

Joseph C. Swidler

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

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with the assistance of Deloris C. Butler
Revised and expanded by John R. Monagle**



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2001

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**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress
Manuscript Division, 2003**

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms003023>

Latest revision: 2004-07-26

Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Joseph C. Swidler

Span Dates: 1931-1997

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1958-1977)

ID No.: MSS42093

Creator: Swidler, Joseph C. (Joseph Charles), 1907-

Extent: 32,200 items; 93 containers; 37.2 linear feet

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

Language: Collection material in English

Abstract: Attorney and public power industry official. Articles, correspondence, legal papers, memoranda, newspaper clippings, printed matter, reports, and speeches relating primarily to Joseph C. Swidler's career as an attorney and government official.

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.

Names:

Swidler, Joseph C. (Joseph Charles), 1907-

Institute for Public Policy Alternatives

National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

New York (State). Public Service Commission

Tennessee Valley Authority

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission

United Nations

United States. Federal Power Commission

International Conference on Water for Peace (1967 : Washington, D.C.)

Subjects:

Allegiance

Electric power failures--Northeastern States

Energy policy--United States

Interconnected electric utility systems--United States

Lawyers--United States

Loyalty

Power resources--United States--Laws and legislation

Water resources development

New York (State)--Politics and government

Occupations:

Lawyers

Public officials

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Joseph Charles Swidler, attorney and public power industry official, were given to the Library of Congress by Swidler in 1980 and 1982. Additional material was given by Ann Swidler in 1997 and 1999 and by Scott Henderson in 2001.

Processing History:

The papers of Joseph C. Swidler were arranged and described in 1996. Additional material was processed in 2001.

Transfers:

A sound recording has been transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where it is identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status:

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

Preferred Citation:

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

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1907, Jan. 28	Born, Chicago, Ill.
1929	Ph.B., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1930	J.D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1930-1931	Attorney, David E. Lilienthal law firm, Chicago, Ill.
1932-1933	Attorney, Booth & Swidler law firm, Chicago, Ill. Associate editor, Public Utilities and Carriers Service, Commerce Clearing House, Chicago, Ill.
1933	Assistant solicitor, Interior Department Married Janet Elizabeth Voss (divorced 1943)
1933-1937	Attorney, Tennessee Valley Authority
1937-1939	Assistant general solicitor in charge of power matters, Tennessee Valley Authority
1939-1945	Solicitor, Tennessee Valley Authority
1941	Counsel, Alien Property Bureau, Justice Department (on loan from Tennessee Valley Authority)
1942	Counsel, Power Division, Office of War Utilities, War Production Board (on loan from Tennessee Valley Authority)
1943-1945	United States Navy
1944	Married Gertrude Tyrna
1945-1957	General counsel and secretary, Tennessee Valley Authority Chairman of the board, Tennessee Valley Authority Retirement System
1957	Consultant on integrated river basin development, United Nations, Bureau of Economic Affairs, Water Resources and Power Section
1957-1958	Attorney and consultant on utility management, Knoxville, Tenn.

1958-1961	Counsel to Denney, Leftwich & Osborn law firm, Nashville, Tenn.
1961-1965	Chairman, Federal Power Commission
1964-1965	Member, United States Water Resources Council
1966	Representative, United Nations Inter-regional Seminar on Integrated Utilization of Water Resources, Moscow, USSR
1966-1967	Attorney, Swidler & Freeman law firm, Washington, D.C.
1967	Consultant, United States Atomic Energy Commission United States representative, International Conference on Water for Peace, Washington, D.C.
1967-1970	Attorney, Swidler & Belnap law firm, Washington, D.C.
1970-1974	Chairman, New York Public Service Commission, Albany, N.Y.
1973	Member, Commission on Critical Choices for Americans
1974-1975	Director, Institute for Public Policy Alternatives, State University of New York, Albany, N.Y.
1975-1982	Attorney, Leva, Hawes, Symington, Martin & Oppenheimer law firm, Washington, D.C.
1982-1997	Attorney, Swidler & Berlin law firm, Washington, D.C.
1997, May 1	Died, Bethesda, Md.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Joseph Charles Swidler (1907-1997) span the years 1931-1997 with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1958-1977. Swidler's career, much of which is reflected in his papers, coincided with the birth and development of the modern public power system and the creation of a continental power grid. As chief energy regulator for the federal government and later head of the New York Public Service Commission, Swidler played a pivotal role during the crises regarding infrastructure in the 1960s and energy supply in the 1970s.

The collection consists of six series and an addition. The first four series are arranged by agency name in an order reflecting the chronology of Swidler's career in public service. A [Law Practice](#) series, representing material from his private practice, is divided into sections and arranged alphabetically by name of law firm. A [Miscellany](#) series is placed at the end.

The [Tennessee Valley Authority \(TVA\)](#) series consists chiefly of printed matter, including congressional testimony, legal opinions, and reports. Correspondence deals largely with Swidler's termination from the authority.

The [Federal Power Commission](#) series consists of [correspondence, memoranda, and reports](#) chronicling the rapid growth of the energy industry during the 1960s, including the planning and creation of the first regional and national power grids, the disruptive power outages of November 1965 in the northeastern United States, power generating, power supply and reliability, and energy prices and pricing. Included in the commission's travel files is an unpublished report regarding the Soviet Union's state energy system in 1962.

The [New York Public Service Commission](#) under Swidler's leadership was one of the foremost state utility authorities. [Correspondence, memoranda, reports, and speeches](#) in the series record his administration of the commission. Subjects include the environmental movement, energy policies of the city of New York, proposed power utility sites and activities, and the

state government's position on energy conservation. Swidler's activities with the [National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners](#) are also reflected in the series.

In 1974, at the invitation of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, Swidler left the [Public Service Commission](#) to become head of the [Institute of Public Policy Alternatives](#). The institute was intended to be a think tank for the State University of New York system. One year later, however, the plan was canceled by a new governor. Files in the series reflect the start-up of the institute and the research it initiated.

The [Law Practice](#) series reflects Swidler's tenure with the private firms of Denney, Leftwich & Osborn; Leva, Hawes, Symington, Martin & Oppenheimer; Swidler & Belnap; and Swidler & Freeman.

The [Miscellany](#) series contains biographical and family material as well as papers from Swidler's service on the Atomic Energy Commission, International Conference on Water for Peace, the United Nations Inter-regional Seminar on International Utilization of Water Resources, and other conferences and commissions.

An [Addition](#) reflects aspects of Swidler's tenure with the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Federal Power Commission, and the New York Public Service Commission as well as with his various law firms. The Tennessee Valley Authority section consists primarily of material relating to loyalty hearings regarding accusations of membership in the Communist party during the 1930s through 1950s with Swidler as both witness and defendant. The Federal Power Commission section contains material relating to congressional hearings, speeches, newspaper clippings on the November 1965 electric power failure in the Northeast United States, and Swidler's appointment, efforts at reappointment, and resignation from the commission. The New York Public Service Commission section consists of material relating to congressional hearings and speeches. The Law Practice section contains material from several private firms including Leva, Hawes, Symington, Martin & Oppenheimer and Swidler & Berlin. A miscellany section contains autobiographical material, an oral history transcript, and personal correspondence.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1957](#)
- [Federal Power Commission, 1959-1966, n.d.](#)
- [New York Public Service Commission, 1969-1974, n.d.](#)
- [Institute for Public Policy Alternatives, 1974-1975](#)
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Description of Series

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