

Robert Ellsworth Gross Papers

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LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm78024232>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: Robert Ellsworth Gross Papers

Span Dates: 1903-1961

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1932-1961)

ID No.: MSS24232

Creator: Gross, Robert Ellsworth, 1897-1961

Extent: 8,500 items ; 19 containers ; 7.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Airplane manufacturer. Correspondence, speeches, citations, obituary, memorial tributes, clippings, photographs, and other papers chiefly relating to Gross's interest in and development of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation.

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

Arnold, Henry Harley, 1886-1950--Correspondence.

Bernhard Leopold, Prince, consort of Juliana, Queen of the Netherlands, 1911-2004--Correspondence.

Bible, Alan, 1909-1988--Correspondence.

Bradley, Omar Nelson, 1893-1981--Correspondence.

Burden, William A. M. (William Armistead Moale), 1906-1984--Correspondence.

Byrd, Richard Evelyn, 1888-1957--Correspondence.

Conant, James Bryant, 1893-1978--Correspondence.

Doolittle, James Harold, 1896-1993--Correspondence.

Douglas, Donald W. (Donald Wills), 1892-1981--Correspondence.

Eaker, Ira, 1896-1987--Correspondence.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969--Correspondence.

Foss, Joe, 1915-2003--Correspondence.

Gavin, James M. (James Maurice), 1907-1990--Correspondence.

Goldwater, Barry M. (Barry Morris), 1909-1998--Correspondence.

Goldwyn, Samuel, 1879-1974--Correspondence.

Gross, Courtlandt S. (Courtlandt Sherrington), 1904-1982--Correspondence.

Gross, Robert Ellsworth, 1897-1961.

Gross, Robert H. (Robert Haven), 1864-1942--Correspondence.

Hilton, Conrad N. (Conrad Nicholson), 1887-1979--Correspondence.

Hinshaw, Carl, 1894-1956--Correspondence.

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--Correspondence.

Knight, Goodwin, 1896-1970--Correspondence.

LeMay, Curtis E.--Correspondence.

Lodge, Henry Cabot, 1902-1985--Correspondence.

Loening, Grover, 1888-1976--Correspondence.

Martin, Glenn L. (Glenn Luther), 1886-1955--Correspondence.

Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994--Correspondence.

Pirie, George Clark, 1896-1980--Correspondence.

Pulitzer, Joseph, 1885-1955--Correspondence.

Pusey, Nathan M. (Nathan Marsh), 1907-2001--Correspondence.

Quesada, Elwood R. (Elwood Richard), 1904- --Correspondence.

Rickenbacker, Eddie, 1890-1973--Correspondence.

Rockefeller, Nelson A. (Nelson Aldrich), 1908-1979--Correspondence.

Stettinius, Edward R. (Edward Reilly), 1900-1949--Correspondence.

Strauss, Franz Josef, 1915-1988--Correspondence.

Strauss, Franz Josef, 1915-1988--Correspondence.
Symington, Stuart, 1901-1988--Correspondence.
Trippe, J. T. (Juan Terry), 1899-1981--Correspondence.
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.
Vaughn, Guy W., 1884-1966--Correspondence.
Von Braun, Wernher, 1912-1977--Correspondence.
Warren, Earl, 1891-1974--Correspondence.
Weeks, Sinclair, 1893-1972--Correspondence.
Wilson, Charles Erwin, 1890-1961--Correspondence.

Organizations

Episcopal Church.
Harvard Alumni Association.
Lockheed Aircraft Corporation.
Republican Party (Calif.)
Republican Party (U.S. : 1854-)
Viking Flying Boat Company.

Subjects

Aeronautics.
Aircraft industry.
Presidents--United States--Election--1952.
World War, 1939-1945--Equipment and supplies.

Places

California--Politics and government.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.
United States--Politics and government--20th century.

Occupations

Aircraft manufacturers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Robert Ellsworth Gross, airplane manufacturer, were given to the Library of Congress by Mary Bradford Palmer Gross in 1965.

Processing History

The papers of Robert Ellsworth Gross were arranged and described in 1966. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert Ellsworth Gross 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 Ellsworth Gross 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, Robert Ellsworth Gross Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1897, May 11	Born, Roxbury, Mass.
1916-1919	Attended and graduated, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1918	Enlisted and commissioned a second lieutenant, American Expeditionary Force
1919-1927	Employed by Lee, Higginson and Co.
1920	Married Mary Bradford Palmer
1925-1935	Owned and operated Reliance Fuel Corp., Canon City, Colo.
1928	Formed Viking Flying Boat Co.
1932-1961	Purchased and operated Lockheed Aircraft Corp.
1934	Elected president, Lockheed Aircraft Corp.
1956	Retired as president, Lockheed Aircraft Corp.
1961, Sept. 3	Died, Los Angeles, Calif.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Robert E. Gross (1897-1961) span the years 1903-1961, with the bulk of the material from 1932 to 1961. The collection consists primarily of correspondence files supplemented by speeches, printed matter, photographs, press releases, and miscellaneous material. About one third of the correspondence consists of copies of original documents not included in the collection. The papers are organized into seven series: [Personal Correspondence](#); [Business Correspondence](#); [Special Correspondence](#); [Aerospace Industry File](#); [Community, National, and International Interests](#); [Speech File](#), and [Miscellany](#).

