consultant to the air force and the secretary of war. Retained in the collection are declassified items regarding Allied bombing operations and the experiences of fliers in the European theatre. Labeled “Air Force Study,” this portion of the [Subject File](#) contains transcripts of Strategic Bombing Survey interviews with captured German Chief of Staff Franz Halder. Pringle’s assignment was to participate in a special mission to gather and preserve individual narratives about the army air force “in connection w/Human Interest History.” He completed the assignment, and he wrote a memoir of the experience with observations and anecdotes about military brass such as Dwight D. Eisenhower and George S. Patton.

A subject heading titled Office of Scientific Research and Development concerns background material for a paper by Pringle on Vannever Bush and government-sponsored scientific research.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in two series:

- [Correspondence, 1932-1957](#)
- [Subject File, 1933-1946](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-4

Series

Correspondence, 1932-1957

Letters sent and received by Pringle, including enclosed material such as clippings, reports, and manuscripts. An initial file of personal correspondence contains disparate items of personal material on a variety of subjects. Official correspondence relates exclusively to the Office of Facts and Figures and successor information agencies.

The official correspondence is arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.

BOX 4-32

Subject File, 1933-1946

Letters, memoranda, reports, minutes, and lists; typed, printed, and near-printed manuscripts; galley proofs and charts; research data and copies of correspondence from the original papers of William H. Taft; plus miscellaneous papers mostly regarding the Office of Facts and Figures, the Office of War Information, or Pringle's biography of Taft.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-4	Correspondence, 1932-1957 Letters sent and received by Pringle, including enclosed material such as clippings, reports, and manuscripts. An initial file of personal correspondence contains disparate items of personal material on a variety of subjects. Official correspondence relates exclusively to the Office of Facts and Figures and successor information agencies. The official correspondence is arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 1	Personal, 1932-1957
BOX 1	Official, 1941-1943
BOX 1	“A-B” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 1	Balderston, John L
BOX 1	Balmer, Edwin
BOX 1	Benet, Stephen Vincent
BOX 1	Bonnet, Henri
BOX 1	“C” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 1	Commager, Henry Steele
BOX 1	“D-E” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 2	“F” miscellaneous
BOX 2	Farrar, John
BOX 2	“G-Mc” miscellaneous (6 folders)
BOX 3	MacLeish, Archibald
BOX 3	“M-N” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 3	Nevins, Allan
BOX 3	“O-S” miscellaneous (4 folders)
BOX 3	Saunders, Mrs. Bradley J.
BOX 3	“T-W” miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 4	White House Writers’
BOX 4	War Board
BOX 4	“X-Z” miscellaneous
BOX 4-32	Subject File, 1933-1946 Letters, memoranda, reports, minutes, and lists; typed, printed, and near-printed manuscripts; galley proofs and charts; research data and copies of correspondence from the original papers of William H. Taft; plus miscellaneous papers mostly regarding the Office of Facts and Figures, the Office of War Information, or Pringle’s biography of Taft. Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic.

Subject File, 1933-1946

Container	Contents
BOX 4	Air Force study, 1941-1946 (7 folders)
BOX 5	Office for Emergency Management
BOX 5	Office of Facts and Figures, 1941-1942
BOX 5	Advertising Council
BOX 5	Board meeting minutes (2 folders)
BOX 5	General memoranda (4 folders)
BOX 6	Ideas
BOX 6	Orders and related memoranda
BOX 6	Project reports
BOX 6	Poore, Charles G., personal files
BOX 6	Sommers, Martin, personal files
BOX 6	Statement of functions and history
BOX 6	Office of War Information, 1942-1943
BOX 6	"ABC of the Axis" (2 folders)
BOX 6	Aircraft report (2 folders)
BOX 7	(5 folders)
BOX 8	"All for One; One for All"
BOX 8	Axis absurdities
BOX 8	"Battle Stations for All" (8 folders)
BOX 9	"Battle Stations for All" (7 folders)
BOX 10	"Battle Stations for All" (7 folders)
BOX 11	"Battle Stations for All" (8 folders)
BOX 12	Bureau operations, description of functions (2 folders)
BOX 12	Chart <i>See Container 32, Oversize Office of War Information chart</i>
BOX 12	Citizens' manual
BOX 12	Office of Facts and Figures, 1941-1942
BOX 12	"Divide and Conquer" (2 folders)
BOX 12	Doctors report
BOX 12	Drinking by soldiers
BOX 12	Editorial questionnaire
BOX 13	Food report (8 folders)
BOX 13	(2 folders)
BOX 14	"Four Freedoms" (5 folders)
BOX 15	(3 folders)
BOX 15	Foreign groups

