

# Calvin Coolidge Papers

## A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



LIBRARY OF  
CONGRESS

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

2009

Revised 2015 February

Contact information:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Additional search options available at:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009246>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm79016741>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Calvin Coolidge Papers

**Span Dates:** 1915-1932

**ID No.:** MSS16741

**Creator:** Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933

**Extent:** 179,000 items ; 294 containers ; 43 linear feet ; 190 microfilm reels

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**Summary:** United States president and businessman. White House office files from Coolidge's presidency consisting of incoming correspondence, draft replies, carbon copies of outgoing letters from Coolidge or one of his secretaries, incoming telegraph messages, appointment books, and names and addresses of White House guests. Includes telegraph messages from the first months of the Herbert Hoover administration.

## 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

Andrews, Lincoln C. (Lincoln Clarke), 1867-1950--Correspondence.  
Beck, James M. (James Montgomery), 1861-1936--Correspondence.  
Bristol, Mark L. (Mark Lambert), 1868-1939--Correspondence.  
Clark, Edward Tracy, 1878-1935--Correspondence.  
Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933.  
Culbertson, William Smith, 1884-1966--Correspondence.  
Dennis, Alfred Pearce, 1869-1931--Correspondence.  
Dewey, Charles Schuveltdt, 1880-1980--Correspondence.  
Dodge, Henry Percival, 1870-1936--Correspondence.  
Eisenhower, Milton Stover, 1899-1985--Correspondence.  
Foster, John Gilman, 1859-1931--Correspondence.  
Gore, Howard M.--Correspondence.  
Grew, Joseph C. (Joseph Clark), 1880-1965--Correspondence.  
Hammond, John Hays, 1888-1965--Correspondence.  
Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964--Correspondence.  
Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964.  
Hughes, Charles Evans, 1862-1948--Correspondence.  
Jardine, William Marion, 1879-1955--Correspondence.  
Kellogg, Frank B. (Frank Billings), 1856-1937--Correspondence.  
Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus), 1902-1974--Correspondence.  
Longworth, Nicholas, 1869-1931--Correspondence.  
Lynn, David, 1873-1961--Correspondence.  
MacNider, Hanford, 1889-1968--Correspondence.  
Moses, George H. (George Higgins), 1869-1944--Correspondence.  
New, Harry S. (Harry Stewart), 1858-1937--Correspondence.  
Norbeck, Peter, 1870-1936--Correspondence.  
O'Toole, William Joseph, 1893-1928--Correspondence.  
Olds, Robert Edwin, 1875-1932--Correspondence.  
Phillips, William, 1878-1968--Correspondence.  
Pinchot, Gifford, 1865-1946--Correspondence.  
Poindexter, Miles, 1868-1946--Correspondence.  
Pomerene, Atlee, 1863-1937--Correspondence.  
Prince, John Dyneley, 1868-1945--Correspondence.  
Robinson, Theodore Douglas, 1883-1934--Correspondence.

Russell, William Worthington, 1859- --Correspondence.  
Sanders, Everett, 1882-1950--Correspondence.  
Slemp, C. Bascom (Campbell Bascom), 1870-1943--Correspondence.  
Wallace, Henry Cantwell, 1866-1924--Correspondence.  
Wells, Ira Kent, 1871-1934--Correspondence.  
West, Roy Owen, 1868-1958--Correspondence.  
Willis, Frank B. (Frank Bartlette), 1871-1928--Correspondence.  
Winston, Garrard Bigelow, 1882-1955--Correspondence.  
Wood, Leonard, 1860-1927--Correspondence.

### **Organizations**

White House (Washington, D.C.)

### **Places**

United States--Politics and government--1923-1929.  
United States--Politics and government--1929-1933.  
Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

### **Occupations**

Businessmen.  
Presidents--United States.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Provenance**

The papers of Calvin Coolidge, United States president and businessman, were deposited in the Library of Congress by Coolidge in 1929 and converted to a gift by his wife, Grace Goodhue Coolidge, in 1953. Additions were received by gift, purchase, and transfer from others, 1921-1990.

### **Processing History**

The collection was prepared for indexing and microfilming in 1965 and revised and expanded in 1989 and in 1994. In 2009 the finding aid was expanded by including description of the main collection from the published index.

### **Additional Guides**

The microfilm edition of these papers (not including additions) is indexed in the *Index to the Calvin Coolidge Papers* (Washington, D.C., 1965) prepared as part of the President's Papers Index Series. The index is available online in [PDF](#) and [page view](#) versions. The addition to the collection was partially described in the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* (Jan. 26, 1973).

