

John Von Neumann and Klara Dan Von Neumann Papers

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Revised and expanded by Joseph K. Brooks with the assistance of Jeffery Bryson and Chanté Wilson
Flowers

Collection Summary

Title: John Von Neumann and Klara Dan Von Neumann Papers

Span Dates: 1912-2000

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1953-1963)

ID No.: MSS44180

Creator: Von Neumann, John, 1903-1957

Creator: Von Neumann, Klara Dan, 1911-1963

Extent: 19,100 items ; 55 containers plus 1 oversize ; 21.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English, Hungarian, German, and French

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

Summary: Mathematician, atomic energy commissioner, and educator (John Von Neumann). Pioneer computer programmer (Klara Dan Von Neumann). Correspondence, memoranda, journals, speeches, article and book drafts, notes, charts, graphs, patent, biographical material, family papers, and other material pertaining to John Von Neumann's career as professor of mathematics, scientific advisor to government and industry, and author, and to the scientific career and family of his wife, Klara Dan Von Neumann.

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

Aldor, Eva, approximately 1913-

Aldor, Eva, approximately 1913--Correspondence.

Aldor, Peter, 1904-1976.

Aydelotte, Frank, 1880-1956--Correspondence.

Bethe, Hans A. (Hans Albrecht), 1906-2005--Correspondence.

Birkhoff, Garrett, 1911-1996--Correspondence.

Chandrasekhar, S. (Subrahmanyan), 1910-1995--Correspondence.

Dan family.

Dan, Kamilla, 1888-1983--Correspondence.

Dantzig, George B. (George Bernard), 1914-2005--Correspondence.

Deg, Elizabeth, 1908-1997 or 1998--Correspondence.

Dirac, P. A. M. (Paul Adrien Maurice), 1902-1984--Correspondence.

Eckart, Carl, 1902-1973--Correspondence.

Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955--Correspondence.

Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955.

Fermi, Enrico, 1901-1954--Correspondence.

Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959--Correspondence.

Gamow, George, 1904-1968--Correspondence.

Goldstine, Herman H. (Herman Heine), 1913-2004--Correspondence.

Goldstine, Herman H. (Herman Heine), 1913-2004.

Gödel, Kurt--Correspondence.

Halmos, Paul R. (Paul Richard), 1916-2006.

Heisenberg, Werner, 1901-1976--Correspondence.

Hove, L. van (Léon)--Correspondence.

Hurd, Cuthbert Corwin, 1911-1996--Correspondence.

Jordan, Pascual, 1902-1980--Correspondence.

Kent, R. H. (Robert Harrington), 1886-1961--Correspondence.

Kistiakowsky, George B. (George Bogdan), 1900-1982--Correspondence.

Maxwell, Robert, 1923-1991--Correspondence.

Morgenstern, Oskar, 1902-1977--Correspondence.

Neumann, Michael J., 1907-1989--Correspondence.

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1904-1967--Correspondence.
Ortvay, Rudolf, 1885-1945--Correspondence.
Pauli, Wolfgang, 1900-1958--Correspondence.
Stone, Marshall H. (Marshall Harvey), 1903-1989--Correspondence.
Strauss, Lewis L.--Correspondence.
Taub, A. H., 1911-1999--Correspondence.
Taub, A. H., 1911-1999.
Teller, Edward, 1908-2003--Correspondence.
Ulam, Françoise--Correspondence.
Ulam, Stanislaw M.--Correspondence.
Veblen, Oswald, 1880-1960--Correspondence.
Von Neumann family.
Von Neumann, John, 1903-1957.
Von Neumann, Klara Dan, 1911-1963. John Von Neumann and Klara Dan Von Neumann papers. 1912-2000.
Vonneuman, Nicholas A., 1911- --Correspondence.
Weaver, Warren, 1894-1978--Correspondence.
Weyl, Hermann, 1885-1955--Correspondence.
Wiener, Norbert, 1894-1964--Correspondence.
Wigner, Eugene Paul, 1902-1995--Correspondence.

Organizations

Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, N.J.)--Faculty.
Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory.
U.S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratory.
U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

Subjects

Ballistics.
Computers.
Continuous geometries.
Game theory.
Logic, Symbolic and mathematical.
Mathematics--Study and teaching.
Nuclear energy--Government policy--United States.
Nuclear energy.
Operator theory.
Physics.
Quantum theory.