Subject File, 1933-1946

Container	Contents
BOX 15	Fuel oil
BOX 15	Hamburger, Philip, personal files
BOX 15	Office for Economic Management
BOX 15	Office of War Information 1942-1943
BOX 15	“Inflation vs. the People” (2 folders)
BOX 15	MacKaye, Milton, personal files (3 folders)
BOX 16	MacKaye, Milton, personal files (2 folders)
BOX 16	Magazine digest
BOX 16	Meat campaign
BOX 16	Nature of the enemy (2 folders)
BOX 16	Navy’s report
BOX 16	"Negro report" (3 folders)
BOX 17	(1 folder)
BOX 17	Office of Censorship (5 folders)
BOX 17	“Pearl Harbor Day”
BOX 17	Postwar world
BOX 18	“The Price of Free World Victory,” speech by Henry A. Wallace
BOX 18	Psychological Warfare
BOX 18	“Report to the Nation” (5 folders)
BOX 19	(10 folders)
BOX 20	(8 folders)
BOX 21	(6 folders)
BOX 21	Rickenbacker, Eddie, radio speech
BOX 21	Rubber
BOX 21	Social changes in Britain and America
BOX 21	Speakers Bureau (Office of Civilian Defense)
BOX 21	Strategy of truth
BOX 22	“Suffer Little Children”
BOX 22	“Tale of a City” (3 folders)
BOX 22	“The Thousand Million” (19 folders)
BOX 23	(16 folders)
BOX 24	(9 folders)
BOX 25	(4 folders)
BOX 25	“Toward New Horizons”
BOX 25	No. 1
BOX 25	No. 2
BOX 25	No. 3 (1 folders)
BOX 26	(2 folders)

Subject File, 1933-1946

Container

Contents

BOX 26	“The Unconquered People”
BOX 26	“Wanted for Murder”
BOX 26	“The War and Human Freedom,” speech by Cordell Hull
BOX 26	“War Creeds”
BOX 26	War history (3 folders)
BOX 27	(1 folders)
BOX 27	Writers’ War Board
BOX 27	“Your War and Your Wages”
BOX 27	Miscellaneous
BOX 27	General memoranda, reports, and related matter (4 folders)
BOX 27	Printed matter
BOX 27	Public reaction to OWI
BOX 27	Office of Scientific Research and Development, article on Vannever Bush (2 folders)
BOX 28	Taft, William H., biography, 1933-1942, undated
BOX 28	General correspondence
BOX 28	Lorwin, Val R., 1933-1940
BOX 28	Pringle, Henry F., 1936-1942
BOX 28	Miscellaneous, 1935-1941, undated
BOX 28	Copies of Taft correspondence
BOX 28	Family, 1837-1912 (5 folders)
BOX 28	Law practice, 1889
BOX 28	Marriage, 1882-1886
BOX 28	Mexico, 1911-1913
BOX 28	Philippines, 1900-1903
BOX 29	Pre-presidential, 1907-1909
BOX 29	President-elect, 1908-1909
BOX 29	Presidential, 1909-1911 (2 folders)
BOX 29	Taft-Roosevelt, 1902-1912
BOX 29	War Department
BOX 29	Incoming, 1904-1908
BOX 29	Outgoing
BOX 29	1904-1908
BOX 30	1905-1908
BOX 30	Miscellaneous
BOX 30	Incoming, 1912-1913 (2 folders)
BOX 30	Outgoing, 1907-1922 (2 folders)
BOX 30	Lewinson, Paul, guide
BOX 30	Notes (3 folders)
BOX 31	(5 folders)

Subject File, 1933-1946

Container

Contents

BOX 31

Timetables

BOX 32

Oversize Office of War Information chart