

James Alexander Robertson Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2012

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81038000>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012175>

Prepared by Clarencetta Jelks

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2013

Collection Summary

Title: James Alexander Robertson Papers

Span Dates: 1816-1939

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1898-1939)

ID No.: MSS38000

Creator: Robertson, James Alexander, 1873-1939

Extent: 22,000 items

Extent: 59 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 22.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English, French, and Spanish

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81038000>

Summary: Editor, biographer, and archivist. Correspondence, diaries, notes, writings, subject files, and miscellany relating primarily to Robertson's activities and scholarship in Hispanic studies, especially Florida and the Philippines.

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

Blair, Emma Helen, -1911--Correspondence.

Bond, Carroll T. (Carroll Taney), 1873-1943--Correspondence.

LeRoy, James A. (James Alfred), 1875-1909--Correspondence.

Robertson family--Correspondence.

Robertson family.

Robertson, Cora Halsey, circa 1878- --Correspondence.

Robertson, James Alexander, 1873-1939.

Wright, Irene Aloha, 1879-1972--Correspondence.

Organizations

Florida State Historical Society.

Maryland. Archives Division.

Places

Florida--History.

France--Description and travel.

Italy--Description and travel.

Latin America--History--Periodicals.

Latin America--History.

Philippines--History.

Portugal--Description and travel.

Spain--Description and travel.

Titles

Hispanic American historical review.

Occupations

Archivists.

Bibliographers.

Editors.

Provenance

The papers of James Alexander Robertson, editor, bibliographer, and first archivist of the state of Maryland, were given to the Library of Congress by James A. Robertson and family, 1930-1960. Additional material was deposited by John B. Stetson, Jr., via Cora Halsey Robertson, in 1940; other material was given by Curtis Wilgus in 1975.

Processing History

The papers of James Alexander Robertson were processed in 1981. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Serials have been transferred to the Serial and Government Publications Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the James Alexander Robertson Papers.

Other Repositories

Manuscripts by Robertson relating to Florida are in the Florida Historical Society, Cocoa, Fla. A collection of Robertson papers on the Philippines is in the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of James Alexander Robertson 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 James Alexander Robertson 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, James Alexander Robertson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| Date | Event |
|---------------|---|
| 1873, 19 Aug. | Born, Corry, Pa. |
| 1896 | Ph.B., Adelbert College, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio |
| 1903-1909 | Co-edited with Emma Helen Blair <i>The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803</i> . Cleveland: A. H. Clark. 55 vols. |
| 1906 | L.H.D., Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio |
| 1916-1917 | Research assistant, Carnegie Institution, Washington, D.C. |
| 1910-1916 | Librarian, Philippine Library, Manila, Philippine Islands. |
| 1912 | Married Cora Moore Halsey |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 1916 | Founded <i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> |
| 1917-1923 | Served in Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Commerce Department |
| 1918-1922 | Managing editor, <i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> (also in 1926-1939) |
| 1923-1933 | Research professor, American history, John B. Stetson University: Deland, Fla. |
| 1923-1939 | Executive secretary, Florida State Historical Society |
| 1931 | Organized Inter-American Bibliographical Association |
| 1932 | Translated and edited <i>True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Fernando de So . . .</i> Deland, Fla: Florida State Historical Society. 2 vols. |
| 1935 | Appointed archivist, state of Maryland |
| 1936 | Awarded Cervantes Medal for outstanding contributions in field of Florida history |
| 1938 | Elected vice president, Society of American Archivists |
| 1939, 10 Mar. | Died, Annapolis, Md. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of James Alexander Robertson (1873-1939) extend from 1816 through 1939, with the bulk of the material dated 1898-1939. The major portion of the papers focuses on Robertson's career as editor, bibliographer, librarian, and educator, a professional life that spanned the first four decades of the twentieth century and was devoted to the study of Hispanic America, Florida, and the Philippines. The collection is organized into six series: [Diaries](#), [Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [Correspondence](#) series constitutes the bulk of the collection and is divided into three subseries: Family, Special, and General. Some correspondence is in Spanish and French. The [Writings File](#) includes translations and editorial notes by Robertson as well as his poems and miscellaneous writings. Included in the papers are two manuscripts pertaining to Americans in Latin America, 1835 and 1845.

Robertson's letters to his wife, Cora Halsey Robertson, began in 1910, two years prior to their marriage and continued to 1938. The [Family Correspondence](#) also includes exchanges with his children and relatives. This correspondence is particularly revealing for his work on the Philippines from 1910 to 1915, and it gives a daily account of his private and family life. Much of the correspondence dated 1939 relates to his illness and death.

