

Evalyn Walsh McLean Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: Evalyn Walsh McLean Papers

Span Dates: 1874-1948

ID No.: MSS32318

Creator: McLean, Evalyn Walsh, 1886-1947

Extent: 45,000 items ; 113 containers plus 3 oversize ; 46.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Socialite, of Washington, D.C.; daughter of Thomas F. Walsh; married Edward Beale McLean in 1907; later divorced. Correspondence, memoranda, business and legal records, notes, printed matter, scrapbooks, broadsides, photographs, and other papers pertaining primarily to McLean's leading role in the social life of Washington, D.C.

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

Barkley, Alben William, 1877-1956--Correspondence.

Baruch, Bernard M. (Bernard Mannes), 1870-1965--Correspondence.

Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925--Correspondence.

Bullitt, William C. (William Christian), 1891-1967--Correspondence.

Chancellor, William Estabrook, 1867-1963. Warren Gamaliel Harding: president of the United States; a review of facts collected from anthropological, historical, and political researches. 1922.

Coolidge, Calvin, 1872-1933--Correspondence.

Daugherty, H. M. (Harry Micajah), 1860-1941--Correspondence.

Harding, Florence Kling, 1860-1924--Correspondence.

Harding, Warren G. (Warren Gamaliel), 1865-1923--Correspondence.

Hearst, William Randolph, 1863-1951--Correspondence.

Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964--Correspondence.

Hoover, J. Edgar (John Edgar), 1895-1972--Correspondence.

Hull, Cordell, 1871-1955--Correspondence.

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

Maxwell, Elsa--Correspondence.

McLean family.

McLean, Edward Beale, -1941.

McLean, Evalyn Walsh, 1886-1947.

McLean, Evalyn Walsh, 1886-1947. Father struck it rich. 1936.

Meigs, Merrill C. (Merrill Church), 1883-1968. Merrill C. Meigs diary.

Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930--Correspondence.

Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.

Walsh family.

Walsh, Thomas F. (Thomas Francis), 1850-1910.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

Zanuck, Darryl Francis, 1902-1979--Correspondence.

Subjects

American newspapers--Ohio--Cincinnati.

American newspapers--Washington (D.C.)

Diamonds.

Hope diamond.

Kidnapping--United States.

Mines and mineral resources--Colorado.

Political corruption--United States.

Teapot Dome Scandal, 1921-1924.

Places

Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

Titles

Cincinnati enquirer.

Washington post.

Washington times herald.

Occupations

Socialites.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Evalyn Walsh McLean, socialite, of Washington, D.C., daughter of Thomas F. Walsh, married Edward Beale McLean in 1907, and later divorced, were given to the Library of Congress by Thurman Arnold, executor of the McLean estate, in 1949.

Processing History

The papers of Evalyn Walsh McLean were processed in 1964. The finding aid was revised in 2012 and 2014.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Evalyn Walsh McLean 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, Evalyn Walsh McLean Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Evalyn Walsh McLean (1886-1947) relate to the life of one of Washington's notable social matrons. The material spans a half century beginning with the Walsh family in the 1880s and extending to McLean's death in 1947. The collection is organized into eight series: [Family Correspondence](#), [Special Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Business Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Financial-Legal Papers](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

Evalyn Walsh McLean was the daughter of Thomas F. Walsh of Washington, D.C., whose successful mining ventures in Colorado made him a fortune. In 1907 she married Edward Beale McLean, heir to a family fortune that included ownership of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and the *Washington Post*, thus combining two great family fortunes. Evalyn McLean soon established herself as a socialite, particularly during the Harding and Coolidge administrations, and her status remained high during the Hoover, Roosevelt, and Truman administrations.

As the owner of the Hope diamond, which she bought for over \$150,000 in 1912, McLean was able to command the social limelight. She became involved in the kidnapping case of Charles Augustus Lindbergh's baby by paying \$100,000 to Gaston B. Means, falling prey to a hoax. Her close relationship to several key figures in the Teapot Dome Scandal in 1924 further contributed to her publicity.

The [Special Correspondence](#) file includes the elite of the entertainment, political, and social worlds during McLean's lifetime. Correspondents include Alben William Barkley, Bernard M. Baruch, William Jennings Bryan, William C. Bullitt (1891-1967), Calvin Coolidge, H. M. Daugherty, Florence Kling Harding, Warren G. Harding, William Randolph Hearst, Herbert Hoover, J. Edgar Hoover, Cordell Hull, Elsa Maxwell, William H. Taft, Harry S. Truman, Woodrow Wilson, and Darryl Francis Zanuck. Many of the letters, however, are brief social notes. [Business Correspondence](#) mostly relates to the Walsh mining interests and various matters dealing with the *Enquirer* and the *Post*.