### **Transfers**

Photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

### **Copyright Status**

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Calvin Coolidge 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 Coolidge Papers 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.

## Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on 190 reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

## Preferred Citation

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

## Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1872, July 4	Born, Plymouth, Vt.
1895	Graduated, Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.
1897	Admitted to Massachusetts bar
1898	Opened law office, Northampton, Mass.
1905	Married Grace Anna Goodhue (died 1957)
1907-1908	Member, Massachusetts house of representatives
1910-1911	Mayor, Northampton, Mass.
1912-1915	Member, Massachusetts state senate
1916-1918	Lieutenant governor, Massachusetts
1919-1920	Governor, Massachusetts
1921-1923	Vice president of the United States
1923-1929	President of the United States
1933, Jan. 5	Died, Northampton, Mass.

## History of the Collection

[From *Index to the Calvin Coolidge Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1965), pp.v-vi]

The Calvin Coolidge Papers in the Library of Congress consist largely of correspondence files remaining in the White House when the President left office on March 4, 1929. Following an exchange of letters between Mr. Coolidge and J. Franklin Jameson, [1] then Chief of the Manuscript Division in the Library, the collection, now estimated to number 175,000 pieces, was transferred to the Library of Congress as a deposit. Thereafter scholars were permitted to use the papers with the assent of Mr. Coolidge or, following his death in 1933, with that of his widow. Mrs. Coolidge formally gave the papers to the Library in 1953. [2] Since her death in 1957 access has been unrestricted. To this large group of papers, constituting series 1 in the microfilm edition and in this index, a few other Coolidge items acquired over the years have been added to form a much smaller series 2. Series 3 comprises three substantial volumes of names and addresses of guests at formal White House social functions.

It might be assumed that so large a number of manuscripts would provide enough material for a thorough study of Coolidge's long career of public service which began in Northampton, Mass., in 1899 and culminated in the Presidency, or at least that the 6 years Coolidge spent as Chief Executive would be rather completely documented. Such unfortunately, is not the case. The scholar must look elsewhere for the record of Coolidge's career before his becoming President, for the correspondence files for 1923-29, bulky as they are, reveal very little significant events of this period. These thousands of letters are mostly those from private citizens along with carbon copies of routine replies. They include only a small quantity of correspondence with political or governmental figures.

Although the "disappointingly thin" [3] character of the Coolidge Papers was long apparent, explanations could only be surmised until 1962 when the Edward T. Clark Papers were opened in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. [4] Clark, a fellow Amherst College alumnus, had served as private secretary to Coolidge during the latter's tenure as Vice President and as President. In a letter to Harry E. Ross, Coolidge's last secretary, written shortly after the former President's death in 1933, Clark related that "Mr. Coolidge's desire was to destroy everything in the so-called personal files and there would have been nothing preserved if I had not taken some things out on my own responsibility." [5] Five years later in a conversation with St. George L. Sioussat, then Chief of the Manuscript Division, Mrs. Coolidge stated that the late President had "destroyed all his 'personal' papers." [6] The evidence is thus quite strong that Coolidge eliminated, if not quite all, at least a large part of his personal papers. The remainder, comprising the Calvin Coolidge Papers in the Library of Congress indexed in the present work and the smaller collection of Coolidge material at the Forbes Library in Northampton, is therefore of considerably less importance than its size or the career of its subject might suggest.

The right of each President to dispose of his personal papers in any way he might choose has been assumed throughout the history of the office, and Coolidge is not the first Chief Executive to destroy portions of his files. Martin Van Buren, Franklin Pierce, Chester A. Arthur, and William McKinley all destroyed parts of their personal papers from one motive or another. [7] In the case of Coolidge, the reason for such destruction very likely lies in his personality. His reserve is legendary. A shy and taciturn man, even by Yankee standards, he did not change the habits of a lifetime when he entered the White House. William Allen White, a critical though not unsympathetic biographer, recalled spending several days with Coolidge in 1924. "What I wanted," he wrote, "was his slant on things, his point of view, the light that glowed in the inner chambers of his heart." But, White added, "he kept it hooded." [8] Claude M. Fuess, a quite sympathetic biographer, also lamented Coolidge's silences, noting that "his secretiveness is almost unparalleled among American statesmen." [9] Finally, Edward T. Clark, who knew something of the contents of the destroyed papers and who was probably privy to as many secrets as anyone around Coolidge, in another letter commenting on the papers' destruction noted that "this would not involve the loss which you might at first imagine because as President, Mr. Coolidge did not follow the practice of other Presidents in trying to explain his Administration through letters to friends." Hoover and Wilson, he continued, had deliberately tried to supply posterity with a record through memoranda or letters on public affairs. "Mr. Coolidge, however, strictly avoided this and the files, therefore, consisted of the huge number of letters to him which might be of interest but with replies which reveal little or nothing." [10] Although this explanation may be small consolation to the student of 20th-century American politics, it is in keeping with Coolidge's personality. If he did not actually say "I have never been hurt by what I have not said," [11] the statement epitomizes both Coolidge's attitude and the letters that have survived. The destruction of part of his own papers may have been but an extension of this philosophy.