Occupations

Atomic energy commissioners.
Computer programmers.
Educators.
Mathematicians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of John Von Neumann, mathematician, atomic energy commissioner, and educator, and Klara Dan Von Neumann, pioneer computer programmer, were given to the Library of Congress in 1974-1975 by his daughter Marina Von Neumann Whitman. Additions were received in 1993 from brother Nicholas A. Vonneuman, 1998 from Israel Halperin, 2001 from William McClelland, and 2012 from Marina Von Neumann Whitman.

Processing History

The Von Neumann Papers were arranged and described in 1992. Additions were made to the collection in 1993, 2002, and 2014.

Transfers

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

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Von Neumann and Klara Dan Von Neumann 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, John Von Neumann and Klara Dan Von Neumann Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

John Von Neumann

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1903, Dec.28	Born Neumann János Lajos, Budapest, Hungary
1926	Ph.D., University of Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
1929	Married Mariette Kovesi (divorced 1937)
1930	Immigrated to United States
1930-1933	Visiting professor, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1932	Published <i>Mathematische Grundlagen der Quantenmechanik</i> . Berlin: J. Springer
1933-1957	Research professor of mathematics, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.
1937	Naturalized United States citizen
1939	Married Klara Dan
1940-1957	Member, Scientific Advisory Committee, Ballistic Research Laboratory, Aberdeen, Md.
1943 1955	Consultant, Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, Los Alamos, N.Mex.
1944	Published <i>Theory of Games and Economic Behavior</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press
1952-1954	Member, General Advisory Committee, United States Atomic Energy Commission

1955-1957	Commissioner, United States Atomic Energy Commission
1957, Feb. 8	Died, Washington, D.C.

Klara Dan Von Neumann

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
Aug. 18, 1911	Born Dan Klara, Budapest, Hungary
1921-1929	Attended Veres Pálné Gimnázium, Budapest, Hungary
ca 1930-1938	Married and divorced Francis Engel and Andrew Rapoch
1938	Married John Von Neumann and emigrated to the United States
1942	Naturalized United States citizen
1943-1945	Head, Statistical Computing Group, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1946-1953	Mathematical coder, Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories, Los Alamos, N.Mex.
1958	Married Carl Eckart (died 1973)
1963, Nov. 10	Died, La Jolla, Calif.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Von Neumann (1903-1957) and Klara Dan Von Neumann (1911-1963) span the years 1912-2000, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1935-1963. The papers pertain primarily to John Von Neumann's life in the United States after he emigrated from Hungary to the United States in 1930 and to the work and family of his second wife and widow, Klara, after her emigration in 1938. Featured is John's career as professor of mathematics at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, 1933-1957, adviser and commissioner on the United States Atomic Energy Commission, 1952-1957, scientific consultant to government and industry, and author of works on various scientific topics. Also featured are their family relationships and Klara's career as a computer programmer. The collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, journals, speeches, articles and book drafts, notes, charts, graphs, patent, family papers, clippings, printed matter, photographs, and other material. The papers are organized into seven series: [Family Papers](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Addition I](#), [Addition II](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [Family Papers](#) series consists chiefly of correspondence between John Von Neumann and family members. Of particular significance is the extensive correspondence between him and wife Klara concerning professional and family matters.

The [General Correspondence](#) series contains John Von Neumann's incoming and outgoing correspondence with his colleagues at the Institute for Advanced Study, the Atomic Energy Commission and other government bodies, including the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, and various universities. Of special interest are an Albert Einstein letter and report on theoretical physics, 1937. Other correspondents include Frank Aydelotte, Hans Albrecht Bethe, Garrett Birkhoff, S. Chandrasekhar, George Bernard Dantzig, P. A. M. Dirac, Carl Eckart, Enrico Fermi, Abraham Flexner, George Gamow, Kurt Gödel, Herman Heine Goldstine, Werner Heisenberg, L. van Hove, Cuthbert Hurd, Pascual Jordan, R. H. Kent, George B. Kistiakowsky, Oskar Morgenstern, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Rudolf Ortway, Wolfgang Pauli, Marshall H. Stone, Lewis L. Strauss, Abraham Haskel Taub, Edward Teller, Stanislaw M. Ulam, Oswald Veblen, Warren Weaver, Hermann Weyl, Norbert Wiener, and Eugene Paul Wigner.

The [Subject File](#) documents all facets of John Von Neumann's career in the United States, reflecting his role in early computer and atomic research. The bulk of the series pertains to his work at the Institute for Advanced Study, including his tenure as director of the Electronic Computer Project. Other papers document Von Neumann's many consultantships. Of particular interest are files relating to his work at the United States Army Ballistic Research Laboratory in Aberdeen, Maryland.

