

Robert Helyer Thayer Papers

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LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm81076877>

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Revised by Michael Spangler with the assistance of John Monagle and Susie Moody

Collection Summary

Title: Robert Helyer Thayer Papers

Span Dates: 1920-1980

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1930-1964)

ID No.: MSS76877

Creator: Thayer, Robert Helyer, 1901-1984

Extent: 8,700 items ; 29 containers plus 1 classified and 1 oversize ; 12.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Diplomat, lawyer, and New York public official. Correspondence, memoranda, legal briefs and case files, reports, financial records, scrapbook, printed matter, maps, photographs, and other papers documenting Thayer's legal career, political activities in the Republican Party, service in naval intelligence during World War II, and work for the State Department.

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

Bundy, McGeorge--Correspondence.

Castle, William R. (William Richards), 1878-1963--Correspondence.

Dewey, Thomas E. (Thomas Edmund), 1902-1971--Correspondence.

Dillon, C. Douglas (Clarence Douglas), 1909-2003--Correspondence.

Donovan, William J. (William Joseph), 1883-1959--Correspondence.

Dulles, Allen, 1893-1969--Correspondence.

Dulles, John Foster, 1888-1959--Correspondence.

Hurok, Sol, 1888-1974--Correspondence.

Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus), 1902-1974.

Lindbergh, Charles Augustus, 1930-1932--Kidnapping, 1932.

Rusk, Dean, 1909-1994--Correspondence.

Thayer, Robert Helyer, 1901-1984.

Weeks, Sinclair, 1893-1972--Correspondence.

Organizations

Republican Party (U.S. : 1854-)

Unesco.

United States. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

United States. Department of State.

United States. Naval Reserve.

Subjects

Art.

Bankruptcy--Canada.

Bankruptcy--United States.

Congresses and conventions.

Diplomatic and consular service, American.

Embassy buildings.

Kidnapping--United States.

Law--New York (State)--New York County.

Practice of law--New York (State)--New York.

Public prosecutors--New York (State)--New York County.

World War, 1939-1945--Military intelligence.

Places

France--Foreign relations--United States.
New York (N.Y.)--Politics and government.
New York (State)--Politics and government--20th century.
Romania--Foreign relations--United States.
United States--Foreign relations--France.
United States--Foreign relations--Romania.
United States--Politics and government--20th century.

Occupations

Diplomats.
Lawyers.
Public officials--New York (State)

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Robert Helyer Thayer, diplomat, lawyer, and New York public official, were given to the Library of Congress by Thayer in 1981. Additional material was given to the Library by Thayer's estate in 1984.

Processing History

The papers of Robert Helyer Thayer were arranged and described in 1985. The collection was expanded and revised in 1996 and additional revisions were made to the finding aid in 2009.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Sound recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Robert Helyer Thayer Papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert Helyer Thayer 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 Robert Helyer Thayer 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.

Security Classified Documents

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

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1901, Sept. 22	Born, Southboro, Mass.

1922	A.B., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1923	LL.B., Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Mass.
1926-1929	Law clerk, Cadwalader, Wickersham and Taft, New York, N.Y.
1929-1932	Associate counsel to William J. Donovan of Donovan, Leisure, Newton and Lumbard, New York, N.Y.
1929	Associate counsel, investigation into the United States Bankruptcy Act, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York
1932	Assisted Henry Breckinridge as counsel to Charles A. Lindbergh in the matter of the kidnapping of Lindbergh's son
1934	Partner, Donovan, Leisure, Newton and Lumbard, New York, N.Y.
1936	Chairman, Republican National Finance Committee for New York City
1938	Appointed assistant district attorney for New York County, N.Y.
1941-1945	Commissioned lieutenant commander, United States Naval Reserve, and assisted in organization of combat intelligence
1945	Assistant to John Foster Dulles, United States delegation to United Nations charter conference in San Francisco, Calif.
1946	Candidate for Congress from Brooklyn, N.Y.
1946-1947	Assistant commissioner, New York State Division of Housing
1949-1951	Commissioner, New York State Commission Against Discrimination
1951-1954	Assistant to ambassador to France
1955-1958	Minister to Romania
1958-1962	Assistant secretary for cultural and educational affairs, State Department
1962-1971	Director of governmental relations, American Field Service
1984, Jan. 26	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Robert Helyer Thayer (1901-1984) span the period 1920-1980, with the bulk of the material concentrated between 1930 and 1964. The collection covers the breadth of Thayer's professional life, including his legal career, political activities in the Republican party, service in naval intelligence during World War II, and work for the State Department. His career brought him into close contact with many prominent figures in mid-twentieth century American politics and culture. The collection is composed of correspondence, memoranda, legal briefs, case files, reports, financial records,

