

William Jennings Bryan Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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Washington, D.C.**

2006

Revised 2010 April

Contact information:

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

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms006014>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lccn.loc.gov/mm75014217>

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Revised and expanded by Brian McGuire

Collection Summary

Title: William Jennings Bryan Papers

Span Dates: 1877-1940

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1896-1925)

ID No.: MSS14217

Creator: Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925

Extent: 18,000 items ; 59 containers and 7 oversize ; 24.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Author, lawyer, orator, United States representative from Nebraska, and secretary of state. Correspondence, military papers and other material relating mainly to the presidential campaign of 1896, the Spanish-American War, Bryan's efforts to preserve world peace during World War I, his career as a lecturer for the Chautauqua Institution and its affiliates, and his interest in prohibition, political and monetary reform, and religious issues.

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

Baker, Newton Diehl, 1871-1937--Correspondence.
Baruch, Bernard M. (Bernard Mannes), 1870-1965--Correspondence.
Bernstorff, Johann Heinrich, Graf von, 1862-1939--Correspondence.
Bok, Edward William, 1863-1930--Correspondence.
Booth, Evangeline, 1865-1950--Correspondence.
Borah, William Edgar, 1865-1940--Correspondence.
Bryan, C. W. (Charles Walter), 1863- --Correspondence.
Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925.
Burlison, Albert Sidney, 1863-1937--Correspondence.
Carnegie, Andrew, 1835-1919--Correspondence.
Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933--Correspondence.
Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948--Correspondence.
Fuller, Paul, -1947--Correspondence.
Glynn, Martin Henry, 1871-1924--Correspondence.
Hargreaves, Grace Bryan.
Hitchcock, Gilbert M. (Gilbert Monell), 1859-1934--Correspondence.
Hull, Cordell, 1871-1955--Correspondence.
Jones, Oliver Morton, 1867- --Correspondence.
Jordan, David Starr, 1851-1931--Correspondence.
Kellogg, Frank B. (Frank Billings), 1856-1937--Correspondence.
Kirchwey, George W. (George Washington), 1855-1942--Correspondence.
Kitchin, Claude, 1869-1923--Correspondence.
La Follette, Robert M. (Robert Marion), 1855-1925--Correspondence.
Lansing, Robert, 1864-1928--Correspondence.
Lind, John, 1854-1930--Correspondence.
Lloyd George, David, 1863-1945--Correspondence.
Long, Boaz Walton, 1876-1962--Correspondence.
McAdoo, W. G. (William Gibbs), 1863-1941--Correspondence.
McCormick, Vance Criswell, 1872-1946--Correspondence.
McPherson, Aimee Semple, 1890-1944--Correspondence.
Morris, George William, 1861-1944--Correspondence.
Mott, John R. (John Raleigh), 1865-1955--Correspondence.
Overman, Lee S. (Lee Slater), 1854-1930--Correspondence.

Peabody, George Foster, 1852-1938--Correspondence.
Robins, Raymond, 1873-1954--Correspondence.
Scott, James Brown, 1866-1943--Correspondence.
Sheldon, Charles Monroe, 1857-1946--Correspondence.
Sheppard, Morris, 1875-1941--Correspondence.
Spring Rice, Cecil, Sir, 1859-1918--Correspondence.
Sunday, Billy, 1862-1935--Correspondence.
Thompson, Huston--Correspondence.
White, William Allen, 1868-1944--Correspondence.
Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

Organizations

Chautauqua Institution.
United States. Department of State.

Subjects

Monetary policy--United States.
Peace.
Presidents--United States--Election--1896.
Prohibition.
Religion.

Places

Nebraska--Politics and government.
United States--Politics and government--1865-1933.

Occupations

Authors.
Cabinet officers.
Lecturers.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Nebraska.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of William Jennings Bryan, secretary of state, presidential candidate, congressman, author, and lecturer, were deposited in the Library of Congress by his wife, Mary Baird Bryan, from 1926 to 1929. Other members of the family donated additional papers, 1929-1945, and in 1942 converted the deposit to a gift. Another group of Bryan's papers, consisting chiefly of his correspondence with Woodrow Wilson, was purchased, 1970-1974. One item was transferred from the Copyright Office in 1982, and another was received by gift from Ralph L. Miller in 1985.

