

Richmond Pearson Hobson Papers

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Prepared by Bradley E. Gernand with the assistance of Patrick Kerwin

Collection Summary

Title: Richmond Pearson Hobson Papers

Span Dates: 1889-1966

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1890-1937)

ID No.: MSS26153

Creator: Hobson, Richmond Pearson, 1870-1973

Extent: 27,300 items ; 78 containers plus 1 oversize ; 31.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Naval officer and United States representative from Alabama. Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, lectures, articles, reports, notes, analyses, naval orders, press clippings, photographs, and other papers relating chiefly to Hobson's naval career and to his efforts on behalf of prohibition, restrictions on international drug trafficking, and opposition to the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Cervera y Topete, Pascual, 1839-1909--Correspondence.

Chadwick, French Ensor, 1844-1919--Correspondence.

Hobson family--Correspondence.

Hobson, Grizelda Hull--Correspondence.

Hobson, Richmond Pearson, 1870-1937.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945.

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.

Tesla, Nikola, 1856-1943--Correspondence.

Organizations

Alcohol Education Society of America.

American Public Welfare Association.

Anti-saloon League of America.

Constitutional Democracy Association.

International Narcotic Education Association.

Lusitania (Steamship)

Public Welfare Association.

United States Naval Academy.

United States. National Prohibition Act.

United States. Navy--Equipment.

United States. Navy. Pacific Fleet.

United States. Supreme Court.

Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

World Narcotic Defense Association.

Subjects

Battleships--United States.

Depressions--1929--United States.

Drug traffic.

Narcotics.

Naval architecture.

Navy-yards and naval stations--China.

Navy-yards and naval stations--Great Britain.

Navy-yards and naval stations--Japan.

Prohibition--United States.
Shipbuilding.
Spanish-American War, 1898--Naval operations--Cuba.
Spanish-American War, 1898--Naval operations--Philippines.
Temperance--United States--Societies, etc.
Women--Suffrage--United States.
World War, 1914-1918--Prophecies.
World War, 1939-1945--Prophecies.

Places

United States--Economic conditions--1918-1945.
United States--History, Naval.
United States--Politics and government--1933-1945.

Occupations

Naval officers.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Alabama.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Richmond P. Hobson, naval officer and U.S. representative from Alabama, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Grizelda Hull Hobson, and the World Narcotic Defense Association and Constitutional Democracy Association, through Mrs. Hobson, in 1939-1940 and 1944. A smaller addition was received from Hobson's daughter, Mrs. W. E. D. Stokes, Jr., in 1986.

Processing History

The Hobson Papers were processed in 1996. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

Transfers

Some broadsides have been transferred to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library, where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Richmond Pearson Hobson 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 Richmond Pearson Hobson 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, Richmond Pearson Hobson Pearson, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1870, Aug. 17	Born, Greensboro, Ala.

1889 Graduate, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

1889-1990 Midshipman cruise aboard *Chicago* with White Squadron, Mediterranean Sea and South Atlantic ocean

1890-1991 Student, École d'Application du Génie Maritime, Paris, France

1891 Resigned as naval cadet
Appointed assistant naval constructor, United States Navy

1893 Temporary duty, American embassy, London, England

1894 Published "A Summary of the Situation and Outlook in Europe: An Introduction to the Study of Coming War," *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute* (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute. 62 pp.)

1894-1995 Assistant naval constructor, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.

1895 Commissioned as officer, United States Navy

1895-1996 Assigned to New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.

1896 Member of international commission supervising sea trials of Mexican naval despatch vessel *Donato Guerra*

1896-1997 Supervised construction of warships, Newport News, Va.

1897-1998 Organized and taught postgraduate fleet construction course, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

1898 M.S., Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Pa.
Assigned to North Atlantic Squadron to research stability and firing systems of ships in action, Key West, Fla.; later reported aboard flagship *New York*
Sunk the collier *Merrimac* in Santiago harbor; captured and imprisoned in Spanish fortress, Santiago, Cuba
Promoted to position of naval constructor as acknowledgment for heroism in sinking *Merrimac*

1898-1900 Assigned to Asiatic Station at Hong Kong to refloat and refit Spanish warships *Isla de Cuba*, *Isla de Luzon*, and *Don Juan de Austria*

1899 Published *The Sinking of the Merrimac* (New York: The Century Co. 306 pp.)

1900 Directed ship reconstruction, Cavite Navy Yard, Philippine Islands
Led preliminary reconnaissance and survey of Olongapo (later Subic Bay) naval base, Philippine Islands
Received medical treatment, Yokohama, Japan, and returned to United States on medical leave

1901 Promoted to captain, United States Navy
Assigned to Navy Department, Washington, D.C.
Directed United States naval exhibit, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, N.Y.

