

John Osborne

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

**Prepared by Michael McElderry with the assistance of Brian
McGuire**



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Collection Summary

Title: Papers of John Osborne

Span Dates: ca. 1900-1983

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1941-1983)

ID No.: MSS60400

Creator: Osborne, John, 1907-1981

Extent: 34,300 items; 98 containers plus 1 oversize plus 1 classified; 39.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Author, editor, and journalist. Correspondence and memoranda; family papers; drafts of published and unpublished articles, reports, columns, and interviews; notes and notebooks; dispatches and news cables; research material; and other papers documenting Osborne's career as a reporter, editor, and columnist for *Time*, *Life*, and the *New Republic*.

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:

Osborne, John, 1907-

Carter, Jimmy, 1924-

Ford, Gerald R., 1913-

Forrestal, James, 1892-1949

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963

Luce, Henry Robinson, 1898-1967 --Correspondence

Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-

Reagan, Ronald

Subjects:

Life (Chicago, Ill.)

New Republic (New York, N.Y.)

Time

Foreign correspondents--England--London

Foreign correspondents--Italy--Rome

Foreign correspondents--Japan--Tokyo

Journalism--New York (State)--New York

Journalism--Washington (D.C.)

Korean War, 1950-1953--Journalism

Presidents--United States

Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-1975

World War, 1939-1945--Journalism--Europe

London (England)--History--Bombardment, 1940-1945

United States--Politics and government--1969-1974

United States--Politics and government--1974-1977

United States--Politics and government--1977-1981

United States--Politics and government--1981-1989

Occupations:

Authors

Journalists

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of John Osborne, journalist and writer, were deposited in the Library of Congress by his wife, Gertrude McCullough Osborne, 1982-1993. In 1999, the deposits were converted to gifts by Osborne's son, John Osborne III.

Processing History:

The John Osborne Papers are described in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division, 1982*, pp. 26-28.

Transfers:

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Audiotapes have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the John Osborne Papers.

Copyright Status:

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

Classified Material:

Government regulations control the use of classified material in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified material.

Preferred Citation:

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

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1907, Mar. 15	Born, Corinth, Miss.
1925-1926	Attended Southwestern University, Memphis, Tenn.
1926-1927	Attended University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.
1927-1931	Reporter, <i>Commercial Appeal</i> and the Associated Press, Memphis, Tenn.
1933-1935	Public information officer, Tennessee Valley Authority and National Recovery Administration
1936-1938	Labor affairs writer and national affairs editor, <i>Newsweek</i>
1938-1961	Writer, editor, and foreign correspondent, Time, inc.
1942	Married Gertrude McCullough
1946-1948	London bureau chief, Time, inc.
1948-1951	Foreign editor, <i>Life</i> magazine
1951-1953	Washington editor, Time, inc.

1953-1956	Senior Far East correspondent, Time, inc.
1956-1961	Staff writer, <i>Life</i> magazine
1961	Published <i>Britain: A Country of Character</i> (New York: Time, inc. 176 pp.)
1961-1968	Free-lance writer
1968	Published <i>The Old South</i> (New York: Time-Life Books. 192 pp.)
1968-1981	White House correspondent and associate senior editor, <i>New Republic</i> ; wrote regular columns "The Nixon Watch" and "White House Watch"
1970-1975	Published annual volumes of collections of "The Nixon Watch" columns
1974	George Polk Memorial Award for magazine reporting
1977	Published <i>White House Watch: The Ford Years</i> (Washington: New Republic Book Co. 482 pp.)
1981, May 2	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Franklin Osborne (1907-1981) span the years ca. 1900-1983, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period after 1941. Although he worked as a reporter and writer for several newspapers and *Newsweek* magazine from 1927 to 1938 and as a free-lance writer from 1961 to 1968, Osborne's most important work as a journalist and editor was largely confined to two phases of his long career, each identified with the news magazine with which he was associated at the time. The first phase covers the period from 1938 to 1961 when he worked as a writer, editor, and foreign correspondent for Time, inc. The second, from 1968 until his death in 1981, began when Osborne joined the staff of the *New Republic* to write an analysis of Richard M. Nixon's presidency in a column entitled "The Nixon Watch," which was continued under the title "White House Watch" during later administrations. Records originating from both news organizations are contained in subseries in the [Journalism File](#). The [Time files](#) contain correspondence and memoranda, drafts of published and unpublished articles and reports, notes and notebooks, dispatches, news cables, and research material. Osborne's field reports reflect the political and international repercussions of American foreign policy during and immediately following World War II, while his office files provide insight into the operations of Henry Luce's publishing empire. The [New Republic files](#) contain material similar to those of *Time*, including an important set of notes transcribed from Osborne's tape-recorded interviews and telephone conversations, and serve as source material for the study of twentieth century American politics as viewed through the office of the United States presidency. In addition to the files associated with *Time* and the *New Republic*, the collection also includes [family papers](#), general correspondence, research and production material for Osborne's [books and free-lance writings](#), and [miscellaneous](#) items.