It is against this background that the present work must be reviewed. The character of the surviving Coolidge Papers is such that it was decided that the most useful as well as most economical index would be one organized around the "case" files and subject titles of the collection's contents, together with cross- references. In consequence, this index is much smaller than would be one which indexed every correspondent and every letter.

Coolidge material, of course, survives in other collections. The Edward T. Clark Papers, already referred to, contain a number of Coolidge letters and other material about him, as do the papers of his confidant and adviser Frank Waterman Stearns at Holy Cross College, Worcester, Mass. The Everett Sanders Papers in the Library of Congress contain reading copies of Coolidge speeches. At the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts, there is a significant collection of Coolidge material. There, in the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Room, are to be found letters received and copies of letters sent while Coolidge was Governor of Massachusetts, along with clippings, copies of speeches, and memorabilia.

1. Jameson to Coolidge, May 6, 1929; Coolidge to Jameson, May 9, 1929; Manuscript Division files.
2. Instrument of gift, March 24, 1953. Exchange and Gift Division files.
3. Allan Nevins in *Dictionary of American Biography*, XXI (New York, 1944), p.198.

4. The Clark Papers were given to the Library in 1942 by Charles Kohen with the provision that they be sealed for 20 years. They are now available for use.
5. Clark to Ross, March 31, 1933. Edward T. Clark Papers.
6. Memorandum, March 3, 1959. Manuscript Division files.
7. See Robert V. Remini, *Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party* (New York, 1959), p. 13; and the Library of Congress: *Calendar of the Papers of Martin Van Buren* (Washington, 1910), p. 5; *Index to the Franklin Pierce Papers* (Washington, 1962), p. v; *Index to the Chester A. Arthur Papers* (Washington, 1961), p. v; and *Index to the William McKinley Papers* (Washington, 1963) p. vi
8. *A Puritan in Babylon, the Story of Calvin Coolidge* (New York, 1938), p. vii.
9. *Calvin Coolidge, the Man from Vermont* (Boston, 1940), p. 469
10. Clark to Harry E. Ross, January 28, 1933. Edward T. Clark Papers.
11. Quoted in John H. McKee, compiler, *Coolidge Wit and Wisdom* (New York, 1933), p. 121

## Scope and Content Note for Additions to the Collection

The addition to the papers of Calvin Coolidge consists of material transferred to the Library of Congress in 1985 from the Office of Presidential Libraries, National Archives and Records Administration, and other items received by gift and purchase from various sources between 1970 and 1990. Designated as [Series 4](#) of the collection, the Addition is not available on microfilm and is not described in the published index of the papers. It spans the years 1915-1932 and includes correspondence and related material, appointment books, and volumes of incoming telegraph messages. The telegraph messages also date from the first months of the Herbert Hoover administration.

Of particular interest is a note written by Coolidge and given to his secretary, Everett Sanders, to copy for distribution to journalists in Rapid City, South Dakota. The note reads, "I do not choose to run for President in nineteen twenty eight."

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [Series 1: Executive Office Correspondence, 1923-1929](#)
- [Series 2: Additional Correspondence, 1921-1929](#)
- [Series 3: Reception Lists, 1925-1927](#)
- [Series 4: Addition, 1915-1932](#)

## Description of Series

*Container*

REEL 1-188

*Series*

**Series 1: Executive Office Correspondence, 1923-1929**

Files from the President's Executive Office consisting of letters received, sometimes with brief notes drafted by Coolidge for reply, and carbon copies of outgoing letters from Coolidge or his secretaries. Enclosures are filed with their covering letters.