- 1901-1902 Directed United States government exhibit, South Carolina, Interstate and West Indian Exposition, Charleston, S.C.
- 1902-1903 Superintended naval construction, Crescent Shipyard, Elizabeth, N.J.
- 1903 Assigned to Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Wash.; resigned from United States Navy
- 1904 Appointed presidential elector-at-large, Alabama
- 1904-1905 Lectured on national chatauqua circuit
- 1905 Married Grizelda Houston Hull
- 1906 LL.D, Southern University, Greensboro, Ala.
- 1907 Published *Buck Jones at Annapolis* (New York: D. Appleton & Co. 370 pp.)
- 1907-1915 Member of Congress from sixth district of Alabama
- 1908 Published *An Appeal to the President of the United States for the Retention of the Fleet and for an Adequate Defense in the Pacific Ocean* (Washington: [publisher unknown]. 16 pp.)
- 1910 Published *In Line of Duty* (New York: D. Appleton & Co. 365 pp.)
Introduced congressional resolution which developed into Eighteenth Amendment to United States Constitution
- 1911 Delivered prohibition speech before Congress, "Alcohol, the Great Destroyer"
- 1913 Campaigned unsuccessfully for election to Senate from Alabama
- 1915 Published *An Adequate Navy and the Open-Door Policy* (Washington: [publisher unknown.] 30 pp.)
- 1919 Published *Alcohol and the Human Race* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. 205 pp.)
- 1921-1937 Organized and led American Alcohol Education Association
- 1923-1937 Organized and led International Narcotic Education Association
- 1926 Organized and led World Conference on Narcotic Education, Philadelphia, Pa.
- 1927-1937 Organized and led World Narcotic Defense Association
- 1933 Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor
- 1934 Appointed rear admiral, United States Navy, retired, by act of Congress
- 1935-1937 Organized and led Constitutional Democracy Association
- 1936 Proposed the founding of Institution of Social Advancement

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Richmond Pearson Hobson (1870-1937) span the years 1889-1966, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the years 1890-1937. Hobson's career is noted for his naval operation against the Spanish during the Spanish-American War; proficiency in naval design and construction; his activism in the campaign to enact a prohibition amendment to the United States Constitution, both as member of Congress and afterward; and his efforts to restrict the availability and use of recreational narcotics. All of these facets of Hobson's life are chronicled in these papers. Hobson is also noted for predicting a global war among European powers, ten years before it began in 1914, and between Japan and the United States, thirty years before Pearl Harbor. Hobson's papers contain his analyses and correspondence regarding both conflicts. The collection consists of six series: [Family Papers](#), [Navy File](#), [Congressional File](#), [Organizations File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

Hobson and his wife, Grizelda, wrote frequently to one another during times of separation. Hobson also corresponded with other members of his family, including his brother, sisters, and mother. The [Family Papers](#) contain information regarding both professional and personal endeavors related to subjects also documented in other series in the collection.

The [United States Navy](#) series includes files regarding a congressional bill to retire him as admiral and his service in the Spanish-American War. His papers record his inspections of the battle fleet under wartime conditions, his attempts to sink the *Merrimac* in a Cuban harbor and bottleneck an opposing fleet, and his efforts to refloat and refit ruined Spanish warships near Cuba and the Philippine Islands. Hobson believed the United States needed to secure naval facilities in the Far East, and his visits to Chinese, Japanese, and British colonial yards produced detailed descriptions of each area. He also was the first to report on the small Spanish Philippine station at Olongapo on Subic Bay, later developed as an American base. Included are accounts of the Mexican warship *Donato Guerra* and correspondence with French E. Chadwick, Nikola Tesla, the crew of the *Merrimac*, Naval Academy classmates and shipmates, and Pascual Cervera y Topete, the Spanish admiral who captured Hobson at Cuba. Lecture notes and correspondence regarding the first ship construction course at the United States Naval Academy, organized and taught by Hobson but canceled because of faculty opposition, are also included.