As an editor and foreign correspondent for *Time*, Osborne reported many of the major events of the mid-twentieth century. A selection of the stories Osborne covered while stationed in London, Rome, Tokyo, New York, and Washington includes World War II reports from Europe and the London "blitz," the Communist takeover of China, and the Korean War. Osborne's files include dispatches, news cables, and memoranda. The geopolitical file, representing Osborne's collected notes and research material on specific countries and foreign policy issues, documents postwar international realignment, especially in the Far East.

In his role as adviser and editor, Osborne exchanged correspondence and memoranda with other top editors and decision makers throughout the corporate hierarchy of Time, inc., including Henry Luce. These exchanges outline various administrative and editorial policies and suggest the extent to which the company shaped its product through tight editorial control and a centralized world view. For some years, Osborne was a colleague of Whittaker Chambers on the staff of *Time*

magazine. Reflecting on his relationship with Chambers, Osborne responded to John Chabot Smith's book, *Alger Hiss: The True Story*, in a controversial review published in the *New Republic* in April 1976. Material relating to the review and the relationship is located in the *New Republic* files.

In an effort to advance his career and broaden his opportunities for independent writing, Osborne left *Time* in 1961 to become a free-lance writer. The [Books and Writings File](#) contains correspondence, drafts, notes, and other material detailing the contract negotiations, research, and writing he pursued during this period. The series contains a large collection of notes and research material gathered in support of an intended, but unpublished, biography of James Forrestal. Similar files accumulated for prospective volumes on John F. Kennedy and Vietnam illustrate Osborne's research methods.

In 1968 Osborne became the White House correspondent for the *New Republic*. The collection contains drafts, notes and notebooks, and reference files produced and collected by Osborne while writing his regular columns, "The Nixon Watch," and "White House Watch." Although Osborne's columns chronicled the record of incumbent presidents from Richard M. Nixon to Ronald Reagan, his attention was drawn more closely to the study of the American presidency as an institution. It was the office of the presidency, more so than its occupant, that Osborne admired and sought to document. The *New Republic* files include full sets of drafts, proofs, and tearsheets for these columns, which were later collected and published as *The Nixon Watch* in annual volumes, 1970-1975, and *White House Watch: The Ford Years*, 1977. Material relating to these published volumes can be found in the [Books and Writings File](#).

Despite his access to inside sources, Osborne preferred official documents and transcripts for his information. His work habits are further reflected in the set of notes, notebooks, and reference material he used in preparation for his columns. These materials are in the White House file, among the [files of the New Republic](#). Although Osborne kept notebooks throughout his career to record both facts and impressions, his holograph entries are fragmentary and difficult to read. Of greater importance are his typewritten notes, which he categorized and filed both chronologically as a set and selectively within subject headings. In addition to research material, the notes include transcripts of personal and telephone interviews conducted by Osborne with a variety of administration officials and recorded by him on cassette tapes.