The [Speeches and Writings File](#) reflects Von Neumann's interest in numerous scientific and mathematical subjects. The series includes his early writings in quantum mechanics and logic, his writings on continuous geometries, operator theory, ballistic research, and his later works concerning computers. Also of note is his pioneering work on the theory of games. Throughout the [Speeches and Writings File](#) are evaluations of Von Neumann's work written after his death by his colleagues. Among the reviewers were Herman Heine Goldstine, Paul R. Halmos, and Abraham Haskel Taub.

[Addition I](#) to the papers consists of correspondence between John Von Neumann and Eva Aldor, other material relating to Eva and Peter Aldor, correspondence relating to the Poiseuille-type laminar flow, biographical information, a patent, photographs, and printed matter.

The bulk of [Addition II](#) was created by Klara Dan Von Neumann. Taught by her husband, she developed into one of the early computer programmers. In the general correspondence of [Addition II](#) is Klara's correspondence with many of the physicists and mathematicians documented in the [General Correspondence](#), and their wives, including fellow programmers such as Francois Ulman.

In the family correspondence of [Addition II](#) are letters spanning 1937-1954 between Klara and John Von Neumann. Also in the file are Klara's exchanges with John Von Neumann's brothers, Michael J. Neumann and Nicholas A. Vonneumann, and in Hungarian with members of Klara's own Dan family, including her mother, Kamilla Dan, and sister, Elizabeth Deg. Much of the Hungarian correspondence relates to getting Klara and then her family members, who were Jewish, out of continental Europe at the onset of World War II.

A file relating to John Von Neumann's literary estate includes correspondence with Robert Maxwell, the proprietor of Pergamon Press and publisher of his collected works.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Family Papers, 1929-1956](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1926-1959](#)
- [Subject File, 1930-1974](#)
- [Speeches and Writings File, 1928-1960](#)
- [Addition I, 1912-1996](#)
- [Addition II, 1926-2000](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1	<u>Family Papers, 1929-1956</u> Correspondence, telegrams, official documents, and other papers. Arranged alphabetically.
BOX 2-8	<u>General Correspondence, 1926-1959</u> Correspondence and attached material with friends and colleagues. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or institution.
BOX 8-19	<u>Subject File, 1930-1974</u> Correspondence, telegrams, memoranda, journals, logs, tests, travel orders, invitations, charts, graphs, forms, biographical data, photographs, clippings and other printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Organized by name of person or organization, topic, or type of material.
BOX 19-33	<u>Speeches and Writings File, 1928-1960</u> Correspondence, speeches, articles, book drafts, notes, contracts, clippings, and printed matter. Speeches have been separated from other writings, which are arranged alphabetically by type of writing and therein alphabetically by type of material, subject, or title.
BOX 34	<u>Addition I, 1912-1996</u> Correspondence, biographical data, patents, photographs, a report, printed matter, and an index. Arranged by year of addition and therein alphabetically by name of person or type of material.
BOX 35-55	<u>Addition II, 1926-2000</u> Correspondence, diary, legal documents, photographs, topical files, biographical material, computer programming flow charts, and writings relating to Von Neumann and his second wife, Klara Dan Von Neumann. Arranged by name of husband and wife and therein by type of material.
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	Einstein, Albert, 1937
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	Fermi, Enrico, 1949-1951, undated
	Flexner, Abraham, 1933-1944, 1956
	Frankel, Stanley, 1946-1955
	Fréchet, Maurice, 1934, 1952-1953, 1959
	Friedman, William F., 1952-1956
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	Harrison, George R., 1945, 1956
	Heisenberg, Werner, 1950
	Hove, L. van (Léon), 1950
	Hurd, Cuthbert C., 1948-1958, undated
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BOX 8-19	Subject File, 1930-1974 Correspondence, telegrams, memoranda, journals, logs, tests, travel orders, invitations, charts, graphs, forms, biographical data, photographs, clippings and other printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Organized by name of person or organization, topic, or type of material.
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BOX 25	1955	"Blast Wave Calculation" "Can We Survive Technology?" Fermi, Enrico "On the Permutability of Self-Adjoint Operators"
	1956	"Probabilistic Logics and the Synthesis of Reliable Organisms from Unreliable Components"
	Undated	"An Inequality Concerning Rational Functions of Non-Hermitian Matrices" "Comparison of Two Cells" "Discussion of the Cylinder Symmetrical Geometry of Points and Trajectories" "Fourier Transformation Method for Two-Dimensional (Barotropic) Meteorological Prediction" "Measure in Functional Spaces" "Non-Isomorphism of Certain Continuous Rings" "Numerical Method for Determination of the Value and the Best Strategies of a Zero-Sum Two-Person Game with Large Numbers of Strategies" "On Generalized Matrix-Algebras with a Unique Trace" "On Relativistic Gas-Degeneracy and the Collapsed Configuration of Stars" "Point-Source Model" "Point-Source-Solution, Assuming a Degeneracy of the Semi-Relativistic Type, $p=K\rho^{4/3}$, Over the Entire Star"
BOX 26		"Reliable Organizations of Unreliable Elements" "Representation of Certain Linear Groups by Unitary Operators in Hilbert Space" "Study of a Numerical Solution to a Two-Dimensional Hydrodynamical Problem"
	By others	General, 1952-1955, undated Weyl, Hermann, undated
	Book file	"Continuous Geometries with a Transition Probability," 1937 (5 folders)
BOX 27		<i>Functional Operators</i> , 1950 (2 folders) "Invariant Measures," 1940-1941 (4 folders) "Lattice Abelian Groups," circa 1940 <i>Mathematical Foundations of Quantum Mechanics</i> , publication correspondence, 1948-1954 (1 folder)
BOX 28		(1 folder) "Theory of Automata," undated (2 folders)