The [Congressional File](#) documents Hobson's career as a member of Congress from Alabama and his efforts to enact a prohibition amendment to the Constitution. Correspondents include leaders of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Anti-Saloon League of America (which he later joined as traveling orator), and other anti-alcohol movements. It also features his work to enlarge the American fleet, fund an aggressive battleship construction program, and establish a permanent fleet in the Pacific Ocean. His distrust of Japanese intentions, which he believed were rooted in aggressive imperialism, spurred his interest in a permanent Pacific fleet, and many of his speeches and correspondence are devoted to the subject. Of particular note is a series of exchanges between Hobson and Theodore Roosevelt in which the two debated issues related to Japan. Hobson also headed a congressional panel investigating alleged police brutality during a 1913 national suffragette march in Washington, and the Congressional File contains correspondence and reports from participants.

The [Organizations File](#) contains the records of several associations as well as of the 1936 [New York Olympic Committee](#). These organizations, with exception of the Olympic committee, operated more or less concurrently from the same offices with shared officers, and the administrative files of the three overlap. Hobson remained interested in prohibition after leaving Congress. He traveled on behalf of the [Anti-Saloon League of America](#) until passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, after which he worked to restrict narcotic use. He established and directed the [Alcohol Education Society of America](#), the [International Narcotic Education Association](#), and the [World Narcotic Defense Association](#) to educate Americans regarding drugs and to lobby state, national, and international legislatures to eliminate the drug trade. He organized an international convention during which he was received privately by the pope and secured worldwide agreement limiting the drug trade. Afterward Hobson, believing patriotism to be waning, founded the [Public Welfare Association](#) to campaign for greater love of country. He also organized the [Constitutional Democracy Association](#), which worked to defeat Franklin D. Roosevelt's attempt to enlarge the United States Supreme Court, and he campaigned with Hubert W. Eldred to establish a national Veterans Reserve Corps, ideological forebear of the contemporary military reserve system. After Hobson's death in 1937, these organizations disbanded.

Papers that are personal in nature are grouped in the [Miscellany File](#). Included are correspondence, memoranda, newspaper clippings, photographs, and reports regarding Hobson's life and death, a plan of George Huntington Hull, Jr., to spark industrial recovery during the Great Depression, the sinking of the British passenger liner *Lusitania*, prohibition, Theodore Roosevelt, and World War I.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series :

- [Family Papers, 1898-1966](#)
- [Navy File, 1886-1942](#)
- [Congressional File, 1900-1938](#)
- [Organizations File, 1909-1939](#)
- [Miscellany, 1889-1944](#)
- [Oversize, circa 1898-circa 1934](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-16	<u>Family Papers, 1898-1966</u> Correspondence and cables between Hobson and his wife, children, siblings, parents, and other relatives. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 17-27	<u>Navy File, 1886-1942</u> Articles, books, correspondence and cables, memoranda, notes, orders, papers, photographs, press clippings, reports, and speeches. Organized alphabetically by name of person, subject, or type of material and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 28-38	<u>Congressional File, 1900-1938</u> Articles, books, correspondence, memoranda, photographs, press clippings, printed matter, reports, speeches, and writings. Arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 39-70	<u>Organizations File, 1909-1939</u>
BOX 39	<u>Alcohol Education Association of America, 1919-1922</u> Correspondence and reports. Arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 39-45	<u>Anti-Saloon League of America, 1909-1927</u> Correspondence and reports. Arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 45-55	<u>Constitutional Democracy Association, 1934-1938</u> Correspondence, press clippings, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically.
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BOX 62-71	<u>World Narcotic Defense Association, 1928-1939</u> Correspondence, press clippings, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically.

BOX 72-78

Miscellany, 1889-1944

Correspondence and cables, memoranda, notes, photographs, press clippings, and reports.
Organized alphabetically by name of person, subject, or type of material and thereunder
chronologically.

BOX OV 1

Oversize, circa 1898-circa 1934

Oversize material consisting mostly of charts, ship schematics, and panoramic photographs.
Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were
removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX 3	22 Apr.-31 Oct. 1905 (9 folders)
BOX 4	1 Nov. 1905-28 Feb. 1906 (9 folders)
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BOX 17-27	Navy File, 1886-1942 Articles, books, correspondence and cables, memoranda, notes, orders, papers, photographs, press clippings, reports, and speeches. Organized alphabetically by name of person, subject, or type of material and thereunder chronologically.

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Miscellany, 1889-1944

Container

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Oversize, circa 1898-circa 1934

Oversize material consisting mostly of charts, ship schematics, and panoramic photographs. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

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Economic recovery plan

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