Correspondence and memoranda exchanged between staff members of the *New Republic* detail administrative decisions that influenced editorial policy at the magazine. Readers' reactions to his columns were always important to Osborne, and their letters, along with his replies to the more thoughtful responses, are contained in the [New Republic files](#).

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Family Papers, 1915-1983, n.d.](#)
- [Journalism File, 1941-1981, n.d.](#)
- [Books and Writings File, ca. 1900-1980, n.d.](#)
- [Miscellany, 1940-1981, n.d.](#)
- [Oversize, ca. 1900-1974](#)
- [Classified, 1978](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1-2

Family Papers, 1915-1983, n.d.

Letters received and copies of letters sent by Osborne, as well as correspondence exchanged between family members other than Osborne, telegrams, genealogical records, printed matter, writings, and miscellaneous items and enclosures.

Organized alphabetically by name of family member and arranged chronologically therein.

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Journalism File, 1941-1981, n.d.

BOX 2-17

Time, inc., 1941-1966, n.d.

Correspondence and memoranda, telegrams, dispatches and news cables, research material, reports, notes and notebooks, typescripts, drafts, printed matter, and miscellaneous items and enclosures documenting Osborne's career as a writer, correspondent, and editor with Time, inc.

Organized alphabetically by subject or type of material and arranged chronologically therein.

BOX 17-71

New Republic, 1949-1981, n.d.

Correspondence and memoranda, notes and notebooks, transcripts, drafts, typescripts, tearsheets, proofs, reference files, research material, financial records, reports, printed matter, and miscellaneous items and enclosures accumulated by Osborne as White House correspondent for the *New Republic*.

Organized alphabetically by subject or type of material and arranged chronologically therein.

BOX 71-94

Books and Writings File, ca. 1900-1980, n.d.

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Organized alphabetically by type of material and books alphabetically by title and arranged chronologically therein.

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Miscellany, 1940-1981, n.d.

Correspondence, financial records, address and telephone books, appointment calendars, awards, cards and invitations, diary, medical records, memorabilia, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.

Organized alphabetically by subject or type of material and arranged chronologically therein.

BOX OV 1

Oversize, ca. 1900-1974

Oversize material consisting mostly of printed matter.

Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

BOX CL 1

Classified, 1978

Telegrams, cables, memoranda, correspondence, and policy papers.

Arranged according to the series, folders, and containers from which the items were removed.

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BOX 53	Panama, 1977-1978 Press releases, 1977 Speeches and remarks, 1977-1980, n.d. Strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT) Miscellany, 1977 Newspaper clippings, 1977 Notes, 1977 Helms, Richard, 1977-1978 Humphrey-Hawkins bill, 1976-1977 Human rights, 1976-1977, n.d. Interviews Carter, Jimmy, 1976-1980
BOX 54	Miscellany, 1977-1981 (2 folders) Jordan, Hamilton, 1977-1981 Kraft, Tim, 1980 Lance, Bert Miscellany, 1976-1977 Newspaper clippings, 1977 Notes, 1977 Miscellany, 1977-1978, n.d. Mondale, Walter F. Interviews, 1977-1980 Miscellany, 1976-1977, n.d. !Newspaper clippings, 1977 Notes, 1977 Press conferences, 1977 Press pool reports, 1977 Press releases, 1977 Speeches and remarks, 1977
BOX 55	Newspaper clippings Nov. 1976-Oct. 1977 (6 folders)
BOX 56	Nov. 1977-Dec. 1980, n.d. (8 folders) Plains, Ga., 1976-1977, n.d. Policy angles, 1978 Presidential campaigns 1976 Miscellany, 1975-1976, n.d. Newspaper clippings (2 folders) Remarks and policy statements, 1974-1976, n.d.
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	1980
	Funding
	Interviews
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	Newspaper clippings
	Presidential Committee, 1979, n.d.
BOX 58	Press briefings and conferences
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BOX 59	1980-1981
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	Speeches and statements, 1977-1980
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	Strauss, Robert S.
	Miscellany, 1977-1980
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	Transition
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BOX 61	Notes
	Trips
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	July, Southern states tour
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	Addresses and remarks
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	Newspaper clippings
	Press briefings and conferences
	Press pool reports
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	June, Austria
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	June, Europe
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BOX 62	1978
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BOX 63	(3 folders)
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BOX 64	(4 folders)
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BOX 65	Reagan administration
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	Miscellany, 1981, n.d.
	Notebooks, 1981
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	(2 folders)
	Reference files
	Assassination attempt, 1981
	Deregulation, 1981
	Economics and finance, 1980-1981
	Foreign policy, 1980-1981
	Haig, Alexander M., 1980-1981
	Lefever, Ernest, 1980-1981
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BOX 66	Oil controls, 1981