Processing History

The Bryan Papers were processed in 1975 and 1979 and expanded in 1999. The finding aid was revised in 2006.

Transfers

Phonograph records of lectures and readings by William Jennings Bryan and others have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, where they are identified as part of this collection.

Related Material

Repositories other than the Library of Congress that have collections relating to William Jennings Bryan include Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, and the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Jennings Bryan 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, William Jennings Bryan Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1860, Mar. 19	Born, Salem, Ill.
1881	A.B., Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill.
1883	LL.B., Union College of Law, Chicago, Ill. Admitted to the Illinois bar
1883-1887	Practiced law, Jacksonville, Ill.
1884	Married Mary Elizabeth Baird A.M., Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill.
1887-1891	Practiced law, Lincoln, Neb.
1891-1895	Member, U.S. House of Representatives
1894	Unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate
1894-1896	Editor, <i>Omaha World Herald</i>
1896	Wrote the "silver plank" in the party platform at the Democratic national convention, Chicago, Ill. Nominated for president by the Democratic Party
1897-1925	Lectured primarily for Chautauqua and its affiliates on political, governmental, and religious issues
1898	Organized and commanded the Third Regiment, Nebraska Volunteer Infantry
1900	Nominated for president by the Democratic Party
1901	Established <i>The Commoner</i> , Lincoln, Neb.
1908	Nominated for president by the Democratic Party
1913-1915	Secretary of state

1925, July 26

Died after the Scopes trial, Dayton, Tenn.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) span the years 1877-1940, with nearly one-third relating to the presidential campaign of 1896 and the greater part of the remainder dated between 1913 and 1925. The collection consists of the following series: [General Correspondence](#); [Special Correspondence](#); [Subject File, Speech, Article, and Report File](#); [Miscellany](#); [Biographer's Papers](#); and an [Addition](#).

The correspondence for 1896 and early 1897 relates to public opinion and reaction to Bryan's nomination and campaign. Other items in the [General Correspondence](#) reflect his support of the Spanish-American War, his efforts to preserve world peace before the American entry into World War I, his career as a lecturer sponsored primarily by Chautauqua and its affiliates, and his interest in prohibition, political and monetary reform, and religious issues.

The [Special Correspondence](#) contains three volumes of letterbooks, 1883-1891, two volumes of carbon copies consisting largely of outgoing correspondence encompassing Bryan's two years as secretary of state, 1913-1915, and namesake and children's letters. The [Subject File](#) includes muster rolls and discharge documents from the Spanish-American War as well as material pertaining to the Panama Canal and the evolution trial of John Thomas Scopes in Dayton, Tennessee.

[Miscellaneous](#) material, scrapbooks, cartoons, a travel album, and newspaper clippings on Bryan's death, together with addresses, reports, editorials, printed matter, memorabilia, photographs, and an unpublished biography prepared by Bryan's daughter, Grace Bryan Hargreaves, complete the collection.

Most prominent among Bryan's many correspondents is Woodrow Wilson. The Wilson-Bryan correspondence is contained chiefly in the [Addition](#) series, but there are also letters between the two men in the [General Correspondence](#) and copies of letters in the State Department exchanges of the [Special Correspondence](#). Other correspondents include Newton D. Baker, Bernard M. Baruch, Count Johann von Bernstorff, Edward Bok, Evangeline Booth, William E. Borah, Charles W. Bryan, Albert S. Burlinson, Andrew Carnegie, Calvin Coolidge, Josephus Daniels, Paul Fuller, Martin H. Glynn, Gilbert M. Hitchcock, Cordell Hull, Ollie M. James, David Starr Jordan, Frank B. Kellogg, George W. Kirchwey, Claude Kitchin, Robert M. La Follette (1855-1925), Robert Lansing, John Lind, David Lloyd George, Boaz Long, William G. McAdoo, Vance McCormick, Aimee Semple McPherson, John R. Mott, George W. Norris, Lee S. Overman, George Foster Peabody, Raymond Robins, James Brown Scott, Charles M. Sheldon, Morris Sheppard, Sir Cecil A. Spring-Rice, Billy Sunday, Huston Thompson, and William Allen White.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in eight series:

- [General Correspondence, 1879-1931](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1883-1915](#)
- [Subject File, 1898-1925](#)
- [Speech, Article, and Report File, 1877-1940](#)
- [Miscellany, circa 1877-1925](#)
- [Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934](#)
- [Addition, 1913-1921](#)
- [Oversize, 1905-1925](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-41	<u>General Correspondence, 1879-1931</u> Letters sent and received, including letters received by Bryan's family. Arranged chronologically and alphabetically therein by name of correspondent.
BOX 42-45	<u>Special Correspondence, 1883-1915</u> Children's letters, letters from namesakes, letterbooks, and carbons of State Department correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence.
BOX 46-48	<u>Subject File, 1898-1925</u> Correspondence, statements, muster rolls, military discharges, memoranda, and copies of documents. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 49-50	<u>Speech, Article, and Report File, 1877-1940</u> Handwritten, typewritten, or printed editorials, speeches, articles, statements, and reports by and about Bryan. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 51-56	<u>Miscellany, circa 1877-1925</u> Reports, essays, addresses, poetry by others, a drawing and blueprint, receipts, office receipt book with campaign expenses for 1890, memorabilia, photographs, miscellaneous printed matter, and scrapbooks of cartoons, clippings, photographs, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 57-58	<u>Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934</u> Correspondence of Grace Bryan Hargreaves and the typescript of her unpublished biography of Bryan. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 59	<u>Addition, 1913-1921</u> Letters between Bryan and Woodrow Wilson, including correspondence referred by Bryan. Included also is one letter to B. L. Miller discussing Bryan's views on creationism.
BOX OV 1-OV 7	<u>Oversize, 1905-1925</u> Oversize items arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which they were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-41	General Correspondence, 1879-1931 Letters sent and received, including letters received by Bryan's family. Arranged chronologically and alphabetically therein by name of correspondent.
BOX 1	1879, 1 Aug.-1890, 31 July
BOX 2	1890, 1 Aug.-1893, 28 Feb.
BOX 3	1893, 1 Mar.-1896, 30 Apr.
BOX 4	1896 1 May-30 Oct.
BOX 5	31 Oct.-3 Nov.
BOX 6	4 Nov.
BOX 7	5 Nov. 6 Nov. A-B
BOX 8	C-Q
BOX 9	R-Z 7 Nov. A-H
BOX 10	I-Z 8 Nov. A-D
BOX 11	E-Z 9 Nov. A-H
BOX 12	I-W 10 Nov. A-J
BOX 13	K-W 11 Nov.
BOX 14	12-13 Nov.
BOX 15	14-16 Nov.
BOX 16	17-30 Nov.
BOX 17	1-31 Dec., undated
BOX 18	1897 1 Jan.-31 Mar.
BOX 19	1 Apr.-30 June
BOX 20	1897, 1 July-1898, 16 May
BOX 21	1898, 17 May-June
BOX 22	1898, 2 July-1899, 29 Apr.
BOX 23	1899, 1 May-30 Dec.
BOX 24	1900 1 Jan.-16 July