Robertson's contribution as compiler and coeditor of the fifty-five volumes of *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803* is described in the [Special Correspondence](#) from his collaborator, Emma Helen Blair. This correspondence also gives an account of his travels to Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France from 1902 to 1907. Other Special Correspondents include Carroll T. Bond, James A. LeRoy, and Mabel P. LeRoy. Letters to and from Bond relate to Robertson's appointment as archivist for the State of Maryland. The LeRoy correspondence concerns research and translations for *The Philippine Islands* project.

The [General Correspondence](#) dates from 1898 to 1939 and covers Robertson's professional activities in an uninterrupted sequence. It includes copies or carbons of Robertson's outgoing letters, memoranda, notes, and telegrams. From 1898 to 1900 the letters refer to *The Jesuit Relations* project. In addition to the material of Emma Helen Blair in the [Subject File](#) series, much of the General Correspondence file from 1900 to 1907 includes Blair-Robertson correspondence. Although the letters and other manuscript materials relating to the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (1916-1918) are a part of the Subject File, correspondence for the years 1920-1939 in the General Correspondence also concerns *HAHR* matters. This is especially true of letters between 1923 and 1929, the period in which Robertson served as managing editor of the journal. Letters relating to the activities of the Florida State Historical Society and Robertson's duties as executive secretary of that organization and as general editor of its publications date from March 1923 to 1932. Specific business letters, reports, and minutes of the society are a part of the Subject File.

The [Subject File](#) details the founding of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Documents and correspondence in the American Historical Association and *Hispanic American Historical Review* files refer to this phase of the journal's history. Most of the research and duplication of Spanish manuscripts relating to the history of Florida in the archives of Spain was the work of Irene Aloha Wright. In a file for Wright are letters and financial records relating to her work.

Of special interest in the [Miscellany](#) series are the writings of Robertson's colleagues and the reproduction of Cabeza de Vaca's *Relacion de la Florida* (Zamora, 1542).

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [Diaries, 1902-1911](#)
- [Correspondence, 1896-1939](#)
- [Subject File, 1835-1938](#)
- [Writings File, 1901-1939](#)
- [Miscellany, 1816-1939](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

| Container | Series |
|------------------|--|
| BOX 1 | <p><u>Diaries, 1902-1911</u></p> <p>Diaries and journals kept by Robertson. Arranged chronologically.</p> |
| BOX 2-44 | <p><u>Correspondence, 1896-1939</u></p> |
| BOX 2-4 | <p><u>Family Correspondence, 1910-1939</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received between family members, including with Robertson's wife, Cora Halsey Robertson, and children. Arranged chronologically within each file. Letters of condolence on the death of Robertson are arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.</p> |
| BOX 5-6 | <p><u>Special Correspondence, 1902-1935</u></p> <p>Letters from Emma Helen Blair to Robertson concerning his early research and publishing ventures. Includes letters to and from Carroll T. Bond and James A. LeRoy and Mabel LeRoy and letters relating to Robertson's tenure and activities in the Philippines. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or subject and therein chronologically.</p> |
| BOX 7-44 | <p><u>General Correspondence, 1896-1939</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Arranged chronologically by month.</p> |
| BOX 45-49 | <p><u>Subject File, 1835-1938</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, notes, manuscripts, and financial statements. Arranged alphabetically by subject and therein chronologically.</p> |
| BOX 50-56 | <p><u>Writings File, 1901-1939</u></p> <p>Transcripts, typescripts, and handwritten copies of lectures, draft copies of articles, books, manuscripts, and miscellaneous writings. Arranged by type of material and chronologically within each file.</p> |
| BOX 56-59 | <p><u>Miscellany, 1816-1939</u></p> <p>Cards, clippings, printed matter, and writings by others. Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic.</p> |
| BOX OV 1 | <p><u>Oversize</u></p> <p>Certificates, awards, and memorabilia. Described according to the series, container and folder from which the items were removed.</p> |