photographs, and printed matter arranged in the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Legal File](#), [Subject File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Classified](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [General Correspondence](#) series chiefly reflects Thayer's intelligence service in the Naval Reserves, his diplomatic assignments as assistant ambassador to France and minister to Romania, and his work for the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Relations. Correspondents include McGeorge Bundy, William R. Castle, Thomas E. Dewey, C. Douglas Dillon, William J. Donovan, Allen Welsh Dulles, John Foster Dulles, Sol Hurok, Dean Rusk, and Sinclair Weeks.

Highlights of Thayer's early legal career in New York include his study of American and Canadian bankruptcy laws, his service as assistant counsel to Charles A. Lindbergh after the kidnapping of Lindbergh's son, and his appointment in 1938 as assistant district attorney for New York County by Thomas E. Dewey. The [Legal File](#) contains material relating to each of these topics as well as other legal cases from the immediate post-World War II period.

The [Subject File](#) documents Thayer's service in naval intelligence during World War II, his political activities in the Republican party in New York state, and his work as assistant secretary for cultural and educational affairs for the State Department. During the late 1930s, he was active in Republican party fund-raising and assisted Thomas E. Dewey in his successful bid for the office of district attorney of New York County and later campaigns for higher political offices. The file includes material relating to Republican party finances, Dewey's presidential campaigns of 1940 and 1948, and Thayer's own unsuccessful run for Congress in 1946. The largest portion of the Subject File pertains to his work with the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Relations and includes material related to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), international conferences, and art in American embassies.

The [Miscellany](#) series includes financial papers, printed matter, invitations, maps, memorabilia, and a scrapbook of clippings pertaining primarily to Thayer's political activities.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [General Correspondence, 1940-1964](#)
- [Legal File, 1926-1957](#)
- [Subject File, 1920-1980](#)
- [Miscellany, 1930-1965](#)
- [Classified, 1953-1959](#)
- [Oversize, 1935-1946](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-3	<u>General Correspondence, 1940-1964</u> Correspondence received and sent. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 4-11	<u>Legal File, 1926-1957</u> Correspondence, office memoranda, legal briefs, case files, reports, trial transcripts, and notes. Arranged alphabetically by topic, type of material, or name of person or organization and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 12-28	<u>Subject File, 1920-1980</u> Correspondence, reports, memoranda, speeches and writings, financial records, clippings, maps, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by topic or name of organization or person and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 28-29	<u>Miscellany, 1930-1965</u> Printed matter, clippings, financial records, cards, invitations, maps, memorabilia, and scrapbook. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX CL 1	<u>Classified, 1953-1959</u> Classified material consisting mostly of correspondence. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	<u>Oversize, 1935-1946</u> Oversize scrapbook. Described according to the series and box from which it was removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-3	General Correspondence, 1940-1964 Correspondence received and sent. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 1	A-F, 1941-1961 <i>See also Classified</i> (5 folders)
BOX 2	G-M, 1941-1961 <i>See also Classified</i> (5 folders)
BOX 3	N-Z, 1940-1964, undated <i>See also Classified</i> (5 folders)
BOX 3	Unidentified, 1942-1961, undated <i>See also Classified</i>
BOX 4-11	Legal File, 1926-1957 Correspondence, office memoranda, legal briefs, case files, reports, trial transcripts, and notes. Arranged alphabetically by topic, type of material, or name of person or organization and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 4	Ardry Trading Co., 1947, undated (3 folders)
BOX 4	Bankruptcy
BOX 4	"Bankruptcy Administration in Canada," circa 1929
BOX 4	Calculations, undated
BOX 4	Interviews, 1929
BOX 4	Miscellany, 1926-1929, undated (2 folders)
BOX 5	Testimony, 1929
BOX 5	Binghamton Raceway, Binghamton, N.Y., 1947-1948
BOX 5	Cadwalader, Wickersham and Taft
BOX 5	Incorporation, 1926-1929, undated (2 folders)
BOX 5	Memoranda, 1927-1929, 1947-1948, undated (3 folders)
BOX 6	Notes, undated (2 folders)
BOX 6	General correspondence, 1928-1957, undated (4 folders)
BOX 6	Greeff, Emily Oetker, 1947-1950 (2 folders)
BOX 6	Kellogg, Burton G., 1947-1948
BOX 7	Lindbergh, Charles A., kidnapping case
BOX 7	Correspondence, 1932-1934
BOX 7	Miscellany, undated
BOX 7	Report and photographs, 1932, undated

