

Benjamin V. Cohen Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Collection Summary

Title: Benjamin V. Cohen Papers

Span Dates: 1902-1983

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1918-1983)

ID No.: MSS61590

Creator: Cohen, Benjamin V.

Extent: 9,850 items ; 26 containers plus 6 classified ; 14.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Lawyer and statesman. Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, writings, notes, reports, printed matter, and other papers pertaining to Cohen's career in public service and as a private counselor.

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

Acheson, Dean, 1893-1971--Correspondence.

Byrnes, James F. (James Francis), 1882-1972--Correspondence.

Cohen family.

Cohen, Benjamin V.

Douglas, William O. (William Orville), 1898-1980--Correspondence.

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

Finletter, Thomas K. (Thomas Knight), 1893-1980--Correspondence.

Frankfurter, Felix, 1882-1965--Correspondence.

Lilienthal, David Eli, 1899-1981--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962--Correspondence.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. (Arthur Meier), 1917-2007--Correspondence.

Stevenson, Adlai E. (Adlai Ewing), 1900-1965--Correspondence.

Willkie, Wendell L. (Wendell Lewis), 1892-1944--Correspondence.

Organizations

Potsdam Conference (1945)

United Nations.

United States. Civil Rights Act of 1957.

United States. Congress. Senate--Cloture.

United States. Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935.

United States. Shipping Board.

Subjects

Civil rights.

Destroyers (Warships)

Executive power--United States.

Human rights.

International relations.

Jews--Societies, etc.

Natural resources.

Navy-yards and naval stations, American.

New Deal, 1933-1939.

Taxation--Law and legislation--United States.

War, Declaration of--United States.

World War, 1914-1918.

World War, 1939-1945--Diplomatic history.

World War, 1939-1945--Naval operations, British.
Zionism.

Places

Israel.
Taiwan.
United States--Foreign relations--1933-1945.
United States--Foreign relations--1945-1989.
United States--Politics and government--1933-1945.
Vietnam.

Occupations

Lawyers.
Statesmen.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Benjamin V. Cohen, lawyer and statesman, were deeded to the Library of Congress in 1983 by his estate.

Processing History

The papers of Benjamin V. Cohen were arranged and described in 1985. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Transfers

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

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Benjamin V. Cohen 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

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions. In addition, 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, Benjamin V. Cohen Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1894, Sept. 23	Born, Muncie, Ind.

1914	Ph.B., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1915	J.D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1916	S.J.D., Harvard University Law School, Cambridge, Mass.
1916-1917	Secretary to Judge Julian Mack, United States Circuit Judge
1917-1919	Attorney, United States Shipping Board
1919-1921	Counsel for American Zionists at peace conference, London, England, and Paris, France
1922-1933	Private law practice, New York, N.Y.
1933-1934	Associate general counsel, Public Works Administration
1934-1941	General counsel, National Power Policy Commission
1936-1938	Special assistant to United States attorney general concerned with public utility holding legislation
1941	Adviser to United States ambassador to Great Britain
1942-1943	Assistant to director, Office of Economic Stabilization
1943-1945	General counsel, Office of War Mobilization
1944	Legal advisor, International Monetary Conference, Breton Woods Conference, Breton Woods, N.H. Member, American delegation, Dumbarton Oaks Conference, Washington, D.C.
1945	Member, American delegation, Berlin Conference, Berlin, Germany Member, American delegation, Council of Foreign Ministers, London, England Member, American delegation, Moscow Conference, Moscow, USSR
1945-1947	Counselor, State Department
1946	Member, American delegation, Paris Conference, Paris, France Member, American delegation, Moscow Conference, Moscow, USSR
1950	United States representative, International Court of Justice, the Hague
1952	United States representative, United Nations Disarmament Commission
1983, Aug. 15	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Benjamin V. Cohen (1894-1983) span the years 1902-1983, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1918-1983. Cohen, best known as an adviser to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, became the architect of some of the New Deal's principal policies and basic legislation. The papers are organized into the following series: [Family Papers](#),

[General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Financial Papers](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Department of State \(CLASSIFIED\)](#).