Container List

| Container | Contents |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1 | Diaries, 1902-1911 Diaries and journals kept by Robertson. Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 1 | 1902-1903, 1910-1911, undated (2 folders) |
| BOX 2-44 | Correspondence, 1896-1939 |
| BOX 2-4 | Family Correspondence, 1910-1939 Letters sent and received between family members, including with Robertson's wife, Cora Halsey Robertson, and children. Arranged chronologically within each file. Letters of condolence on the death of Robertson are arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent. |
| BOX 2 | Wife, Cora M. Halsey Robertson |
| BOX 2 | 1910-1915 (5 folders) |
| BOX 3 | 1916-1927 (5 folders) |
| BOX 4 | 1928-1938 |
| BOX 4 | Children, 1922-1927 |
| BOX 4 | Miscellaneous, 1911-1934 |
| BOX 4 | Illness and death, 1939 |
| BOX 4 | Death notices, 1939 |
| BOX 4 | Condolences on death, 1939 (4 folders) |
| BOX 5-6 | Special Correspondence, 1902-1935 Letters from Emma Helen Blair to Robertson concerning his early research and publishing ventures. Includes letters to and from Carroll T. Bond and James A. LeRoy and Mabel LeRoy and letters relating to Robertson's tenure and activities in the Philippines. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or subject and therein chronologically. |
| BOX 5 | Blair, Emma Helen, 1902 |
| BOX 5 | General, 1902-1911, undated (3 folders) |
| BOX 5 | Concerning death of, 1911-1912 |
| BOX 5 | Bond, Carroll T., 1935 |
| BOX 5 | LeRoy, James A., 1904-1909 (3 folders) |
| BOX 6 | Le Roy, Mabel P., 1909-1913 |
| BOX 6 | Philippine affairs, 1909-1917 (4 folders) |

Correspondence, 1896-1939

Container

Contents

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| BOX 7-44 | General Correspondence, 1896-1939 Letters received and copies of letters sent, memoranda, and miscellaneous attachments. Arranged chronologically by month. |
| BOX 7 | 1896-1903 |
| BOX 7 | Jan.-July (4 folders) |
| BOX 8 | 1904-1906 (3 folders) |
| BOX 8 | 1907 |
| BOX 8 | Jan.-May |
| BOX 9 | June-Dec. |
| BOX 9 | 1908-1909 (4 folders) |
| BOX 10 | 1910-1917 (6 folders) |
| BOX 11 | 1918 (5 folders) |
| BOX 11 | 1919 |
| BOX 11 | Jan.-Mar. |
| BOX 12 | Apr.-Dec. (3 folders) |
| BOX 12 | 1920 |
| BOX 12 | Jan.-Mar. |
| BOX 13 | Apr.-Dec. (3 folders) |
| BOX 13 | 1921 |
| BOX 13 | Jan.-Sept. (2 folders) |
| BOX 14 | Oct.-Dec. |
| BOX 14 | 1922 |
| BOX 14 | Jan.-Sept. (4 folders) |
| BOX 15 | Oct.-Dec. (2 folders) |
| BOX 15 | 1923 |
| BOX 15 | Jan.-Sept. (3 folders) |
| BOX 16 | Oct.-Dec. (2 folders) |
| BOX 16 | 1924 |
| BOX 16 | Jan.-Sept. (3 folders) |
| BOX 17 | Oct.-Dec. |
| BOX 17 | 1925 |
| BOX 17 | Jan.-Nov. (4 folders) |
| BOX 18 | Dec. |

Correspondence, 1896-1939

| Container | Contents |
|-----------|----------|
|-----------|----------|

| | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| BOX 18 | 1926 |
| BOX 18 | Jan.-May (5 folders) |
| BOX 19 | June-Nov. (6 folders) |
| BOX 20 | Dec. |
| BOX 20 | 1927 |
| BOX 20 | Jan.-Apr. (3 folders) |
| BOX 21 | May-Sept. (5 folders) |
| BOX 22 | Oct.-Dec. (3 folders) |
| BOX 22 | 1928 |
| BOX 22 | Jan. |
| BOX 23 | Feb.-June (5 folders) |
| BOX 24 | July-Nov. (6 folders) |
| BOX 25 | Dec., undated (2 folders) |
| BOX 25 | 1929 |
| BOX 25 | Jan.-Apr. (4 folders) |
| BOX 26 | May-Oct. (5 folders) |
| BOX 27 | Nov.-Dec. (3 folders) |
| BOX 27 | 1930 |
| BOX 27 | Jan. (2 folders) |
| BOX 28 | Feb.-May (5 folders) |
| BOX 29 | June-Nov. (6 folders) |
| BOX 30 | Dec. |
| BOX 30 | 1931 |
| BOX 30 | Jan.-Apr. (5 folders) |
| BOX 31 | Apr.-July (6 folders) |
| BOX 32 | Aug.-Nov. (6 folders) |
| BOX 33 | Nov.-Dec. (3 folders) |
| BOX 33 | 1932 |
| BOX 33 | Jan.-Feb. (4 folders) |