There is comparatively little material on the early years of Gross's life. From 1932, when he purchased the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, the material becomes more voluminous. Generally the papers reflect the various business interests of Gross, especially the growth of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation from a bankrupt company in 1932 to a large corporation. Original material, mostly correspondence, traces the growth, development, and maturity of the organization.

Gross's other business interests, such as the Viking Flying Boat Company, which failed because of lack of purchasers during the Depression years, are represented in the Special Correspondence files. His relations with the aerospace and aviation industries, especially with their leading figures, are revealed in the Aerospace Industry file. His religious interests and connection with the Episcopal Church, role as an alumnus of Harvard University, and political affiliation with the Republican Party, especially in California, are documented in the Community, National, and International Interests series.

Important topics include Gross's contributions to the Republican Party of California, particularly in the 1952 presidential campaign; letters between Gross and presidents of various airlines; and Anglo-American cooperation in the exchange of war materiel in the 1940s. Letters with hotel magnate Conrad Hilton concern the latter's proposal to set up a chain of "interplanetary hotels." The proposal was left in abeyance, pending further developments in aerospace research.

Correspondents include Henry Harley Arnold; Prince Bernhard Leopold, consort of Juliana, Queen of the Netherlands; Alan Bible; Omar Nelson Bradley; William A.M. Burden; Richard Evelyn Byrd; James Bryant Conant; James Harold Doolittle; Donald W. Douglas; Ira Eaker; Dwight D. Eisenhower; Joe Foss; James M. Gavin; Barry M. Goldwater; Samuel Goldwyn; Conrad N. Hilton; Carl Hinshaw; John F. Kennedy; Goodwin Knight; Curtis E. LeMay; Henry Cabot Lodge;

Grover Loening; Glenn L. Martin; Richard M. Nixon; George Clark Pirie; Joseph Pulitzer; Nathan M. Pusey; Elwood R. Quesada; Eddie Rickenbacker; Nelson A. Rockefeller; Soekarno; Edward R. Stettinius; Franz Josef Strauss; Stuart Symington; J.T. Trippe; Harry S. Truman; Guy W. Vaughn; Wernher Von Braun; Earl Warren; Sinclair Weeks; Charles Erwin Wilson; and Robert's brother, Courtlandt S. Gross, and their father, Robert H. Gross.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Personal Correspondence, 1920-1961](#)
- [Business Correspondence, 1932-1961](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1932-1961](#)
- [Aerospace Industry File, 1932-1961](#)
- [Community, National, and International Interests, 1936-1961](#)
- [Speech File, 1939-1961](#)
- [Miscellany, 1903-1961](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-3	<u>Personal Correspondence, 1920-1961</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent, mostly from immediate family. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 4-10	<u>Business Correspondence, 1932-1961</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent, supplemented by reports and memoranda, relating to the growth and development of Lockheed Aircraft Corp. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 11-12	<u>Special Correspondence, 1932-1961</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent relating to business activities apart from Lockheed Aircraft Corp. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 13	<u>Aerospace Industry File, 1932-1961</u> Correspondence, reports, and memoranda relating to Gross's interest in aviation and the aerospace industry. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 14	<u>Community, National, and International Interests, 1936-1961</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent concerned mainly with Gross's religious involvements, role as alumnus of Harvard University, and political activities. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 15-17	<u>Speech File, 1939-1961</u> Drafts and printed and mimeographed copies of speeches and addresses by Gross. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 18-19	<u>Miscellany, 1903-1961</u> Honorary awards, photographs, school clippings, press releases, biographical sketches, a letter of credit, passports, printed matter, tributes to the memory of Gross, and letters of condolence. Arranged by type of material.

Container List

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BOX 2	1942-1949
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BOX 4-10	Business Correspondence, 1932-1961 Letters received and copies of letters sent, supplemented by reports and memoranda, relating to the growth and development of Lockheed Aircraft Corp. Arranged chronologically.
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Community, National, and International Interests, 1936-1961

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BOX 15	1939-1953
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BOX 17	June 1958-1961
BOX 18-19	Miscellany, 1903-1961 Honorary awards, photographs, school clippings, press releases, biographical sketches, a letter of credit, passports, printed matter, tributes to the memory of Gross, and letters of condolence. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 18	Honorary awards, 1935-1961
BOX 18	Photographs, 1903-1960, undated
BOX 18	Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., clippings, 1919
BOX 19	Press releases, 1946-1961
BOX 19	Notebook, 1934-1935
BOX 19	Biographical sketches
BOX 19	Letter of credit, 1929
BOX 19	Passports, 1920, 1929
BOX 19	Printed matter, 1914-1961
BOX 19	Tributes to Gross, 1961
BOX 19	Letters of condolence, 1961