The papers touch on many aspects of Cohen's career in public service and as a private counselor. There are files on his work for the United States Shipping Board during World War I, his participation in postwar Zionism and subsequent interest in Israel and Jewish groups, his role in New Deal legislation, coalition diplomacy during World War II, the creation of the United Nations, and post-World War II foreign policy. After Cohen left the government in 1953, he continued to play a vital role in advising public officials and individuals in private about international relations, natural resources, civil liberties, and human rights. In addition to New Deal matters, the collection contains files on the destroyers-for-bases agreement with Great Britain, tax reform, and the Civil Rights Act of 1957. Treated in the [General Correspondence](#) and [Subject File](#) are issues such as the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, the Senate's cloture rule, Taiwan, presidential authority to use the armed forces in the absence of a declaration of war, Vietnam, the Potsdam Conference, and the Minimum Wage Bill.

The [Speeches and Writings File](#) further reflects his views and activities and contains some of the clearest expressions of his political and philosophical opinions. The [Family Papers](#) include biographical information about Cohen as well as other members of his family, and the [Financial Papers](#) consist of correspondence and records relating to family and friends whom Cohen counseled in both financial and legal matters.

Prominent correspondents in the collection include Dean Acheson, James F. Byrnes, William O. Douglas, John Foster Dulles, Felix Frankfurter, Thomas K. Finletter, David Eli Lilienthal, Eleanor Roosevelt, Arthur M. Schlesinger (1917-2007), Adlai E. Stevenson (1900-1965), and Wendell L. Willkie.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Family Papers, 1902-1983](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1933-1983](#)
- [Subject File, 1918-1983](#)
- [Speeches and Writings File, 1935-1980](#)
- [Financial Papers, 1928-1983](#)
- [Miscellany, 1928-1983](#)
- [Department of State \(CLASSIFIED\)](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-2	<u>Family Papers, 1902-1983</u> Correspondence with family members, letters of congratulation and resignation, and miscellaneous documents such as military physical examinations, medical prescriptions, certification to practice law, and brief biographical information. Arranged alphabetically by name of family member.
BOX 2-5	<u>General Correspondence, 1933-1983</u> Letters received and occasional copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 6-16	<u>Subject File, 1918-1983</u> Correspondence, memoranda, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or subject.
BOX 16-20	<u>Speeches and Writings File, 1935-1980</u> Drafts, typescripts, memoranda, letters to the editor, interviews, and printed copies of Cohen's speeches and writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 21-23	<u>Financial Papers, 1928-1983</u> Correspondence, notes, fragments, and records of estates and trusts. Arranged by name of family or personal estate or trust and by type of material.
BOX 24-26	<u>Miscellany, 1928-1983</u> Appointment books, drawings, greeting cards, invitations, and other memorabilia. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX CL 1-CL 6	<u>Department of State (CLASSIFIED)</u> Correspondence, memoranda, policy papers, and miscellaneous records. Arranged by topic.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-2	Family Papers, 1902-1983 Correspondence with family members, letters of congratulation and resignation, and miscellaneous documents such as military physical examinations, medical prescriptions, certification to practice law, and brief biographical information. Arranged alphabetically by name of family member.
BOX 1	Cohen, Moses (father), 1902, 1922
BOX 1	Cohen, Sarah (mother), estate, 1946-1947
BOX 1	Cohen, Benjamin V.
BOX 1	Appointment and resignation correspondence, 1941-1949 (3 folders)
BOX 1	Congratulatory correspondence, 1945 (2 folders)
BOX 1	Miscellany
BOX 1	Cohen, Selma Jeanne (niece), 1964-1981
BOX 2	Freund, Bernard (nephew), and Ruth, 1962-1983
BOX 2	Freund, Daniel (grandnephew), 1965-1982, undated
BOX 2	Freund, Nancy (niece), 1964-1982, undated
BOX 2	Freund, Pearl (sister), 1952-1982, undated
BOX 2	Freund, William D. (nephew), and family, 1962-1980
BOX 2-5	General Correspondence, 1933-1983 Letters received and occasional copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 2	A-C (3 folders)
BOX 3	D-H (5 folders)
BOX 4	I-P (7 folders)
BOX 5	R-Z and unidentified (2 folders)
BOX 6-16	Subject File, 1918-1983 Correspondence, memoranda, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or subject.
BOX 6	Abrahams, Margery, 1934-1981
BOX 6	Acheson, Dean, 1949-1970
BOX 6	Adam, Eric Forbes, 1919, undated
BOX 6	American Association for the United Nations, 1947-1967
BOX 6	Arms control, 1958, 1982

