

**Harry E. Yarnell Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2008**

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

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms018012>

Prepared by Donald Wilson

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2018

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Harry E. Yarnell Papers

**Span Dates:** 1935-1939

**ID No.:** MSS46821

**Creator:** Yarnell, Harry E. (Harry Ervin), 1875-1959

**Extent:** 3,500 items

**Extent:** 14 containers

**Extent:** 5.6 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm73046821>

**Summary:** Naval officer. Correspondence, writings, notes, reports, printed matter, and other papers relating chiefly to conditions in East Asia before and during the renewal of hostilities between China and Japan in the late 1930s.

## 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

Allen, William H. (William Harvey), 1874-1963--Correspondence.

Angwin, William A. China incident. 1938.

Clark, Frank H.--Correspondence.

Gauss, Clarence E.--Correspondence.

Johnson, Nelson T. (Nelson Trusler), 1887-1954--Correspondence.

Jones, J. Weldon (James Weldon), 1896- --Correspondence.

Leahy, William D.--Correspondence.

Little, Charles--Correspondence.

Lockhart, Frank P.--Correspondence.

Yarnell, Harry E. (Harry Ervin), 1875-1959.

### Organizations

Panay (Gunboat : PR-5)

United States. Navy. Asiatic Fleet.

### Subjects

Americans--China.

Chinese newspapers.

Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945.

### Places

China--Foreign relations--Japan.

China--History, Military--1912-1949.

East Asia--History.

Japan--Foreign relations--China.

Japan--History, Military--1868-1945.

Jiujiang (Jiangxi Sheng, China)--History.

### Titles

*North-China daily news.*

### Occupations

Naval officers.

## Provenance

The papers of Harry E. Yarnell, naval officer, were given to the Library of Congress by Yarnell in 1953.

## Processing History

The collection was processed in 1973. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

## Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Harry E. Yarnell 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 Harry E. Yarnell 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, Harry E. Yarnell Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1875, Oct. 18	Born near Independence, Iowa
1897	B.S., United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1899	Ensign, U.S. Navy Duty in the U.S.S. <i>Oregon</i> during the Spanish-American War and in the U.S.S. <i>Yorktown</i> during the Philippine Insurrection and Boxer Campaign
1903	Married Emily Carroll Thomas
1914	Took part in occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico
1915	Graduated, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
1917	Patrol duty, Gibraltar; commanded U.S.S. <i>Nashville</i>
1918	On staff of Admiral Sims, London, England
1919	Awarded Navy Cross and Commander of the Order of the British Empire
1927-1928	First commanding officer, U.S.S. <i>Saratoga</i>
1928	Appointed Chief of Bureau of Engineering, Navy Department
1930	Member, technical staff, Conference of Limitation of Armament, London, England
1931-1933	Commander, Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet
1933-1936	Commandant, Pearl Harbor
1936-1939	Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet Retired from navy
1942	Promoted to admiral
1959, July 7	Died, Newport, R.I.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Harry Ervin Yarnell (1875-1959) span the period 1935-1939, when Yarnell was commander in chief of the Asiatic Fleet. The papers consist of correspondence, memoranda, writings, notes, cables, printed matter, and miscellaneous material arranged in three series: [Personal Correspondence](#), [Official Correspondence](#), and [Miscellany](#). The arrangement of the files largely reflects the organization of the collection when it arrived at the Library of Congress.

The [Personal Correspondence](#) series is organized in three groups. The first, correspondence to and from Yarnell's family and friends, reflects Yarnell's personal and professional life between 1936 and 1939. The second, special correspondence with Admiral William D. Leahy, consists of an exchange of unofficial letters on Far Eastern matters as well as general observations on the United States Navy's policy and administration during that period. The third group, correspondence between Yarnell and various associates, businessmen, and officials, concerns the Far East and Yarnell's interests, contacts, and organizational commitments during his tour of duty.

The [Official Correspondence](#) series reflects the actions and military policy of the United States during the hostilities between China and Japan, 1936-1939. Included in the correspondence are cables and memoranda from Department of State and War Department officials guiding Yarnell's relations with China and Japan. Orders and communications for removing American citizens from areas of hostility in China are extensive. Reports to and from United States vessels concerning the general situation and military actions are found in the war dispatches. The daily movements, conditions, and operations of Japanese and Chinese troops fighting on mainland China in 1937 and 1938 are located in the intelligence reports (with maps), which were compiled by intelligence officers at Headquarters, Fourth U.S. Marines, Shanghai, China. Correspondence pertaining to the specific subjects of the Japanese blockade and the situation at Kiukiang make up the final group in the official correspondence.