Speeches and Writings File, 1928-1960

Container

Contents

	<i>Theory of Games and Economic Behavior</i> , 1943
	Chapter files
	Nos. 1-8
	(8 folders)
BOX 29	Nos. 9-12
	(4 folders)
	General correspondence
	Notes
	(4 folders)
	Reviews
BOX 30	Unidentified, undated
	(2 folders)
	Miscellaneous
	Aeronautics publication program, Princeton, N.J., 1950-1951
	Continuous geometries, 1935-1937
	(4 folders)
BOX 31	(4 folders)
	<i>Mathematical Reviews</i> , 1948
	Notes
	1934-1944
	(5 folders)
	Undated
	(6 folders)
BOX 32	(15 folders)
	Petroleum company writings, 1948-1959, undated
	Philosophical Society of Washington, D.C., 1945-1946
	Princeton University Press, 1948-1957
BOX 33	Publications, list of, 1955-1960, undated
	Reviews, 1937
	Yale University, New Haven, Conn., 1954
	Unidentified, undated
	Reports
	1946
	"Preliminary Discussion of the Logical Design of an Electronic Computing Instrument"
	Congressional reapportionment
	"Planning and Coding of Problems for an Electronic Computing Instrument"
	(3 folders)
	1949, "Recent Theories of Turbulence"
	1953, "An Analysis of the Linear Displacement of Oil by Gas-Driven Solvent"
	Undated, shock waves (incomplete)
BOX 34	Addition I, 1912-1996
	Correspondence, biographical data, patents, photographs, a report, printed matter, and an index.
	Arranged by year of addition and therein alphabetically by name of person or type of material.
BOX 34	1993 addition
	Index to addition I, 1993

Addition I, 1912-1996

Container

Contents

Aldor, Peter and Eva, 1949-1989
Biographical material, 1991-1992
Family tree, undated
Patent, 1957
Photographs, 1912-1983, undated
Printed matter, 1946-1955, 1971
2002 addition
Miscellany, 1948, 1957, 1996

BOX 35-55

Addition II, 1926-2000

Correspondence, diary, legal documents, photographs, topical files, biographical material, computer programming flow charts, and writings relating to Von Neumann and his second wife, Klara Dan Von Neumann.

Arranged by name of husband and wife and therein by type of material.