Correspondence, 1896-1939

| Container | Contents |
|-----------|---|
| BOX 34 | Mar.-Aug. (6 folders) |
| BOX 35 | Sept.-Dec., undated (5 folders) |
| BOX 35 | 1933 |
| BOX 35 | Jan.-Mar. (3 folders) |
| BOX 36 | Mar.-Aug. (6 folders) |
| BOX 37 | Sept.-Dec., undated (5 folders) |
| BOX 37 | 1934 |
| BOX 37 | Jan.-Mar. (3 folders) |
| BOX 38 | Apr.-Sept. (7 folders) |
| BOX 39 | Oct.-Dec., undated (4 folders) |
| BOX 39 | 1935 |
| BOX 39 | Jan.-Apr. (4 folders) |
| BOX 40 | May-Dec., undated (9 folders) |
| BOX 40 | 1936 |
| BOX 40 | Jan. |
| BOX 41 | Feb.-Aug. (7 folders) |
| BOX 42 | Sept.-Dec., undated (5 folders) |
| BOX 42 | 1937 |
| BOX 42 | Jan.-Aug. (8 folders) |
| BOX 43 | Sept.-Dec., undated (5 folders) |
| BOX 43 | 1938 |
| BOX 43 | Jan.-June (6 folders) |
| BOX 44 | July-Dec. (6 folders) |
| BOX 44 | 1939 |
| BOX 44 | Jan.-Oct., undated (4 folders) (4 folders) |
| BOX 45-49 | Subject File, 1835-1938 Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, notes, manuscripts, and financial statements. Arranged alphabetically by subject and therein chronologically. |
| BOX 45 | American Historical Association, Conference on Hispanic American History, Canada, 1932 |

Subject File, 1835-1938

| Container | Contents |
|-----------|--|
| BOX 45 | Florida |
| BOX 45 | Florida State Historical Society, 1929-1930 |
| BOX 45 | Correspondence |
| BOX 45 | Minutes, reports |
| BOX 45 | French Florida, 1933 |
| BOX 45 | Correspondence, 1924-1935 (2 folders) |
| BOX 45 | Footnotes (2 folders) |
| BOX 46 | Index |
| BOX 46 | Narrative |
| BOX 46 | Pictures |
| BOX 46 | Miscellaneous |
| BOX 46 | Harris, Alta California, 1846 |
| BOX 46 | <i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> |
| BOX 46 | Correspondence, 1916-1917 (2 folders) |
| BOX 47 | Reports, minutes, 1916-1932 |
| BOX 47 | Inter-American Historical Series, Correspondence, 1929-1939 |
| BOX 47 | Mollan, R. C., 1835 |
| BOX 47 | Monday, H. A., inventory of collection |
| BOX 47 | Pan American Institute of Geography and History, 1929-1930 |
| BOX 47 | Pan American Union, Advisory Committee on Bibliography, minutes, 1930 |
| BOX 47 | Philippine Customary Law Project, correspondence, 1932-1938 |
| BOX 47 | Spanish Institute of Florida |
| BOX 47 | Union Catalog of Floridiana, proposal |
| BOX 47 | Wright, Irene Aloha |
| BOX 47 | Correspondence |
| BOX 47 | 1923 |
| BOX 48 | 1924-1935 (5 folders) |
| BOX 48 | Financial statements |
| BOX 48 | 1922-1923 |
| BOX 49 | 1924-1931 (4 folders) |
| BOX 50-56 | Writings File, 1901-1939 Transcripts, typescripts, and handwritten copies of lectures, draft copies of articles, books, manuscripts, and miscellaneous writings. Arranged by type of material and chronologically within each file. |
| BOX 50 | Articles on |
| BOX 50 | Philippines |
| BOX 50 | Miscellaneous topics |
| BOX 50 | "Cartography, 1492-1867" |
| BOX 50 | Correspondence/notes, 1916-1932 |