The [Miscellany](#) series consists of pamphlets and articles pertaining to the Far East in the 1930s. Also included is a scrapbook of clippings and military and official calling cards received by Yarnell. A significant item in this series is an unpublished report written in 1938 by Captain William A. Angwin entitled "The China Incident." Angwin, who served on the staff of the Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, provides a firsthand account of events that occurred during the initial six-month period of Sino-Japanese hostilities, including an account of the sinking of the U.S.S. *Panay*, Dec. 12, 1937. The report has been illustrated with photographs.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Personal Correspondence, 1936-1939](#)
- [Official Correspondence, 1937-1939](#)
- [Miscellany, 1935-1939](#)

## Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-5	<p><b><u>Personal Correspondence, 1936-1939</u></b></p> <p>Personal letters received and letters sent.</p> <p>Organized in three files: general correspondence, special correspondence with William D. Leahy, and personal correspondence relating to the Far East. The latter two files include indexes. Each file is arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 6-13	<p><b><u>Official Correspondence, 1937-1939</u></b></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent as well as cables and related matter such as memoranda, reports, maps and other material.</p> <p>Organized in four groups: war file, intelligence reports, war dispatches, and special correspondence-topical. Arranged chronologically within the groups, except the special correspondence-topical file, which is organized by topic and then chronologically. The intelligence reports consist of copies of reports and maps from Headquarters, Fourth U.S. Marines, Shanghai, China. The war file and war dispatches file also contain indexes.</p>
BOX 13-14	<p><b><u>Miscellany, 1935-1939</u></b></p> <p>Typescript of an unpublished report on the "China Incident," clippings scrapbook, calling cards, and printed matter pertaining to the Far East.</p> <p>Arranged by type of material.</p>

# Container List

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>BOX 1-5</b>	<b>Personal Correspondence, 1936-1939</b> Personal letters received and letters sent. Organized in three files: general correspondence, special correspondence with William D. Leahy, and personal correspondence relating to the Far East. The latter two files include indexes. Each file is arranged chronologically.
<b>BOX 1</b>	General
<b>BOX 1</b>	1936, May-1938, Jan.
<b>BOX 2</b>	1938, Feb.-Dec.
<b>BOX 3</b>	1939, Jan.-July
<b>BOX 3</b>	Special: William D. Leahy
<b>BOX 3</b>	Index
<b>BOX 3</b>	1936, Oct. 12-1939, May 11
<b>BOX 4</b>	Personal: Far East
<b>BOX 4</b>	Index
<b>BOX 4</b>	1936, Nov.-1938, Jan.
<b>BOX 5</b>	1938, Jan.-1939, Mar.
<b>BOX 6-13</b>	<b>Official Correspondence, 1937-1939</b> Letters received and copies of letters sent as well as cables and related matter such as memoranda, reports, maps and other material. Organized in four groups: war file, intelligence reports, war dispatches, and special correspondence-topical. Arranged chronologically within the groups, except the special correspondence-topical file, which is organized by topic and then chronologically. The intelligence reports consist of copies of reports and maps from Headquarters, Fourth U.S. Marines, Shanghai, China. The war file and war dispatches file also contain indexes.
<b>BOX 6</b>	War file
<b>BOX 6</b>	Index, 1937, Aug. 15-Sept. 5
<b>BOX 6</b>	1937, Aug. 15-Sept. 5
<b>BOX 6</b>	Index, 1937, Sept. 4-23
<b>BOX 6</b>	1937, Sept. 4-23
<b>BOX 7</b>	Index, 1937, Sept. 24-Oct. 20
<b>BOX 7</b>	1937, Sept. 24-Oct. 20
<b>BOX 7</b>	Index, 1937, Oct. 21-Nov. 26
<b>BOX 7</b>	1937, Oct. 21-Nov. 26
<b>BOX 8</b>	Index, 1937, Nov. 26-Dec. 28
<b>BOX 8</b>	1937, Nov. 26-Dec. 28
<b>BOX 8</b>	Index, 1937, Dec. 27-1938, Feb. 23
<b>BOX 8</b>	1937, Dec. 27-1938, Feb. 23
<b>BOX 9</b>	Index, 1938, Feb. 8-Aug. 11
<b>BOX 9</b>	1938, Feb. 8-Aug. 11
<b>BOX 9</b>	Index, 1938, Aug. 17-1939, May 5

## Official Correspondence, 1937-1939

Container	Contents
BOX 9	1938, Aug. 17-1939, May 5
BOX 10	Intelligence reports
BOX 10	1937, July-1938, Mar.
BOX 11	1938, Apr.-1939, Apr.
BOX 12	War dispatches
BOX 12	Index, 1937, July 9-Aug. 25
BOX 12	1937, July 9-Aug. 25
BOX 12	Index, 1937, Aug. 24-Oct. 8
BOX 12	1937, Aug. 24-Oct. 8
BOX 12	Index, 1937, Oct. 8-1939, Mar. 9
BOX 12	1937, Oct. 8-1939, Mar. 9
BOX 12	Index, 1938, Mar. 10-Oct. 15
BOX 12	1938, Mar. 10-Oct. 15
BOX 13	Special-topical
BOX 13	Japanese blockade, 1937, Aug.-1938, May (4 folders)
BOX 13	Situation at Kiukiang, 1938
BOX 13	Letters (4 folders)
BOX 13	Messages
BOX 13-14	<b>Miscellany, 1935-1939</b> Typescript of an unpublished report on the "China Incident," clippings scrapbook, calling cards, and printed matter pertaining to the Far East. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 13	"The China Incident," by William A. Angwin, 1938
BOX 13	Scrapbook of clippings, 1937-1939
BOX 13	Calling cards, 1936-1939 (2 folders)
BOX 14	Printed matter, 1935-1939