General Correspondence, 1879-1931

Container

Contents

BOX 25	17 July-12 Nov.
BOX 26	1900, 13 Nov.-1901, 31 May
BOX 27	1901, 1 June-1908, 9 Nov.
BOX 28	1908, 10 Nov.-1912, 31 Dec.
BOX 29	1913, 1 Jan.-1914, 30 Apr.
BOX 30	1914, 1 May-1915, 31 Dec.
BOX 31	1916, 1 Jan.-1917, 31 Dec.
BOX 32	1918, 1 Jan.-1919, 31 Dec.
BOX 33	1920, 1 Jan.-1921, 31 Mar.
BOX 34	1921, 1 Apr.-31 Dec.
BOX 35	1922, 1 Jan.-31 Aug.
BOX 36	1922, 1 Sept. -1923, 28 Feb.
BOX 37	1923 1 Mar.-30 June
BOX 38	1 July-31 Dec.
BOX 39	1924, 1 Jan.-24 June
BOX 40	1924, 25 June-1931, 30 June
BOX 41	Undated
BOX 42-45	Special Correspondence, 1883-1915 Children's letters, letters from namesakes, letterbooks, and carbons of State Department correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence.
BOX 42	Children's letters, 1896 General letterbooks 1883-1886 (2 vols.)
BOX 43	1891 Letters from namesakes 1896-1898
BOX 44	1896-1898
BOX 45	State Department letterbooks, 1913-1915 (2 vols.)
BOX 46-48	Subject File, 1898-1925 Correspondence, statements, muster rolls, military discharges, memoranda, and copies of documents. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 46	Bennett, Philo S., case regarding will Correspondence, 1900-1905 Miscellany, n.d Probate certificates, trial pleadings and transcripts 1903
BOX 47	1904-1905 Democratic convention material, 1904-1908 Panama Canal, 1904, 1921

Subject File, 1898-1925

Container

Contents

- Scopes, John Thomas, evolution trial, Dayton, Tenn., 1925
Correspondence
Miscellany
- BOX 48** Spanish-American War, Nebraska Volunteers
Discharge lists, 1898, undated
Discharge requests and approvals, 1898
By commanding officer
By soldier
Muster rolls, 1898
- BOX 49-50** **Speech, Article, and Report File, 1877-1940**
Handwritten, typewritten, or printed editorials, speeches, articles, statements, and reports by and about Bryan.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.
- BOX 49** Editorials, *The Commoner*, 1901-1923, undated
Reports, undated
Speeches
1877-1925
- BOX 50** Undated
Speeches and articles concerning Bryan, 1896-1940, undated
- BOX 51-56** **Miscellany, circa 1877-1925**
Reports, essays, addresses, poetry by others, a drawing and blueprint, receipts, office receipt book with campaign expenses for 1890, memorabilia, photographs, miscellaneous printed matter, and scrapbooks of cartoons, clippings, photographs, and miscellaneous material.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
- BOX 51** Addresses, speeches, statements, theses, and poetry by others
Memorabilia
- BOX 52** Memorabilia
Photographs
- BOX 53-55** Printed matter
Newspaper clippings
- BOX 56** Pamphlets, brochures, etc.
Receipts, including campaign expenses of 1890
Scrapbooks *See Oversize*
Album of trip to the Philippines, 1905-1906
Cartoons
(3 vols.)
Newspaper clippings re death of Bryan, 1925
(3 vols.)
- BOX 57-58** **Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934**
Correspondence of Grace Bryan Hargreaves and the typescript of her unpublished biography of Bryan.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Biographer's Papers, 1924-1934

Container

Contents

BOX 57	Correspondence of Grace Bryan Hargreaves, 1924-1934 Drafts Vol. 1 Chapters 1-7 Notes on other chapters
BOX 58	Vol. 2 Chapters 1-2, 5-6, 8-9, 20, and appendix Notes
BOX 59	Addition, 1913-1921 Letters between Bryan and Woodrow Wilson, including correspondence referred by Bryan. Included also is one letter to B. L. Miller discussing Bryan's views on creationism.
BOX 59	Miller, B. L., letter to Bryan expressing views on creationism, 1921 Wilson, Woodrow, political and diplomatic file including letters referred by Bryan to Wilson, 1913-1915
BOX OV 1-OV 7	Oversize, 1905-1925 Oversize items arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which they were removed.
BOX OV 1	Album of trip to the Philippines, 1905-1906 (Container 56)
BOX OV 2	Cartoons (Container 56) 1906-1907
BOX OV 3	1913 Vol. 1
BOX OV 4	Vol. 2
BOX OV 5	Scrapbooks regarding death of Bryan, 1925 (Container 56) Vol. 1
BOX OV 6	Vol. 2
BOX OV 7	Vol. 3