Writings File, 1901-1939

| Container | Contents |
|-----------|--|
| BOX 50 | Notes/drafts (2 folders) |
| BOX 51 | (2 folders) |
| BOX 51 | "Flora and Fauna," notes |
| BOX 51 | "Florida" |
| BOX 51 | Notes (2 folders) |
| BOX 51 | Notes, "Monroe Doctrine, United States Foreign Policy" |
| BOX 52 | "Florida Missions" |
| BOX 52 | Draft |
| BOX 52 | Notes/draft |
| BOX 52 | " <i>Leyes de Indias</i> ," notes |
| BOX 52 | <i>Louisiana under the Rule of Spain, France, and the United States</i> , notes 1785-1807, 1911 |
| BOX 52 | "The Luna Papers" |
| BOX 52 | "McCartney Mission to China," notes |
| BOX 52 | "Panama," notes/draft |
| BOX 52 | "Rivers," notes |
| BOX 52 | "Gentlemen of Elvas" |
| BOX 52 | Correspondence, 1932-1939 |
| BOX 52 | Draft |
| BOX 53 | "The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents" |
| BOX 53 | <i>The Philippine Islands</i> , 1493-1803 |
| BOX 53 | Notes (2 folders) |
| BOX 54 | (2 folders) |
| BOX 54 | Poems, 1901-1928, undated |
| BOX 54 | Translations (Spanish to English) |
| BOX 54 | Early Spanish documents (1513) |
| BOX 54 | Jesuit letter from Siam (1686) |
| BOX 54 | Letter from China (1745) |
| BOX 55 | Pavón, José María |
| BOX 55 | <i>The Ancient Legends of the Island of Negros</i> |
| BOX 55 | <i>Stories of the Indios of This Island (Negros)</i> |
| BOX 55 | Rochmanteux, Camille, The Jesuits and New France |
| BOX 55 | Translations, English to Spanish, "How the War Came to America," 1917 |
| BOX 55 | Miscellaneous |
| BOX 55 | Concerning libraries and archives |
| BOX 55 | Concerning Hispanic American history and others (2 folders) |
| BOX 56 | Unidentified fragments |
| BOX 56-59 | Miscellany, 1816-1939 Cards, clippings, printed matter, and writings by others. Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic. |
| BOX 56 | Cards |
| BOX 56 | Certificates, awards, and memorabilia <i>See Oversize</i> |

Miscellany, 1816-1939

| Container | Contents |
|-----------|---|
| BOX 56 | Clippings |
| BOX 56 | Examinations |
| BOX 56 | Invitations |
| BOX 56 | Legal documents |
| BOX 56 | Notes |
| BOX 57 | Notes |
| BOX 57 | Printed matter |
| BOX 57 | Programs |
| BOX 57 | Receipts |
| BOX 57 | Reproduction, Cabeca de Vaca, <i>Relacion de la Florida</i> |
| BOX 57 | Writings by others (2 folders) |
| BOX 58 | Speeches and lectures |
| BOX 58 | Writings |
| BOX 58 | Biographical file |
| BOX 58 | Short stories |
| BOX 58 | Introductions and foreword |
| BOX 58 | "Bits about Masonry in Former Spanish Countries" |
| BOX 58 | British seamen |
| BOX 58 | Florida and Louisiana |
| BOX 58 | Latin America |
| BOX 58 | Philippine Islands |
| BOX 58 | Spain |
| BOX 58 | Spanish exploration |
| BOX 58 | "Suggestions regarding Translation and Typographical Style" |
| BOX 58 | Pardo de Tavera, T. H., "Resena Historica" |
| BOX 58 | Cleary, R., "Brazil under the Monarchy" |
| BOX 58 | Notebook |
| BOX 58 | Notes on colonization |
| BOX 58 | Notes re Philippine Islands |
| BOX 58 | Notes from Jose Montero y Vidal |
| BOX 58 | Miscellaneous notes |
| BOX 59 | Subject files |
| BOX 59 | American Mestizo Protective Association, report, 1914 |
| BOX 59 | Instituto Historico e Geographico Brasileiro, 1922 |
| BOX 59 | Inter-American Historical Series, report, circa 1934 |
| BOX 59 | Official names of Barrios, Philippine Islands, 1911 |
| BOX 59 | Ordinances for the Treatment of the Indians |
| BOX 59 | Puente de Espana, 1875 |
| BOX 59 | Sanitation in Mexico |
| BOX 59 | <i>Stafford</i> (schooner), invoice, 1816-1817 |
| BOX 59 | War Trade Board records |
| BOX 59 | General |
| BOX 59 | Greece |
| BOX 59 | Latin America |
| BOX 59 | Report of the Near Eastern Division |

Miscellany, 1816-1939

| Container | Contents |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 59 | Ultra-Mayan |
| BOX 59 | Duplicates |
| BOX 59 | Bibliographical material |
| BOX 59 | Miscellany |
| BOX OV 1 | Oversize Certificates, awards, and memorabilia. Described according to the series, container and folder from which the items were removed. |
| BOX OV 1 | Miscellany |
| BOX OV 1 | Certificates, awards, and memorabilia (Container 56) |