William Smith Culbertson 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://lccn.loc.gov/mm79017392

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012146

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

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

Collection Summary

Title: William Smith Culbertson Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1897-1965
ID No.: MSS17392
Creator: Culbertson, William Smith
Extent: 55,000 items
Extent: 194 containers plus 2 classified
Extent: 78 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79017392
Summary: Diplomat, lawyer and professor of law. Correspondence, diaries, lecture notes, government documents, writings, memoranda, and scrapbooks relating to Culbertson's career as vice chairman of the U.S. Tariff Commission, minister to Romania, ambassador to Chile, chief of the military intelligence service in the War Department, member of the Planning Group of the Office of Strategic Services, and other duties during World War II. Includes papers relating to his law career, lecturer as professor at Georgetown University, and church activities as a Presbyterian.

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
Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933--Correspondence.
Culbertson family--Correspondence.
Culbertson, William Smith, 1884-1966.
Emery, Henry Crosby, 1872-1924--Correspondence.
Finley, John H. (John Huston), 1863-1940--Correspondence.
Harding, Warren G. (Warren Gamaliel), 1865-1923--Correspondence.
Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964--Correspondence.
Hughes, Charles Evans, 1862-1948--Correspondence.
Hull, Cordell, 1871-1955--Correspondence.
Hurley, Edward N. (Edward Nash), 1864-1933--Correspondence.
Kent, Charles Foster, 1867-1925--Correspondence.
La Follette, Robert M. (Robert Marion), 1855-1925--Correspondence.
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.
Wells, H. G. (Herbert George), 1866-1946--Correspondence.
White, William Allen, 1868-1944--Correspondence.

Organizations
Georgetown University. School of Foreign Service.
United States Tariff Commission.
United States. Office of Strategic Services. Planning Group.
United States. Special Economic Mission to the Middle East.
United States. War Department. Military Intelligence Service. Geopolitical Section.

Subjects
Commercial policy.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Chile.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Romania.
Geopolitics.
Practice of law--Washington (D.C.)
Presbyterian Church--Washington (D.C.)
Presbyterian Church.

Tacna-Arica question.
Tariff.
Technology--Germany.
Universities and colleges--Washington (D.C.)
World War, 1939-1945--Middle East.
World War, 1939-1945--Political aspects.
World War, 1939-1945--Secret service--United States.
World War, 1939-1945--Technology.

Places
Chile--Boundaries--Peru.
Chile--Foreign relations--United States.
Peru--Boundaries--Chile.
Romania--Foreign relations--United States.
United States--Foreign relations--Chile.
United States--Foreign relations--Romania.

Occupations
Diplomats.
Educators.
Lawyers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of William Smith Culbertson, diplomat, lawyer, and professor of law, were given to the Library of Congress by Culbertson in 1958. Additions were made to the collection by Culbertson from 1961 to 1964 and by his wife, Mary J. Hunter Culbertson, in 1967.

Processing History

The papers of William Smith Culbertson were arranged and described in 1963. Additional material was processed by Allan Teichroew in 1981 and by Patrick Kerwin in 1994. The finding aid was revised in 2012. 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

In 1963, the Library published *William S. Culbertson, a Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress.*

Transfers

One phonographic disc has been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division where it is identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of William Smith Culbertson 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 William Smith Culbertson 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.

Security Classified Documents

Government regulations control the use of security classified items in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified material.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William Smith Culbertson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1884, Aug. 5	Born, Greensburg, Pa.
1907	A.B., College of Emporia, Emporia, Kans..
1908	A.B., Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1911	Ph.D., Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1911	Married Mary J. Hunter
1912	Admitted to bar of District of Columbia
1915	Admitted to bar of United States Supreme Court
1916-1917	Special counsel and member, board of review of Federal Trade Commission
1917-1925	Member and vice-chairman, United States Tariff Commission
1918	LL.D., College of Emporia, Emporia, Kans.
1919-1956	Professor and member of executive faculty, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
1925-1928	Minister to Romania
1928-1933	Ambassador to Chile
1931	LL.D., Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
1934	Practiced international and administrative law, Washington, D. C.
1942-1945	Colonel, United States Army
1944	Chairman, with rank of ambassador, U.S. Special mission to the Middle East
1953	Special mission as ambassador for the coronation of King Faisal II of Iraq
1955-1958	Member, board of directors, Benjamin Franklin Stiftung, Berlin, Germany

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Smith Culbertson (1884-1966) span the years 1897-1965 and consist mainly of diplomatic and other public documents, diaries, lecture notes, correspondence, memoranda, and manuscripts of his speeches, articles, and books, including a copy of his unpublished memoir "Ventures in Time and Space." The collection is organized into seven series: Diaries; Correspondence; Book, Article, and Speech File; Subject File; Miscellany; Addition; and Classified.