The original numbered subject or case file sequence has been retained. Within a case file or subdivision of a case file the arrangement is chronological and, within the days, alphabetical by name of correspondent or by locality of organization. A typed index to case file titles in alphabetical order precedes the series.

REEL 188

**Series 2: Additional Correspondence, 1921-1929**

Correspondence not a part of the Executive Office file, including photocopies.  
Arranged chronologically.

REEL 188-190

**Series 3: Reception Lists, 1925-1927**

Lists, with addresses, of persons invited to formal social events at the White House.  
Arranged chronologically and grouped into judicial, congressional and army and navy reception lists within each volume.

BOX 4:288-294

**Series 4: Addition, 1915-1932**

Correspondence and related material, appointment books, and incoming telegraph messages.  
Arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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REEL 9	5A5-5A21
REEL 10	5A22-5A49
REEL 11	5A50-5A106
REEL 12	5A107-5A152
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REEL 19	10A96-10E
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REEL 22	18 (cont.)-18B, 1926, Oct. 30
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REEL 24	18F (cont.)-19, 1924, Sept.
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## Series 1: Executive Office Correspondence, 1923-1929

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REEL 36	25H (cont.)-27
REEL 37	28-28, 1924, Oct. 21
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## Series 1: Executive Office Correspondence, 1923-1929

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REEL 99	200Y (cont.)-202, 1923, Nov. 16
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REEL 106	227A (cont.)-227C, 1927, Aug. 8
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REEL 109	249 (cont.)-250, 1926, Apr. 7
REEL 110	250 (cont.)-254A, 1925, Feb. 4
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REEL 112	276 (cont.)-276, 1925, June 5
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REEL 114	276 (cont.)-282A, 1924, Oct. 24
REEL 115	282A (cont.)-296, 1928, July 13
REEL 116	296 (cont.)-319, 1926, June 17
REEL 117	319 (cont.)-341
REEL 118	342-358, 1926, Nov. 26
REEL 119	358 (cont.)-379, 1924, Feb. 13
REEL 120	379 (cont.)-394, 1928, Sept. 29
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REEL 129	401-422, 1923, Nov. 8
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REEL 138	587 (cont.)-608, 1927, July 17
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REEL 140	686 (cont.)-736
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REEL 159	1832 (cont.)-1865, 1928, Dec. 14
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REEL 162	1996 (cont.)-2070
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REEL 165	2194-2285, 1924, Sept. 15
REEL 166	2285 (cont.)-2365, 1924, Oct. 11
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REEL 180	3655-3795
REEL 181	3796-3848, 1927, May 18
REEL 182	3848 (cont.)-3867
REEL 183	3868-3965
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REEL 187	4365-4635
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REEL 188

### Series 2: Additional Correspondence, 1921-1929

Correspondence not a part of the Executive Office file, including photocopies.  
Arranged chronologically.

REEL 188

1921-1929

REEL 188-190

### Series 3: Reception Lists, 1925-1927

Lists, with addresses, of persons invited to formal social events at the White House.  
Arranged chronologically and grouped into judicial, congressional and army and navy  
reception lists within each volume.

REEL 188

Vol. 1

REEL 189

Vol. 2-Vol. 3, Judiciary p. 220

REEL 190

Vol. 3 (cont.)

BOX 4:288-294

### Series 4: Addition, 1915-1932

Correspondence and related material, appointment books, and incoming telegraph messages.  
Arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.

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Correspondence and related material

Adams, W. W., 1932

Collins, Paul V., 1928

Coolidge, Calvin, note to Sanders, "I do not chose to run," 1927

Crane, Winthrop M., 1923

Dunn, Edward 1923

Evans, E. H., 1915

Koenig, Samuel S., 1924

Lawrence, David, 1926

Nelson, Oscar H., 1920

**Series 4: Addition, 1915-1932**

***Container***

***Contents***

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	O'Shea, Michael J., 1915
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	Tippy, William, 1921
	Turgeon, Newton E., 1925
	Waldo, Richard H., 1931
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	1925
	Volume I
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<b>BOX 4:290</b>	1926
	Volume I
	Volume II
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	Volume I
<b>BOX 4:291</b>	Volume II
	1928
	Volume I
	Volume II
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	1923, Aug. 15
	1925, Dec. 24-28 Sept. 1926
	1926, Sept. 29-24 June 1927
<b>BOX 4:294</b>	1927, June 28-14 Apr. 1928
	1928, Apr. 16-11 Apr. 1929