

# Edith Benham Helm Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff



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: Edith Benham Helm Papers

Span Dates: 1915-1961

ID No.: MSS25700

Creator: Helm, Edith Benham, 1874-1962

Extent: 10,000 items; 32 containers; 14 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Social secretary at the White House. Letters, notes, scrapbooks, and photographs documenting Helm's career as social secretary at the White House during the Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman administrations.

## 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

Helm, Edith Benham, 1874-1962.

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

Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924.

### Organizations

Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920)

White House (Washington, D.C.)

### Places

Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

### Occupations

Social secretaries.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The papers of Edith Benham Helm, social secretary at the White House, were given to the Library of Congress by Helm between 1940 and 1962.

### Processing History

The papers of Edith Benham Helm were arranged and described in 1962. The finding aid was revised in 1980 and 2010.

### Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Edith Benham Helm in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.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 Edith Benham Helm 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, Edith Benham Helm Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1874	Born, Staten Island, N.Y.
1915-1919	Social secretary to Edith Bolling Galt Wilson
1919	Accompanied the presidential party to the Peace Conference, Paris, France
1920	Married Rear Admiral James M. Helm (died 1927)
1933-1953	White House social secretary to Eleanor Roosevelt and Bess Wallace Truman
1954	Published <i>The Captains and the Kings</i> . New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons
1962, Aug. 7	Died, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edith Benham Helm (1874-1962) span the years 1915-1961 and pertain to her career as social secretary to the White House during the administrations of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman. The papers are organized into three series: [Paris Peace Conference](#), [White House Scrapbooks](#), and [Miscellany](#).

Among the items in [Paris Peace Conference](#) series is Edith Benham Helm's daily accounts of her two trips to Europe as a member of the party accompanying President Woodrow Wilson to the Peace Conference in Paris. She served as secretary to his wife, Edith Bolling Galt Wilson. The [White House Scrapbooks](#) include Helms's personal scrapbooks containing invitations and other memorabilia, as well as scrapbooks documenting official social functions at the White House. Among the [Miscellany](#) is information about Bess Wallace Truman's activities that were compiled for press briefings.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Paris Peace Conference, 1918-1920](#)
- [White House Scrapbooks, 1915-1961](#)
- [Miscellany, 1919-1961](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-6	<u>Paris Peace Conference, 1918-1920</u> Notes, scrapbook, photographs, and newspaper clippings. Arranged by type of material
BOX 7-31	<u>White House Scrapbooks, 1915-1961</u> Scrapbooks containing correspondence, invitations and other memorabilia, and material relating to social functions. Arranged according to type of material and therein chronologically.
BOX 32	<u>Miscellany, 1919-1961</u> Press briefing material and accounts of events. Arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-6	Paris Peace Conference, 1918-1920 Notes, scrapbook, photographs, and newspaper clippings. Arranged by type of material
BOX 1	Notes
BOX 1	Typewritten, Dec. 1918-July 1919 (6 folders)
BOX 1	Holograph
BOX 1	Dec. 1918-May 1919 (7 folders)
BOX 2	May-July 1919 (2 folders)
BOX 2	Scrapbook
BOX 2	Photographs (2 folders)
BOX 3	Photographs
BOX 4	Photographs
BOX 5	Photographs, scrapbook
BOX 6	Newspaper clippings, scrapbook
BOX 7-31	White House Scrapbooks, 1915-1961 Scrapbooks containing correspondence, invitations and other memorabilia, and material relating to social functions. Arranged according to type of material and therein chronologically.
BOX 7	Correspondence
BOX 7	7 Mar. 1916-15 May 1951
BOX 7	5 May 1955-20 Dec. 1961
BOX 8	Invitations and other memorabilia
BOX 8	Dec. 1915-May 1930, includes articles Helm wrote for <i>Cosmopolitan</i> about the White House and the Paris Peace Conference, Aug.-Oct. 1930
BOX 9	Nov. 1936-Aug. 1943
BOX 10	Oct. 1937-June 1938, includes "Making the Wheels Go Round" by Eleanor Roosevelt
BOX 11	Social events attended by Helm, 1938-1939
BOX 12	Nov. 1939-Sept. 1942
BOX 13	Nov. 1940-Aug. 1941
BOX 14	Oct. 1943-Feb. 1949
BOX 15	Oct. 1944-Dec. 1945
BOX 16	Dec. 1945-Dec. 1947
BOX 17	1949-Aug. 1950
BOX 18	Oct. 1950-May 1952
BOX 19	May 1952-Sept. 1961

# White House Scrapbooks, 1915-1961

## *Container*

## *Contents*

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BOX 20	Social functions
BOX 20	Mar. 1933-Oct. 1934
BOX 21	Sept. 1934-July 1935
BOX 22	White House season, Aug. 1935-June 1936
BOX 22	Social season, 1936-1937
BOX 23	June 1937-June 1938
BOX 24	June 1938-Aug. 1939
BOX 25	Oct. 1939-Aug. 1940
BOX 26	Oct. 1939-Aug. 1940
BOX 27	Oct. 1941-July 1943 (2 volumes)
BOX 28	Sept. 1943-May 1945 (2 volumes)
BOX 28	Franklin D. Roosevelt funeral, 1945
BOX 29	May 1945-July 1947 (2 volumes)
BOX 30	Oct. 1947-Sept. 1949 (2 volumes)
BOX 31	Oct. 1949-Jan. 1953 (2 volumes)
BOX 32	Miscellany, 1919-1961 Press briefing material and accounts of events. Arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.
BOX 32	Press briefing material, 1945-1953
BOX 32	Accounts of events
BOX 32	Report of conversations concerning the resignation of Secretary of State Robert Lansing, 18 Feb. 1920
BOX 32	Lord Grey not being received at White House, newspaper clipping, and note to Benham from D. Tynell, undated
BOX 32	Craufurd-Stuart Affair, memorandum, 1919
BOX 32	Memorandum concerning Madame Chiang-Kai-Chek, 1961