The [Subject File](#) covers a variety of topics such as McLean's divorce proceedings, the Hope diamond, the Lindbergh case, and Teapot Dome. Many of McLean's writings are represented, including drafts of her column in the Washington *Times Herald* and the manuscript of her book, *Father Struck It Rich*. The Warren G. Harding file contains a revision, with additions, of the 1922 published book *Warren Gamaliel Harding: President of the United States* attributed to William Estabrook Chancellor. The book was a racist attack on Harding and rumored to have been suppressed by the federal government. The handwritten revisions on the published manuscript are in Chancellor's handwriting and indicate that he was likely in Canada when the book was originally published. Dissatisfied with the book, he had made these revisions from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and had sent the pages in the fall of 1922 to the publisher, Sentinel Press (a small Ohio press that also printed material for the Ku Klux Klan), for a revised edition. The presence of this manuscript in the McLean Papers relates to the story of federal agents confiscating copies of the book and the printing plates from Ohio in November of 1922 and bringing them back to Washington, D.C. for destruction at Friendship, the estate of the McLeans. The 1922 general correspondence file contains a printed Klan letter and the printing plate dated November 8, 1922, in a Justice Department envelope.

The [Financial-Legal Papers](#) series treats business as well as personal matters, and the [Miscellany](#) series contains photographs, printed matter, notes, broadsides, and other miscellaneous items.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- [Family Correspondence, 1887-1947](#)
- [Special Correspondence](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1874-1948](#)
- [Business Correspondence, 1887-1947](#)
- [Subject File](#)
- [Financial-Legal Papers, 1894-1947](#)
- [Miscellany](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-4	<u>Family Correspondence, 1887-1947</u> Letters sent and received between members of the family. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 5-8	<u>Special Correspondence</u> Letters sent and received from prominent persons in the entertainment, political, and social fields. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 9-76	<u>General Correspondence, 1874-1948</u> Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically arranged by year.
BOX 77-93	<u>Business Correspondence, 1887-1947</u> Letters sent and received relating to business matters such as mining interests, the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Washington Post, and real estate. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 94-102	<u>Subject File</u> A variety of specific topics are included such as business memoranda-transactions, Cliveden libel case, divorce proceedings, family memoranda, Warren G. Harding, the Hope diamond, Lindbergh kidnapping case, political memoranda, and the Teapot Dome affair.
BOX 103-109	<u>Financial-Legal Papers, 1894-1947</u> Letters, financial receipts, legal briefs, and related notes concerning topics such as mining claims, newspaper interests, legal suits, and real estate. Arranged chronologically by year and month.
BOX 110-113	<u>Miscellany</u> Diary of Merrill C. Meigs, photographs, printed matter, notes, lists, scrapbooks, broadsides, and other miscellaneous items. Arranged according to type of material.
BOX OV 1-OV 3	<u>Oversize</u> Scrapbooks and broadsides. Arranged according to the series and containers from which they were removed.

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BOX 3	1944-1947, undated
BOX 4	Undated
BOX 5-8	Special Correspondence Letters sent and received from prominent persons in the entertainment, political, and social fields. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
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BOX 5	Arnall, Ellis
BOX 5	Ashbrook, William A.
BOX 5	Ashurst, Henry F.
BOX 5	Astor
BOX 5	Austin, Mildred I.
BOX 5	Baker, Ronald
BOX 5	Baker, Ray
BOX 5	Bankhead, Tallulah
BOX 5	Barbour, Warren
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BOX 5	Barkley, Alben William
BOX 5	Barnes, James M.
BOX 5	Baruch, Bernard M.
BOX 5	Berle, Adolph
BOX 5	Beale, Edward I.
BOX 5	Bean, Louis H.
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BOX 5	Bloom, Sol
BOX 5	Boardman, Mabel T.
BOX 5	Boyle, Irme
BOX 5	Boyle, William M.
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Special Correspondence

Container

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BOX 5	Cabrera, Manuel Etrada
BOX 5	Cafritz, Morris and Gwendolyn
BOX 5	Campbell, Ronald
BOX 5	Capper, Arthur
BOX 5	Carroll, K. M.
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BOX 6	Dewey, George
BOX 6	Dewey, Thomas
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BOX 8	Truman, Harry S. and Bess
BOX 8	Tarkington-Tyler

Special Correspondence

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Business Correspondence, 1887-1947

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Financial-Legal Papers, 1894-1947

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