

# Walter Francis Willcox Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

Prepared by Beverly W. Brannan



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

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# Collection Summary

Title: Walter Francis Willcox Papers

Span Dates: 1851-1965

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1886-1940)

ID No.: MSS45765

Creator: Willcox, Walter Francis, 1861-1964

Extent: 12,000 items; 50 containers; 20 linear feet; 1 microfilm reel

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Statistician and professor of economics. Correspondence, a diary, memoranda, notes, reports, books, articles, scrapbooks, and other material relating primarily to Willcox's career as professor of economics and statistics at Cornell University and as chief statistician in the United States Bureau of the Census.

## 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

Becker, Carl L. (Carl Lotus), 1873-1945--Correspondence.

Hill, Joseph A. (Joseph Adna), 1860-1938--Correspondence.

Hollerith, Herman, 1860-1929--Correspondence.

Kennedy, J. C. G. (Joseph Camp Griffith), 1813-1887. J.C.G. Kennedy papers.

Laski, Harold Joseph, 1893-1950--Correspondence.

North, S. N. D. (Simon Newton Dexter), 1849-1924--Correspondence.

Rice, Stuart A. (Stuart Arthur), 1889- --Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945--Correspondence.

Schurman, Jacob Gould, 1854-1942--Correspondence.

Stimson, Henry L. (Henry Lewis), 1867-1950--Correspondence.

Stone, Alfred Holt, 1870-1955--Correspondence.

Taussig, F. W. (Frank William), 1859-1940--Correspondence.

Vandenberg, Arthur H. (Arthur Hendrick), 1884-1951--Correspondence.

Wilbur, Cressy L. (Cressy Livingston), 1865-1928--Correspondence.

Willcox, Walter Francis, 1861-1964.

Wright, Carroll Davidson, 1840-1909--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Cornell University--Faculty.

### Subjects

African Americans--Population.

Demography.

Divorce--Statistics.

Hygiene--Statistics.

Population--Statistics.

Universities and colleges--New York (State)

### Places

United States--Census, 1900.

### Occupations

Educators.

Statisticians.

# Administrative Information

## Provenance

The papers of Walter Francis Willcox, statistician and professor of economics, were the gift and bequest to the Library of Congress by Willcox, 1931-1965. Original correspondence in the possession of Stuart A. Rice was microfilmed by the Library as a separate collection in 1967 and added to the Willcox Papers in 2011.

## Processing History

The papers of Walter Francis Willcox were processed in 1972. The finding aid was completed in 1978. The collection was expanded and revised with the addition of microfilmed correspondence in 2011.

## Copyright Status

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

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Walter Francis Willcox 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

Microfilm on one reel was received as part of the papers of Walter Francis Willcox and is listed and described in this finding aid. This microfilm is not available for interlibrary loan.

## Preferred Citation

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

# Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1861, Mar. 22	Born, Reading, Mass.
1884	A.B., Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.
1887	LL.B., Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1888	A.M., Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.
1891	Ph. D., Columbia University, New York, N.Y. Published <i>The Divorce Problem; a study in Statistics</i> , Ph.D. thesis
1891-1931	Professor of economics and statistics, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
1892	Married Alice Elaine Work
1899-1902	Chief statistician, twelfth U.S. census

1902-1907	Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
1902-1931	Special agent, U.S. Bureau of the Census
1931	Retired from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
1933	Published . . . <i>Introduction to the Vital Statistics of the United States, 1900 to 1930</i> . Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office
1940	Published <i>Studies in American Demography</i> . Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press
1964, Nov. 24	Died, Ithaca, N. Y.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Walter Francis Willcox (1861-1964) span the period 1851-1965, with the bulk of the material from 1886 to 1940. The collection consists of correspondence, a diary, memoranda, notes, reports, books, articles, scrapbooks, and other materials relating primarily to Willcox's career as professor of economics and statistics at Cornell University and as chief statistician in the United States Bureau of the Census for the twelfth United States census. The papers are organized in six series: [Family Papers](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Book and Article File](#), [Scrapbooks](#), and [Microfilm](#).

