Roger Welles Papers

A Finding Aid to the Papers in the Naval Historical Foundation Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Ruth S. Nicholson

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

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

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2011

Finding aid URL: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011172

Collection Summary

Title: Roger Welles Papers
Span Dates: 1884-1926
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1891-1926)
ID No.: MSS52878
Creator: Welles, Roger, 1862-1932
Extent: 2,100 items; 8 containers; 3 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English, with some French
Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Abstract: Naval officer. Correspondence, journals, orders to duty, article and speech file, diary of Welles's wife, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and miscellaneous materials relating to Welles's duties as special representative for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, as director of naval intelligence, and as commander of the Asiatic and Atlantic Fleets and of the U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

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
Allison, James Nicholls, 1848-1918--Correspondence.
Andrews, Philip, 1866-1945--Correspondence.
Balincourt, marquis de--Correspondence.
Blue, Victor, 1865-1928--Correspondence.
Bristol, Mark L. (Mark Lambert), 1868-1939--Correspondence.
Buchanan, William I. (William Insco), 1852-1909--Correspondence.
Coontz, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1864-1935--Correspondence.
Curtis, William Eleroy, 1850-1911--Correspondence.
Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948--Correspondence.
Fairfield, Arthur Philip, 1877-1946--Correspondence.
Hammond, Ogden H. (Ogden Haggerty), 1869-1956--Correspondence.
McDonald, Eugene F., b. 1886--Correspondence.
Moore, Alexander Pollock, 1867-1930--Correspondence.
Niblack, Albert P. (Albert Parker), 1859-1929--Correspondence.
Scruggs, William Lindsay, 1836-1912--Correspondence.
Sefton, Joseph W., 1882-1966--Correspondence.
Stewart, Charles West, 1859-1929--Correspondence.
Symon, C. (Charles)--Correspondence.
Weller, Ovington Eugene, 1862-1947--Correspondence.
Welles family--Correspondence.
Welles, Harriet Ogden Deen. Harriet Ogden Deen Welles diary. 1910.
Welles, Mercy D. A. (Mercy Delano Atkins), 1832-1922--Correspondence.
Welles, Roger, 1862-1932.

Organizations
United States. Naval Forces, Europe.
United States. Navy--Intelligence specialists.
United States. Navy. Asiatic Fleet.
United States. Navy. Atlantic Fleet.
United States. Office of Naval Intelligence.
World's Columbian Exposition (1893 : Chicago, Ill.)

Subjects
Exhibitions--Illinois--Chicago.
Fascism--Italy.
Indians of South America--Venezuela.
Military intelligence.
Spanish-American War, 1898.
Strikes and lockouts--Great Britain.

Places
Colombia--Discovery and exploration.
Europe--Politics and government--1918-1945
Orinoco River (Venezuela and Colombia)--Discovery and exploration.
Venezuela--Discovery and exploration.

Occupations
Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Roger Welles, naval officer, were deposited in the Library of Congress in 1948 and 1950 by the Naval Historical Foundation and converted to a gift in 1998.

Processing History

The Welles Papers were processed in 1970. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Roger Welles 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, Roger Welle Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	*Event*
1862, Dec. 7	Born Newington, Conn.
1884	Graduated, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. Duty in USS *Tennessee* as flag midshipman
1887	Duty in USS *Thetis*, North Pacific Fleet

1891	Sent to Venezuela and the Guianas to explore the Orinoco River as U.S. special representative for the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill.
1894	Duty in USS *Essex*
1896	Duty in USS *Texas*
1897	Duty in Massachusetts Nautical Schoolship Enterprise
1898	Duty in USS *Wasp*, Spanish-American War
1902	Duty in USS *Mayflower*
1903	Student, U.S. Naval War College
1906	Duty in USS *Wisconsin*
1907	Inspector of equipment, Force River Shipbuilding Co., Quincy, Mass.
1908	Married Harriet Ogden Deen
1909-1910	Commanded USS *New Orleans*, Asiatic Fleet
1911-1913	Commanded USS *Louisiana*, Atlantic Fleet
1913-1915	Commandant, U.S. Naval Training Station, Newport, R.I.
1917-1919	Director, U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence
1919	Promoted to rear admiral Commander, First Division of the Atlantic Fleet
1920-1923	Commandant, Eleventh Naval District
1925	Promoted to vice admiral
1925-1926	Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe
1926	Retired from the navy
1932, Apr. 26	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Roger Welles (1862-1932) span the years 1884-1926, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1891-1926. The collection consists of journals, correspondence, orders to duty, an article and speech file, a diary written by his wife, Harriet Welles, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. The papers are organized in four series: Journals, Books, and Diaries; Correspondence; Article and Speech File; and Miscellany.