Journalism File, 1941-1981, n.d.

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	Political conservatives, 1980-1981
	Presidential campaign, 1980
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	Newspaper clippings
	Press briefings and conferences, 1980-1981
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	Personnel appointments and staffing, 1980-1981
	(4 folders)
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	Writings
	Articles, drafts, proofs, and tearsheets, 1965-1969
	Book reviews, 1968-1976
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BOX 68	"The Nixon Watch," drafts, proofs, and tearsheets
	Sept. 1969-Oct. 1973
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BOX 69	Nov. 1973-July 1974
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BOX 70	Mar. 1977-Sept. 1979
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	Organized alphabetically by type of material and books alphabetically by title and arranged chronologically therein.
BOX 71	Articles and other writings
	Drafts, 1947-1950, 1963-1966, n.d.
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	Reports for the <i>Washington Post</i> on the murder of Willie Tucker, 1965-1966
BOX 72	Research material on nuclear policy, 1968
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	"Chit for Mr. Willett," 1963
	"The Foreign Service and the President," 1962

Books and Writings File, ca. 1900-1980, n.d.

Container

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	"Insanity and the Law," 1959
	"A Letter to Noah," n.d.
	"Quiet Warriors," 1966
	"Was Nixon 'Sick of Mind'?" 1975
	Book reviews
	Commager, Henry Steele, editor, <i>Our Day and Generation</i> , 1979
	Hartmann, Robert T., <i>Palace Politics</i> , 1980
	Klein, Herbert G., <i>Making It Perfectly Clear</i> , 1980
BOX 73	Books
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	Atlantic Monthly Press, 1962-1965, 1975, n.d.
	Classified material review, 1962-1963
	Correspondence
	General, 1964, 1970-1973, 1980, n.d.
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	Drafts
	Chapter one, n.d.
	Miscellany, n.d.
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	Forrestal, Michael, 1962-1964
	Narrative outline and summary
	First draft, n.d.
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BOX 74	Notes and research material, ca. 1900-ca. 1968
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	Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
	Day files
	Diaries
	Dillon, Read & Co.
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	Dunnington, Walter
	Early years
	Beacon, N.Y.
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	Hoyt, Morgan H.
	"The Dutchess County Roosevelt"
	Forrestal, James, correspondence
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BOX 76	Printed matter <i>See also Oversize</i>
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Books and Writings File, ca. 1900-1980, n.d.

Container

Contents

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	New York, N.Y.
	Eberstadt report
	Eisenhower, Dwight D.
	Estate of James Forrestal
	Family members
	Forrestal, Josephine
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BOX 77	Finances
	General file
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BOX 78	(7 folders)
BOX 79	Government organization
	Household accounts
	Integration
	Interviews
	Official
	(2 folders)
	Personal
	(2 folders)
BOX 80	Johnson, Lyndon B.
	Kennan, George F.
	Kennedy, John F.
	Last months
	Leslie, Frank P.
	Medical file
	Collapse and death
	Hospital
	Military associates
	Names file
	National Security Council
	Navy staff
	Newspaper clippings
	Nimitz, Chester W.
BOX 81	Obituaries
	O'Hara, John
	Oil industry
	Personal file
	Politics
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Books and Writings File, ca. 1900-1980, n.d.