Subject File, 1918-1983

Container

Contents

BOX 6	Atomic energy, 1956
BOX 6	Auerbach, Carl A., 1965-1968, undated
BOX 6	Austin, Warren, 1946-1952
BOX 6	Austrian and German settlements, 1947-1948
BOX 6	Bailey, Sidney, 1974-1977
BOX 6	Betts v. Brady, 1941-1942
BOX 6	Bowles, Chester, 1956-1980
BOX 6	Burlingham, C. C., 1942-1950
BOX 6	Byrnes, James F., 1955-1972, undated
BOX 6	Cairus, Huntington, 1946
BOX 6	China and Formosa, 1950-1955, undated
BOX 7	Civil rights bill, 1957
BOX 7	Constitutional amendments, 1936-1937 (2 folders)
BOX 7	Corcoran, Thomas G., 1946-1983, undated
BOX 7	Council on Foreign Relations, 1950
BOX 7	Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., 1973-1976
BOX 7	Destroyers-for-bases agreement with Great Britain, 1940, undated (1 folder)
BOX 8	(1 folder)
BOX 8	Douglas, William O., 1936-1980
BOX 8	Dulles, John Foster, 1947-1957
BOX 8	Eban, Abba, 1949-1953
BOX 8	Edelstein, Julius C. C., and family, 1961-1980, undated
BOX 8	Federal Securities Act, 1933
BOX 8	Finletter, Thomas K., 1955-1961
BOX 8	Frankfurter, Felix, 1920-1965
BOX 9	Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Association, and related Roosevelt memorials, 1947-1982
BOX 9	Freund, Paul A., 1948-1977
BOX 9	Ginsburg, David, 1948-1978
BOX 9	Griswold, Erwin N., 1960-1973
BOX 9	Hamilton, Alice, 1929-1951, undated
BOX 9	Harvard University Press, 1961-1967
BOX 9	Hatch Act, 1939-1956, undated
BOX 10	Holding Company Act, 1935-1938
BOX 10	Hudson, Manley, international courts, 1942-1945 (2 folders)
BOX 10	Ickes, Harold L., 1948-1980 (3 folders)
BOX 10	Inflation, 1975, undated
BOX 11	Insured Business Loans Act of 1939
BOX 11	International organization, 1944, undated
BOX 11	Lash, Joseph P., 1950-1975
BOX 11	La Rocque, Gene R., 1977-1981
BOX 11	Lepawsky, Albert, 1973-1978
BOX 11	Lieme, Nehemia de, 1919-1922
BOX 11	Lowenthal, Max, 1919-1969