BOX 35

John Von Neumann

American intervention in World War II, activism, 1941
Applied Mathematics Panel, 1943-1944
Atomic Energy Commission, 1955-1959
Biographical material, 1957-1960, 1966-1967, 2000
Correspondence, 1935-1958, undated
(2 folders)
Fortune, dummy for article, undated *See Oversize*
Logs of cables to Klara Dan Von Neumann, undated
Miscellany, 1943-1946, 1954-1958
Newspaper clippings, 1945-1946
Passports, travel documents, and naturalization documents, 1926-1943, 1949-1952
Writings
By John Von Neumann
First Draft of the Report on the EDVAC, 1945
Holographic writings, undated
Miscellaneous, 1944-1946, 1951-1958

BOX 36

By others, 1945-1969

Klara Dan Von Neumann

Address books, notebooks, and lists, undated
Aldor, Peter, 1938-1939, undated
(2 folders)
Biographical material, 1961-1964
Charles Dan estate
Correspondence
Dan, Kamilla, 1939-1951
Von Neumann, John
1940-1948
(4 folders)
1949-1956, undated
(3 folders)
Von Neumann, Klara Dan, 1948, 1962

BOX 37

1949-1956, undated
(3 folders)

Von Neumann, Klara Dan, 1948, 1962

Addition II, 1926-2000

Container

Contents

	Financial papers
	Bank statements, 1940-1945
	Cash book, 1940-1947
	Miscellany, 1939-1954
	Funeral and cemetery arrangements, 1939-1948
	Legal documents, 1939-1949, undated (2 folders)
BOX 38	Miscellany, undated
	Chilton Books, Philadelphia, Pa., 1960
	Computer instructions and flow charts, undated <i>See also Oversize</i>
	Computers, 1949-1950, 1959
	Correspondence
	Family
	Dan, Charles (father), 1937-1939
	Dan, Kamilla (mother) 1938-1949 (7 folders)
BOX 39	1952-1963, undated (8 folders)
	Deg, Andrew (nephew) 1939-1959 (3 folders)
BOX 40	1960-1963, undated (3 folders)
	Deg, Elizabeth (sister) 1938-1963 (8 folders)
BOX 41	undated
	Deg, Toncsi (niece), 1944-1962
	Milhofer, Manfred (cousin), 1939-1963 (5 folders)
	Miscellaneous, 1939-1963, undated (2 folders)
	Neumann, Michael J. (brother-in-law), 1941-1963, undated (2 folders)
BOX 42	Von Neumann, John 1937-1938 (9 folders)
BOX 43	1939-1949 (10 folders)
BOX 44	1950-1954 , undated (5 folders)
	Vonneumann, Nicholas A. (brother-in-law), 1942-1961
	Whitman, Marina Von Neumann (stepdaughter), 1945-1960
BOX 45	General 1929, 1937-1940 (11 folders)

Addition II, 1926-2000

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 46	1941-1953 (13 folders)
BOX 47	1954-1957 (7 folders) 1958 Jan.-Mar. (2 folders)
BOX 48	Apr.-Dec. (5 folders) 1959 Jan.-Sept. (3 folders)
BOX 49	Oct.-Dec. 1960-1961 (7 folders)
BOX 50	1962-1963 (4 folders) Undated (4 folders)
BOX 51	(4 folders) Death of John Von Neumann, 1957 Deg, Elizabeth (sister), 1940, 1949 Diary, 1928-1929
BOX 52	Household move, Budapest, Hungary to United States Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J. Literary estate of John Von Neumann Correspondence, 1956-1963, undated (8 folders)
BOX 53	Miscellany, 1955-1962, undated (2 folders) "The Scientific Files of John Von Neumann, Report on Contract Nonr 1358-6," 1959 Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories, Los Alamos, N.Mex., 1945-1953, undated (2 folders) Marriage, divorce, and immigration documents, 1936-1958 Meetings, conferences, and symposia, 1954-1963 Miscellany 1927-1962
BOX 54	Undated Newspapers and newspaper clippings <i>The Georgetowner</i> , 1955 Miscellaneous, 1938-1947, 1955-1960, undated (2 folders) Notes, undated Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945, undated (2 folders) Passports, drivers licenses, and vaccination certificates, 1928-1960

Addition II, 1926-2000

Container

Contents

	People to People, 1961-1963, undated (2 folders)
	Photographs
	Deg, Andrew, wedding pictures, undated
BOX 55	Miscellaneous, undated (3 folders)
	Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1947-1960
	Ration books and related document, 1943
	Strauss, Louis L., 1959
	U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo., Dr. John Von Neumann Award
	<i>Falcon News</i> , 1960-1962
	Miscellany, 1958-1964
	Photographs, undated
	Writings
	By Klara Dan Von Neumann, 1957-1959, undated (2 folders)
	By others, 1955-1960
BOX OV 1	Oversize
	Dummy for magazine article and computer programming flow charts. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Addition II
	John Von Neumann
	<i>Fortune</i> , dummy for article, undated (Container 35)
	Klara Dan Von Neumann
	Computer programming flow charts, undated (Container 38)