Container

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	Reputation Roosevelt, Franklin D. Secretary of defense
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	Books Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y. Indexes Symington, Stuart Undersecretary of the navy
BOX 84	General file Morgenthau, Henry, Jr. Personal file Wall Street Wallace, Henry A. World War I World War II Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1962-1963 <i>See also Container 81, same heading</i> Rogow, Arnold A., 1962-1966 Sheehy, Maurice S., 1962-1964 Typists, 1972 "Nixon Watch" book collections
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	Miscellany, 1966, n.d.
	Newspaper clippings, 1966
	Research material
	Dorn, William J. B., 1965-1966
	Miscellany, 1965-1966, n.d.
	(2 folders)
	South Carolina, 1965-1966, n.d.
	"Vietnam," unpublished
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	Chapter submitted to <i>Life</i> magazine, 1968
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BOX 86	Drafts, n.d.
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BOX 88	(6 folders)
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	Tearsheet copy, 1979
	(2 folders)
	<i>White House Watch: The Ford Years</i>
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Books and Writings File, ca. 1900-1980, n.d.

Container

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BOX 92	Contract, 1961
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BOX 93	Chronological file
	May-Aug. 1961 (2 folders)
	Sept. 1961-Nov. 1963, n.d. (2 folders)
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	Defense Department, 1959-1962, n.d.
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BOX 94-98	Miscellany, 1940-1981, n.d.
	Correspondence, financial records, address and telephone books, appointment calendars, awards, cards and invitations, diary, medical records, memorabilia, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.
	Organized alphabetically by subject or type of material and arranged chronologically therein.

Miscellany, 1940-1981, n.d.

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 94	Address and telephone books, 1949, n.d. (2 folders) Aisenman, M. Leone, 1974-1976 Appointment calendars 1976
BOX 95	1977-1981 (5 folders) Awards, 1974-1980 Cards and invitations, 1957, 1973-1981, n.d. Clubs Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., 1976-1981, n.d. Federal City Club, Washington, D.C., 1976-1980 Metropolitan Club, Washington, D.C., 1951-1952, n.d.
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Miscellany, 1940-1981, n.d.

Container Contents

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Miscellany, 1975-1978
New Yorker, 1972-1981
Medical records, 1952-1956, 1971-1981
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Printed matter, 1971-1981, n.d.
St. Alban's School, Washington, D.C., 1952-1953
Sanford, David, 1971-1978, n.d.
Speaking engagements, 1947, 1969, 1975-1980, n.d.
Washington Star syndicate, 1975, n.d.
Wills, 1966, 1975

BOX OV 1

Oversize, ca. 1900-1974

Oversize material consisting mostly of printed matter.
Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

BOX OV 1

Journalism File

Time, inc.

Geopolitical file

Philippines

Map, 1944 (Container 7)

New Republic

White House file

Nixon administration

Reference files

Trips

1972

May-June, Austria, USSR, Iran, and Poland

Printed matter ([Container 27](#))

1974

June, Middle East

Miscellany ([Container 27](#))

June-July, Belgium and USSR

Miscellany ([Container 28](#))

Ford administration

Reference files

Trips

Oversize, ca. 1900-1974

Container

Contents

Nov. 1974, Japan, Korea, and USSR

Miscellany ([Container 41](#))

Books and Writings File

Books

"James Forrestal," unpublished

Notes and research material, ca. 1900-ca. 1968

Early years

Hoyt, Morgan H.

Printed matter ([Container 76](#))

BOX CL 1

Classified, 1978

Telegrams, cables, memoranda, correspondence, and policy papers.

Arranged according to the series, folders, and containers from which the items were removed.

BOX CL 1

Journalism file

New Republic

White House file

Carter administration

Reference files

Carter, William A. ("Billy")

Libyan representation, 1978 ([Container 48](#))

Foreign policy

Africa

Review memoranda, 1978 ([Container 50](#))