Welles's naval career is detailed in journals, orders to duty, and most specifically in his correspondence. The letters he wrote to his mother, Mercy D. A. Welles, 1885-1908, tell of his early cruises and duties. Letters exchanged with William Eleroy Curtis reveal his assignment to explore the Orinoco River, to make ethnological collections during his travels, especially among the Indians in the interior of Venezuela, and later to assist in arranging the exhibits for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Other correspondents in the period were James Nicholls Allison, William I. Buchanan, and William Lindsay Scruggs.

During the Spanish-American War, Welles served as executive officer on the Wasp. Following this service he attended the United States Naval War College, served with the Asiatic Fleet, was appointed director of the United States Office of Naval Intelligence, commanded successively the First Division of the Atlantic Fleet and the Eleventh and Fifth Naval Districts. His correspondence file provides insights into his duties for this period, 1898-1925. Prominent among his correspondents were Victor Blue, Josephus Daniels, Robert E. Coontz, Albert P. Niblack, Joseph W. Sefton, Jr., Charles West Stewart, C. Symon, and Ovington Eugene Weller.

Welles's last duty, 1925-1926, was as commander of the American naval forces in Europe. Letters during this tour reflect his visits to various heads of state and include mention of some of the political problems of the period such as the general strike in Great Britain and the rise of fascism in Italy. Among his correspondents at this time were Philip Andrews, the marquis de Balincourt, Mark L. Bristol, Arthur Philip Fairfield, Ogden H. Hammond, Eugene F. McDonald, Jr., and Alexander Pollack Moore.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- Journals, Books, and Diaries, 1885-1910
- Correspondence, 1884-1926
- Article and Speech File, 1891-1925
- Miscellany, 1890-1926

Description of Series

Container	*Series*
BOX 1	Journals, Books, and Diaries, 1885-1910 Journals, lesson and signal record books, muster roll, battalion drill book, and diary of Welles's wife, Harriet Wells, while in China. Arranged chronologically and therein by type of account.
BOX 2-6	Correspondence, 1884-1926 Family correspondence, general correspondence, and orders to duty. Arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.
BOX 6	Article and Speech File, 1891-1925 Articles, a lecture, speeches, a radio talk and related notes. Arranged chronologically and therein by type of presentation.
BOX 7-8	Miscellany, 1890-1926 Calling cards, invitations, photographs, programs, newspaper clippings and printed matter, and other miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

Container List

Container	*Contents*
BOX 1	Journals, Books, and Diaries, 1885-1910
	Journals, lesson and signal record books, muster roll, battalion drill book, and diary of Welles's wife, Harriet Wells, while in China.
	Arranged chronologically and therein by type of account.
BOX 1	1885, French lesson book, USS *Tennessee*
BOX 1	1888-1889, journal, USS *Thetis*
BOX 1	1891, journal, special representative for World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill.
BOX 1	1898
BOX 1	Muster roll, USS *Wasp*
BOX 1	Signal record book, USS *Wasp*
BOX 1	1906, battalion drill, USS *Wisconsin*
BOX 1	1910, diary, Harriett Welles (wife), China
BOX 2-6	Correspondence, 1884-1926
	Family correspondence, general correspondence, and orders to duty.
	Arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.
BOX 2	Family, 1885-1908
	(8 folders)
BOX 2	General
BOX 2	1884-1898
	(10 folders)
BOX 3	1905-1919
	(15 folders)
BOX 4	1920-1925, July
	(17 folders)
BOX 5	1925, Aug.-1926, undated
	(15 folders)
BOX 6	Orders to duty, 1886-1926
	(10 folders)
BOX 6	Article and Speech File, 1891-1925
	Articles, a lecture, speeches, a radio talk and related notes.
	Arranged chronologically and therein by type of presentation.
BOX 6	circa 1891, holograph article, "The Orinoco River"
BOX 6	circa 1916, lecture on preparedness
BOX 6	1924
BOX 6	Armistice Day
BOX 6	Navy Day, radio talk
BOX 6	1925, July 5, address

Container	*Contents*
BOX 6	Undated
BOX 6	Armistice Day
BOX 6	Holograph notes
BOX 6	Speech, “Unveiling of the Tablet Marking the End of the Kearney Trail”
BOX 7-8	Miscellany, 1890-1926
	Calling cards, invitations, photographs, programs, newspaper clippings and printed matter, and other miscellaneous material.
	Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.
BOX 7	Business cards
BOX 7	Calling cards
	(3 folders)
BOX 7	Contract for mining minerals in Venezuela
BOX 7	Farewell booklet for Welles, 1925
BOX 7	“International Friendship,” speech by J. Morton Howell, 1925
BOX 7	Invitations (2 folders)
BOX 7	“Linear Differential Equations,” lecture notes by W. W. Johnson
BOX 8	Map and geography of Venezuela
BOX 8	Newspaper clippings
BOX 8	Photographs
BOX 8	Printed matter
BOX 8	Programs, 1890-1926, undated
	(11 folders)
BOX 8	Service papers of John Bowen, 1898-1919