Subject File, 1918-1983

Container

Contents

BOX 11	Meeker, Leonard, and family, 1948-1979, undated
BOX 11	Minimum wage bill, 1932-1933, undated (2 folders)
BOX 11	Noel Baker, Philip, 1952, 1965-1966
BOX 11	Oil shale, 1964-1965
BOX 12	Palestine and Israel, 1918-1974, undated (2 folders)
BOX 12	Rauh, Joseph L. (1911-1992), and family, 1941-1980
BOX 12	Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1948-1960
BOX 12	Roosevelt, Franklin D., 1944-1945, undated
BOX 12	Rowe, James H. (1909-1984), 1947-1975
BOX 12	Schlesinger, Arthur (1917-2007), 1951-1976
BOX 12	Sheil, Bernard J., 1939-1940
BOX 13	Simon, John, 1926-1961
BOX 13	Simon, Julius, 1920-1971, undated
BOX 13	Stevenson, Adlai E. (1900-1965), 1946-1961, undated
BOX 13	Submerged Lands Act, 1954, undated
BOX 13	Supreme Court
BOX 13	1934-1937 (3 folders)
BOX 14	1937, undated (4 folders)
BOX 14	Szold, Robert, 1941-1979
BOX 14	Taxes, 1939-1974, undated
BOX 15	Truman, Harry S., 1947-1965
BOX 15	Twentieth Century Fund, 1949-1983, undated (5 folders)
BOX 16	United Nations, 1949-1951, undated
BOX 16	United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1949-1975
BOX 16	United States Shipping Board, 1918, undated
BOX 16	Vietnam, 1962-1969
BOX 16	Wiener, Frederick
BOX 16	Winthrop House Tenants' Association, 1947-1981
BOX 16	Unidentified
BOX 16-20	Speeches and Writings File, 1935-1980 Drafts, typescripts, memoranda, letters to the editor, interviews, and printed copies of Cohen's speeches and writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 16	Speeches
BOX 16	1947-1949 (2 folders)
BOX 17	1949-1952 (6 folders)
BOX 18	1954-1969 (5 folders)

Speeches and Writings File, 1935-1980

Container

Contents

BOX 19	1971-1977, undated (5 folders)
BOX 19	Writings
BOX 19	Article, "The United Nations in the Twentieth Year," <i>International Organization</i> , 1966
BOX 19	Books
BOX 19	<i>Presidential Responsibility in American Democracy</i> , 1976
BOX 19	<i>The United Nations: Constitutional Developments, Growth, and Possibilities</i> , 1961 (1 folder)
BOX 20	(6 folders)
BOX 20	Interviews, 1952, 1970, 1977-1980
BOX 20	Letters to the editor, 1947-1969, undated
BOX 20	Memoranda, 1935-1967, undated
BOX 20	Unidentified
BOX 21-23	Financial Papers, 1928-1983 Correspondence, notes, fragments, and records of estates and trusts. Arranged by name of family or personal estate or trust and by type of material.
BOX 21	Correspondence, 1928-1983
BOX 21	Income tax returns, 1929-1934
BOX 21	Notes and fragments
BOX 21	Cohen family, 1944-1947
BOX 21	Blumgart trust
BOX 21	Brunswick trust
BOX 21	Goldsmith, Arthur J., estate
BOX 22	Harris trust (5 folders)
BOX 23	Herman, Mildred, estate
BOX 23	Higgins, Mildred, trust
BOX 23	Ickes, Jane D.
BOX 23	Martin, Charles and Ann
BOX 23	Ringold, Samuel, estate
BOX 23	Sharfman, Leo and Saul
BOX 24-26	Miscellany, 1928-1983 Appointment books, drawings, greeting cards, invitations, and other memorabilia. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 24	Address list
BOX 24	Appointment books, 1928-1983 (5 folders)
BOX 25	Passports
BOX 25	Drawings (2 folders)
BOX 25	Greeting cards
BOX 25	Bingham, Jonathan and June
BOX 25	General
BOX 26	Harriman, W. Averell

Miscellany, 1928-1983

Container

Contents

BOX 26	Pepper, Claude
BOX 26	Williams, G. Mennan
BOX 26	Memorabilia (3 folder)
BOX CL 1-CL 6	Department of State (CLASSIFIED) Correspondence, memoranda, policy papers, and miscellaneous records. Arranged by topic.
BOX CL 1	Palestine
BOX CL 2	International Court of Justice
BOX CL 3	Korea
BOX CL 4	United Nations
BOX CL 4	Austria
BOX CL 5	Treaties and settlements
BOX CL 6	International organizations