

Alexander Vassiliev Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by Kathleen O'Neill



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2010

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

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Collection Summary

Title: Alexander Vassiliev Papers

Span Dates: 1895-2008

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1930-1950)

ID No.: MSS85460

Creator: Vassiliev, Alexander

Extent: 50 items; 6 containers plus electronic files; 2.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and Russian

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

Abstract: Russian journalist, author, espionage historian, and former KGB operative. Notebooks, file guide, concordance, legal documents, and notes compiled by Vassiliev from KGB files relating to KGB espionage activity in the United States during the 1930s through the early 1950s.

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

Lowenthal, John, 1925-2003.

Vassiliev, Alexander--Trials, litigation, etc.

Vassiliev, Alexander.

Organizations

Frank Cass & Co.--Trials, litigation, etc.

Soviet Union. Komitet gosudarstvennoï bezopasnosti.

Subjects

Espionage--United States.

Intelligence service--Soviet Union.

Titles

Intelligence and national security.

Occupations

Authors.

Historians.

Intelligence officers.

Journalists.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Alexander Vassiliev, author, journalist, espionage historian, and former KGB operative, were given to the Library of Congress by Vassiliev in 2009.

Other Repositories

Digitized versions of the file guide and concordance as well as the original, transcribed, and translated notebooks can be found online as part of the Cold War International History Project on the Woodrow Wilson International Center Web site.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Alexander Vassiliev in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Alexander Vassiliev 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.

Electronic Files

Electronic files were received as part of the papers of Alexander Vassiliev. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for more information.

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1962, May 1	Born, Moscow, Soviet Union
1984	Graduated, M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of Journalism, International Section, Moscow, Soviet Union
1984-1985	Employed, International Department, <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda Daily</i> , Moscow, Soviet Union
1985	Cadet, Andropov Red Banner Institute, KGB, Moscow, Soviet Union
1987	Graduated, Andropov Red Banner Institute, KGB, Moscow, Soviet Union
1987-1990	Operative, First Department, First Chief Directorate, KGB, Moscow, Soviet Union
1990	Resigned, KGB
1990-1996	Reporter and columnist, <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda Daily</i> , Moscow, Russia
1996	Moved to London, England
1999	Published with Allen Weinstein <i>The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—The Stalin Era</i> . New York: Random House
2000-2009	Online producer, <i>BBC World Service</i> . Russian Section—Russian Service. London, England
2001	Sued Amazon.com and Frank Cass & Co., publisher of the <i>Intelligence and National Security Journal</i> , London, England for libel (lost the lawsuit in 2003)

- 2004-2006 Copublisher, editor, and designer, *The Hyde Park*, London, England
- 2009 Published with John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Alexander Vassiliev (1962-2009) span the years 1895-2008, with the bulk of the material dating from 1930 to the early 1950s. The papers are in Russian and English and include notebooks, summary narratives, documents pertaining to Vassiliev v. Frank Cass & Co., and electronic files.

The notebooks were created during Vassiliev's work on a book project supported by the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia (SVR). For this project, he partnered with Allen Weinstein to write a book on KGB operations in the United States. The SVR gave Vassiliev access to KGB files relating to KGB espionage activity in the United States during the 1930s through the early 1950s. The notebooks, handwritten in Russian, contain Vassiliev's direct transcriptions from these files as well as his margin notes. When Vassiliev left Russia in 1996, he left the notebooks behind and did not retrieve them until 2001. The original notebooks were used in writing *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* (2009), coauthored by Vassiliev, John Earl Haynes, and Harvey Klehr. Included with the original notebooks are a file guide, a file concordance, typed transcripts, and English translations of the notebooks. The transcribed and translated versions duplicate the pagination and page layout of the original handwritten notebooks.

The summary narratives consist of material Vassiliev wrote to comply with restrictions set forth by the SVR. These restrictions prohibited Vassiliev from sharing the original notebooks with Allen Weinstein. Vassiliev, therefore, prepared SVR-screened summary narratives of the notebooks. These sanitized summary narratives in English were used as the basis for the book, *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—The Stalin Era* (1999), coauthored with Weinstein. Although the Summary Narratives are based on the KGB files transcribed in the notebooks, the span dates reflect the events chronicled in the narrative text, not the dates of the transcribed files.

The documents relating to the lawsuit Vassiliev v. Frank Cass & Co. include copies of legal documents, correspondence, and trial notes. The libel suit stemmed from an article, "Venona & Alger Hiss" by John Lowenthal, published in 2000 in the journal *Intelligence and National Security*.

At present, the Electronic Files are unprocessed and unavailable.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged according to type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-4	Notebooks, 1923-2008
BOX 1	File guide, undated
BOX 1	File concordance, 2008
BOX 1	Yellow notebooks
BOX 1	No. 1, 1935-1965
BOX 1	Original
BOX 1	Transcribed
BOX 1	Translated
BOX 1	No. 2, 1934-1971
BOX 1	Original
BOX 1	Transcribed
BOX 1	Translated
BOX 1	No. 3, 1934-1957
BOX 1	Original
BOX 1	Transcribed
BOX 1	Translated
BOX 2	No. 4, 1923-1950
BOX 2	Original
BOX 2	Transcribed
BOX 2	Translated
BOX 2	Black notebook, 1932-1954
BOX 2	Original
BOX 2	Transcribed
BOX 2	Translated
BOX 3	White notebooks
BOX 3	No. 1, 1930-1947
BOX 3	Original
BOX 3	Transcribed
BOX 3	Translated
BOX 3	No. 2, 1927-1975
BOX 3	Original
BOX 3	Transcribed
BOX 3	Translated
BOX 4	No. 3, 1934-1951
BOX 4	Original
BOX 4	Transcribed
BOX 4	Translated
BOX 4	Odd pages, 1928-1949, 1992
BOX 4	Original
BOX 4	Transcribed

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 4	Translated
BOX 4-5	Summary narratives
BOX 4	Crook, 1934-1940
BOX 4	Double agent, circa 1895-1957
BOX 4	Enormoz, 1904-1992
BOX 4	Golos-Bentley-Browder, 1907-1951
BOX 4	Golos-Bentley-Browder (addition), 1934-1945
BOX 4	The Hammers, 1917-1972
BOX 5	Information on the United States, 1923-1948
BOX 5	Itshak Akhmerov and "Pal's" group, 1941-1945
BOX 5	Martha Dodd and Alfred Stern, 1924-1975
BOX 5	New York station in late 1930s, 1931-1947
BOX 5	Operations in the United States
BOX 5	1933-1940
BOX 5	1941-1945
BOX 5	1945-1950
BOX 6	"O.S.S. - NKVD cooperation," 1942-1945
BOX 5	Skeletons in the closet, 1937-1946
BOX 5	Washington sources, 1900-1977 (3 folders)
BOX 6	Alexander Vassiliev v. Frank Cass & Co., 1992-2003
BOX 6	Correspondence
BOX 6	Vassiliev, 1997-2003
BOX 6	Others, 1992-2000
BOX 6	Court records
BOX 6	2002, May 3-8
BOX 6	2003
BOX 6	Apr. 29 - June 5
BOX 6	May
BOX 6	June 13
BOX 6	Miscellany, 1992-2003
BOX 6	Notes
BOX 6	2000-2002
BOX 6	Undated
BOX ER 1	Electronic files Unprocessed and unavailable