Legal File, 1926-1957

Container

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BOX 8	Mealpack Corp. of America, 1947, undated
BOX 8	New York County, N.Y., district attorney's office
BOX 8	Briefs, 1938-1939
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BOX 8	Congratulatory, 1937-1938
BOX 8	General, 1938-1941, undated (3 folders)
BOX 8	Docket, 1938
BOX 9	Gutierrez, Santiago, 1938
BOX 9	Memoranda, 1938-1941
BOX 9	Recommendations for cases, 1938
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BOX 10	Percival Aviation Corp., 1947
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BOX 10	Subversive activities, 1941
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BOX 10	Tri-County Lumber Corp., 1947
BOX 11	Tolstoy, Ilia
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BOX 11	With Thayer, 1946-1950
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BOX 11	Warner, George, 1945-1950 (2 folders)
BOX 11	Warner, Robert, 1947, undated
BOX 11	World Resources, Inc., 1948-1949
BOX 12-28	Subject File, 1920-1980 Correspondence, reports, memoranda, speeches and writings, financial records, clippings, maps, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by topic or name of organization or person and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 12	Americans United for World Government, 1946-1947, undated (2 folders)

Subject File, 1920-1980

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BOX 12	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Relations, State Department
BOX 12	African airlift, 1960
BOX 12	Ambassadorial briefings, 1959-1960
BOX 12	American Committee to Preserve Abu Simbel
BOX 12	Correspondence, 1963-1967 (2 folders)
BOX 12	Memoranda, 1963-1964
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BOX 13	Miscellany, 1954-1965
BOX 13	Cabinet paper about coordination of educational and cultural affairs, 1959
BOX 13	Conferences
BOX 13	African Conference on Department of State and United States Information Agency Cultural Programs, Kampala, Uganda, 1960, undated
BOX 13	Business Community in International Educational and Cultural Affairs, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1960-1961
BOX 13	Cultural Relations of the United States and the Soviet Union, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1960-1961 (3 folders)
BOX 14	Science and the Scientist in International Educational and Cultural Affairs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., 1960
BOX 14	Correspondence, 1957-1966
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BOX 15	Educational exchange report, 1961
BOX 15	Financial aid, 1959, undated
BOX 15	Fulbright, J. William, 1959
BOX 15	International Cooperation Year, 1965
BOX 15	Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich, 1959 visit to the United States, 1956-1960
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BOX 16	Clippings, 1957-1961 (2 folders)
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Subject File, 1920-1980

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BOX 20	Miscellany, 1946, undated (3 folders)
BOX 21	Photographs, undated
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BOX 21	Speeches, 1946
BOX 21	Statistics, 1946, undated (2 folders)
BOX 22	Dewey, Thomas E., presidential campaigns
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Subject File, 1920-1980

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BOX 25	Notes, 1943, 1971, 1980, undated
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BOX 26	Republican State Committee
BOX 26	Contributors lists, 1928-1948, undated (3 folders)
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BOX 27	McDonough, William J., 1933-1934
BOX 27	Miscellany, 1935, undated
BOX 27	Moderate Club, 1947
BOX 27	Payment of note, 1934
BOX 28	Political opposition, 1934, undated
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BOX 28	State Commission Against Discrimination, 1949-1951
BOX 28-29	Miscellany, 1930-1965 Printed matter, clippings, financial records, cards, invitations, maps, memorabilia, and scrapbook. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
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BOX 29	Clippings, 1946-1959, undated
BOX 29	Finances, 1930-1962, undated (5 folders)
BOX 29	Invitations, 1941-1965, undated
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BOX 29	Scrapbook, 1935-1946, undated <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX CL 1	Classified, 1953-1959 Classified material consisting mostly of correspondence. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

Classified, 1953-1959

Container

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BOX CL 1	W-Z, 1955-1959 (Container 3)
BOX CL 1	Unidentified, 1958 (Container 3)
BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1935-1946
	Oversize scrapbook.
	Described according to the series and box from which it was removed.
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	Scrapbook, 1935-1946, undated (Container 29)