Included in the collection are papers relating to Culbertson's work as a member and vice chairman of the United States Tariff Commission, 1917-1925. He formulated the statute on the flexible tariff and wrote Section 317 of the same act, which gave legislative sanction to the principle of equality of treatment in commercial policy.

Bound volumes contain Culbertson's correspondence, personal memoranda, and official dispatches for the years when he was minister to Romania, 1925-1928, and ambassador to Chile, 1928-1933. While serving in the latter country, he was active in the settlement of the long-standing controversy between Chile and Peru over the province of Tacna and Arica.

Other papers relate to Culbertson's services in World War II as chief of the military intelligence service in the War Department, as a member of the Planning Group of the Office of Strategic Services, as chairman, with the rank of ambassador, of the Special Mission to the Middle East, and as a member of the technological mission to Germany in 1945.

There are lecture notes prepared during the years 1919-1956 when Culbertson was a professor at Georgetown University and from 1922 to 1924 when he was leader of the round-table conferences at the Institute of Politics at Williamstown, Massachusetts.

The papers include records of his early career as a lawyer, 1913-1915, and his later practice in administrative and international law. There are also manuscripts relating to his church activities, including his teaching of Bible classes and his extensive work in helping to establish a national Presbyterian church and center in Washington, D.C.

Prominent correspondents represented in the papers are Calvin Coolidge, Henry Crosby Emery, John H. Finley, Theodore Roosevelt, Warren G. Harding, Herbert Hoover, Cordell Hull, Charles Evans Hughes, Edward N. Hurley, Charles Foster Kent, Robert M. La Follette, H. G. Wells, and William Allen White. There are also numerous family letters and scrapbooks covering all phases of his career.

The Addition to the collection spans the years 1900-1965 and focuses on Culbertson's activities during World War II. Other files relate to his career before and after the war. The correspondence in the Addition consists primarily of letters between Culbertson and various international acquaintances in South America and Asia. Writings include speeches and articles as well as a typescript of "Ventures in Time and Space." The subject file in the Addition dates principally from World War II and contains reports and correspondence relating to the Analysis Section, previously known as the Geopolitical Section, of the War Department. Also highlighted is the Special Economic Mission to the Middle East in 1944 that Culbertson headed. Of particular interest is a journal he kept while on the mission. Miscellany in the Addition includes biographical data, genealogical material, printed matter, and appointment books for the years 1959-1964.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in seven series:

- Diaries, 1897-1958
- Correspondence, 1897-1960
- Book, Article, and Speech File
- Subject File
- Miscellany
- Addition, 1900-1965
- Classified, 1922-1953

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-6	**Diaries, 1897-1958** Diaries kept by Culbertson. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7-76	**Correspondence, 1897-1960**
BOX 7-43	**Unbound Correspondence, 1897-1960** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 44-76	**Bound Correspondence, 1915-1933** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 77-119	**Book, Article, and Speech File** Handwritten, typewritten, and printed copies of speeches and articles as well as manuscripts of Culbertson's major writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 120-137	**Subject File** Letters, memoranda, and printed matter. Grouped by subject and in general chronological order therein.
BOX 138-175	**Miscellany** Lecture notes, scrapbooks, appointment books, photographs, and printed matter. Grouped by type of material and arranged chronologically thereunder where possible.
BOX 176-194	**Addition, 1900-1965**
BOX 176-177	**Correspondence, 1942-1965** Letters sent and received by Culbertson with enclosed material. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 177-180	**Writings, 1906-1964** A typescript of Culbertson's unpublished autobiography and printed and near-print copies of his court and committee briefs, speeches, articles, and other writings. Arranged alphabetically by type of writing and chronologically therein.
BOX 180-183	**Subject File, 1916-1953** Correspondence, reports, lists, orders, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 183-194	**Miscellany, 1900-1965** Appointment books, biographical and genealogical data, and miscellaneous near-print, printed, and typescript material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

BOX CL 1-CL 2 **Classified, 1922-1953**

Correspondence, memoranda, cables, reports, and other material.