Willcox's practice of saving his papers and his unusually long career make them a rich source for the students of the development of the academic disciplines of economics, sociology and statistics. The history of Cornell University is documented in the letters between Willcox and fellow academicians, especially those exchanged with Jacob Gould Schurman, Cornell president from 1892 to 1920.

Aside from a photocopy of his birth certificate and random comments in later correspondence, there is little information about Willcox's formative years. The [Family Papers](#) series consists of bound volumes of correspondence between Willcox and Alice Elaine Work, including before their marriage in 1892, and with other family members.

During his long career, Willcox culled the materials pertinent to the emergent field of statistics, which embraced many related fields in the early years. His concern with the collection of accurate vital statistics led to his appointment as chief statistician for the twelfth census and later to his correspondence with Cressy L. Wilbur, S. N. D. North, and Joseph A. Hill, officials of the Bureau of the Census.

Other noteworthy correspondents include economist Harold Joseph Laski, publicist Alfred Holt Stone, statistician Carroll Davidson Wright, economist F. W. Taussig, Herman Hollerith of the Census Bureau, and Henry L. Stimson.

For his early papers, from 1886-1904, Willcox used a year-by-year alphabetical arrangement. This became unwieldy as his correspondence grew more voluminous, and in 1904 he switched to an alphabetic arrangement that he continued until 1933. For the period 1928-1940 Willcox used a third series of alphabetically arranged [general correspondence](#). He borrowed this portion of his papers from the Library in 1957 and returned only the portion for the letters S through W.

The [Subject File](#) reflects Willcox's work as a statistician. It documents his contributions to the field of statistics, and the section on apportionment documents his contributions in the areas of apportionment and reapportionment of seats in the House of Representatives. Correspondents in

this effort include Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, and historian Carl L. Becker. Research material spans 1928-1961. The files also document his work in such areas as the census, demography, divorce, hygiene, international cooperation in collecting statistics, and African-American population studies.

Also included in the [Subject File](#) are papers concerning J. C. G. Kennedy, formerly superintendent of the census. These include a typescript of a portion of Kennedy's diary for the period June 6-August 8, 1851, and correspondence between Willcox and Kennedy's daughter during the years 1917-1923.

Among Willcox's major contributions are his textbooks on statistics. Drafts of his text *Studies in American Demography* (1940) are included in the collection along with printed copies of some of his published writings.

[Scrapbooks](#) of correspondence, articles, speeches, and clippings for the years 1933-1952 attest to his continued interest and activity in the concerns of his pre-retirement years. The [Microfilm](#) series consists of copies of Willcox's correspondence with fellow statistician Stuart A. Rice for the years 1938-1965.

## Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Family Papers, 1888-1957](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1886-1954](#)
- [Subject File, 1851-1961](#)
- [Book and Article File, 1900-1952](#)
- [Scrapbooks, 1933-1952](#)
- [Microfilm, 1938-1965](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-2	<u>Family Papers, 1888-1957</u> Bound volumes of transcripts of Willcox's correspondence with his wife and family members. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 3-27	<u>General Correspondence, 1886-1954</u> Correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues as well as papers regarding family financial matters. Containers 3-14 are arranged chronologically for the period 1886-1904. Containers 15-26 are arranged alphabetically for the years 1904 through 1934. Container 27 contains the "S-W" portion for the period 1928 to 1940.
BOX 28-41	<u>Subject File, 1851-1961</u> Correspondence, memoranda, newspaper clippings, minutes of meetings, notes, reports, and printed and near-print material. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 42-49	<u>Book and Article File, 1900-1952</u> Holograph and typewritten drafts of articles, reports, charts, and printed copies of works authored or edited by Willcox and critiques of them. Containers 42-47 contain preliminary studies and drafts of chapters for Willcox's textbook <i>Studies in American Demography</i> . Arranged alphabetically by chapter heading. Containers 48-49 contain printed copies by Willcox.
BOX 50	<u>Scrapbooks, 1933-1952</u> Articles, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and correspondence collected by Willcox after his retirement. Arranged by volume number.
REEL 1	<u>Microfilm, 1938-1965</u> Correspondence between Willcox and Stuart A. Rice. Copied from originals in private hands. <i>Microfilm shelf no. 13,770</i>

# Container List

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General Correspondence, 1886-1954

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