Organized and described according to the series and folder from which the material was withdrawn.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-6	**Diaries, 1897-1958** Diaries kept by Culbertson. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1897, 1900-1907
BOX 2	1907-1917 (1 vol.) 1907-1910
BOX 3	1911-1918
BOX 4	1918-1924
BOX 5	1924-1930, 1932-1933, 1936, 1947
BOX 6	1947, 1949-1954, 1957-1958
BOX 7-76	**Correspondence, 1897-1960**
BOX 7-43	**Unbound Correspondence, 1897-1960** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 7	1897, 1902-1903, 1906-1908
BOX 8	1908
BOX 9	1908-1910
BOX 10	1910-1912
BOX 11	1913-1915
BOX 12	1916-1924
BOX 13	1925-1933
BOX 14	1933-1934
BOX 15	1935-1936
BOX 16	1936-1937
BOX 17	1938
BOX 18	1938-1939
BOX 19	1939
BOX 20	1940
BOX 21	1941
BOX 22	1941-1942
BOX 23	1943
BOX 24	1943-1944
BOX 25	1944
BOX 26	1945
BOX 27	1945-1946
BOX 28	1946-1947
BOX 29	1947

Container	Contents
BOX 30	1948
BOX 31	1948-1949
BOX 32	1949-1950
BOX 33	1951
BOX 34	1951-1952
BOX 35	1952
BOX 36-37	1953
BOX 38	1954
BOX 39	1955
BOX 40	1955-1956
BOX 41	1957-1958
BOX 42	1958-1959
BOX 43	1960
BOX 44-76	**Bound Correspondence, 1915-1933** Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 44	1915-1916
BOX 45	1917-1920
BOX 46	1921
BOX 47	1922
BOX 48	1922-1928
BOX 49	1923
BOX 50	1923-1925
BOX 51	1925
BOX 52	1925-1927
BOX 53	1926
BOX 54	1927
BOX 55	1927-1928
BOX 56-57	1928
BOX 58-59	1928-1929
BOX 60-61	1929
BOX 62-65	1930
BOX 66-67	1930-1931
BOX 68	1931
BOX 69	1931-1932
BOX 70-73	1932
BOX 74-76	1933
BOX 77-119	**Book, Article, and Speech File** Handwritten, typewritten, and printed copies of speeches and articles as well as manuscripts of Culbertson's major writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 77-78	Book file *Latin America in Transition*

Container	Contents
BOX 78	*The Americas*
BOX 79	*Liberation*
BOX 80	*Trust Laws and Business*
BOX 81	*Trust Laws and Business*
BOX 82	*Trust Laws and Business*
	Awakening of Business
	Reciprocity
BOX 83	*Alexander Hamilton*
	The Making of Tariffs and Treaties
	The Tariff Problem
BOX 84-89	*The Tariff Problem*
BOX 90-91	*The Poverty of Nations*
BOX 92-96	"Ventures in Time and Space"
	Holograph
BOX 97-99	Typed
	Notes for books
	Romania and Chile
BOX 101-102	Chile
BOX 103-109	Articles
BOX 110-119	Speeches
BOX 120-137	**Subject File**
	Letters, memoranda, and printed matter.
	Grouped by subject and in general chronological order therein.
BOX 120-121	Chilean nitrate industry
BOX 122	Federal Trade Commission
BOX 123	Foreign Investment Association
BOX 124-126	The Great Church
BOX 127-128	Meat quarantine laws
BOX 129-130	Natural Resources Conference
BOX 131	Special Mission to the Middle East
BOX 132	Torquay Conference
BOX 133-137	United States Tariff Commission
BOX 138-175	**Miscellany**
	Lecture notes, scrapbooks, appointment books, photographs, and printed matter.
	Grouped by type of material and arranged chronologically thereunder where possible.
BOX 138	Lecture notes
	General
BOX 139-143	Taken at Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
BOX 144	Scrapbooks
	1898-1920
BOX 145	1918, 1926-1929
BOX 146	1929
BOX 147	1930-1931

Container	Contents
BOX 148	1932
BOX 149	1933-1936
BOX 150	1937-1939
BOX 151	1939-1942
BOX 152	1942-1945
BOX 153	Appointment books
	1900, 1909, 1925-1934
BOX 154	1935-1942
BOX 155	1945-1953
BOX 156	1954-1958
BOX 157-162	Photographs
BOX 163-173	General
BOX 174-175	Printed matter
BOX 176-194	**Addition, 1900-1965**
BOX 176-177	**Correspondence, 1942-1965**
	Letters sent and received by Culbertson with enclosed material.
	Arranged chronologically.
BOX 176	1942-1963
	(6 folders)
BOX 177	1964-1965, undated
	(2 folders)
BOX 177-180	**Writings, 1906-1964**
	A typescript of Culbertson's unpublished autobiography and printed and near-print copies of his court and committee briefs, speeches, articles, and other writings.
	Arranged alphabetically by type of writing and chronologically therein.
BOX 177	Book, "Ventures in Time and Space," 1962
	(5 folders)
BOX 178	(2 folders)
	Briefs
	Congressional and governmental committees
	Near print, 1938-1964
	Printed, 1913-1938
	(2 folders)
BOX 179	Court, 1913-1950
	(2 folders)
	Reports, 1942-1946
	(2 folders)
	Speeches and articles
	1906-1937
BOX 180	1938-1963, undated
	(3 folders)

Container	Contents
BOX 180-183	**Subject File, 1916-1953**
	Correspondence, reports, lists, orders, and other material.
	Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 180	Analysis Section, War Department General Staff
	Conference, 1942
	Memoranda, 1942-1943, undated
	(2 folders)
	Miscellaneous, 1943, undated
	Reports
	1943
	Jan.-Apr.
	(2 folders)
BOX 181	Apr.-Dec.
	(4 folders)
	Undated
	(2 folders)
	Campaign studies, 1942
	Chile, 1930
	Commission of Inquiry on National Policy in International Economic Relations, 1934
	Cuba, undated
BOX 182	Federal Trade Commission, 1916
	Foreign investment, 1922
	Foreign Trade Advisor's Office, 1921
	Japan, 1921, 1936
	Lima Conference, Lima, Peru, 1938, undated
	Middle East, 1952-1953
	Minerals
	Conference, 1943
	(4 folders)
	General, 1942-1943, undated
BOX 183	Miscellaneous, 1923-1946
	Panama, 1931-1941
	Planning Group, Office of Strategic Services, 1943-1944
	Shipping, 1950
	Special mission to the Middle East
	Correspondence, 1944-1945
	Journal, 1944
	Reports, 1943-1945, undated
	World War II, chronology, 1942
BOX 183-194	**Miscellany, 1900-1965**
	Appointment books, biographical and genealogical data, and miscellaneous near-print, printed, and typescript material.
	Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.
BOX 183	Appointment books

Container	Contents
	1959-1962
	(4 vols.)
BOX 184	1963-1964
	(2 vols.)
	Biographical material, 1941-1964, undated
	Financial papers, 1961-1964, undated
	Genealogical material, circa 1900-1960
	(2 folders)
BOX 185	Greeting cards, 1961-1964, undated
	Memoranda, lists, extracts, etc., 1938, 1955-1963, undated
	Passports and health certificates, 1949-1961
	Photographs, 1928-1933, 1961-1964, undated
	(3 folders)
BOX 186	Printed and near-print material
	Bar and law associations, 1934-1964
	Calling cards, membership cards, programs, invitations, etc., 1908-1964, undated
	Capitol Hill Club, Washington, D.C., 1961-1964
	Presbyterian Church, 1958-1965
	Miscellaneous and unarranged, 1908-1964, undated
	(2 folders)
BOX 187	(unfoldered pamphlets)
BOX 188	(unfoldered pamphlets)
BOX 189	(5 folders)
BOX 190	(6 folders)
BOX 191	(8 folders)
BOX 192	(7 folders)
BOX 193	(8 folders)
BOX 194	(3 folders and 2 vols)
BOX CL 1-CL 2	**Classified, 1922-1953**
	Correspondence, memoranda, cables, reports, and other material.
	Organized and described according to the series and folder from which the material was withdrawn.
BOX CL 1	Correspondence, 1943-1945
	Subject File
	Analysis Section, War Department General Staff, reports, 1943
	Chile, 1930
	Cuba, undated
	Foreign investment, 1922
	Lima Conference, Lima, Peru, 1938, undated
	Middle East, 1952-1953
	Minerals, General, undated
	Miscellaneous, 1943-1944
	Planning Group, office of Strategic Services, 1943-1944, undated
	(2 folders)
	Shipping, 1950
	Special Mission to the Middle East

Container	Contents
	Correspondence, 1944-1945
BOX CL 2	Reports, 1943-1945, undated
	(7 folders)