

Abraham Flexner Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Michael Spangler



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2000

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Latest revision: 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Abraham Flexner Papers

Span Dates: 1865-1989

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1959)

ID No.: MSS20834

Creator: Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959

Extent: 12,500 items; 35 containers; 14 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Educational reformer and author. Correspondence, research files, speeches and writings, and miscellany pertaining to Flexner's work in medical education and administration of educational foundations.

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

Bamberger, Louis, 1855-1944--Correspondence.

Barrett, John D., 1903-1981--Correspondence.

Bluestone, E. Michael (Ephraim Michael), 1891-1979--Correspondence.

Bosworth, Welles, 1869-1966--Correspondence.

Boyd, W. R. (William Robert), 1864-1950--Correspondence.

Buttrick, Wallace, 1853-1926--Correspondence.

Cairns, Huntington, 1904-1985--Correspondence.

Clark, Evans, 1888-1970--Correspondence.

Courant, Richard, 1888-1972--Correspondence.

Cullen, Thomas Stephen, 1868-1953--Correspondence.

Dodds, Harold W. (Harold Willis), 1889-1980--Correspondence.

Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955--Correspondence.

Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959.

Flexner, Anne Crawford, 1874-1955--Correspondence.

Flexner, Bernard, 1865-1945--Correspondence.

Flexner, Eleanor, 1908-1995--Correspondence.

Flexner, Hortense, 1885-1973--Correspondence.

Flexner, James Thomas, 1908-2003--Correspondence.

Flexner, Jean Atherton--Correspondence.

Fosdick, Raymond B. (Raymond Blaine), 1883-1972--Correspondence.

Getty, Robert J. (Robert John)--Correspondence.

Gottmann, Jean--Correspondence.

Hanus, Paul H. (Paul Henry), 1855-1941--Correspondence.

Haskins, Caryl P. (Caryl Parker), 1908-2001--Correspondence.

Hyde, James H. (James Hazen), 1876-1959--Correspondence.

Learned, William S. (William Setchel), 1876-1950--Correspondence.

Lehman, Herbert H. (Herbert Henry), 1878-1963--Correspondence.

Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus), 1902-1974--Correspondence.

Lowe, E. A. (Elias Avery), 1879-1969--Correspondence.

Mantoux, Paul, 1877-1956--Correspondence.

Markham, Violet R. (Violet Rosa)--Correspondence.

McKittrick, Thomas H. (Thomas Harrington), 1889-1970--Correspondence.

Mellon, Paul--Correspondence.

Meritt, Benjamin Dean, 1899-1989--Correspondence.
Nevins, Allan, 1890-1971--Correspondence.
Pritchett, Henry S. (Henry Smith), 1857-1939. Henry S. Pritchett correspondence. 1901-1910.
Rockefeller, John D. (John Davison), 1874-1960--Correspondence.
Rosenwald, Julius, 1862-1932--Correspondence.
Rosenwald, Lessing J. (Lessing Julius), 1891-1979--Correspondence.
Rusk, Dean, 1909-1994--Correspondence.
Sedgwick, Ellery, 1872-1960--Correspondence.
Welch, William Henry, 1850-1934--Correspondence.
Weyl, Hermann, 1885-1955--Correspondence.
Woodward, E. L. (Ernest Llewellyn), 1890-1971--Correspondence.

Organizations

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
Ford Foundation--Correspondence.
General Education Board (New York, N.Y.)
United States. Light-House Board.

Subjects

Education.
Educational change.
Medical education--Canada.
Medical education--United States.
Research.

Occupations

Authors.
Educators.
Reformers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Abraham Flexner, educational reformer and author, were given to the Library of Congress by Flexner in 1954. Additional material was given by Flexner's daughters, Eleanor Flexner and Jean Flexner Lewinson, from 1961 to 1990. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching gave additional items to the Library in 1965.

Processing History

The papers of Abraham Flexner were organized in 1965. Additional material given in 1974 was processed in 1984. Unprocessed restricted material given in 1961 and items received between 1986 and 1990 were incorporated into the collection in 2000.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Abraham Flexner 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 Abraham Flexner 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, Abraham Flexner Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1866, Nov. 13	Born, Louisville, Ky.
1886	B.A., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md. Appointed teacher, Louisville High School, Louisville, Ky.
1890-1905	Established and directed college preparatory school, Louisville, Ky.
1898	Married Anne Laziere Crawford (died 1959)
1906	M.A., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1907-1908	Studied at the University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany
1908	Published <i>The American College: A Criticism</i> (New York: The Century Co. 237 pp.) Joined the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
1910	Published <i>Medical Education in the United States and Canada</i> (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 346 pp.)
1913-1925	Assistant secretary and secretary, General Education Board
1925-1928	Director, Division of Studies and Medical Education, General Education Board
1928	Delivered Rhodes Trust memorial lectures, Oxford, England
1930-1939	Director, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.
1940-1959	Director emeritus, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.
1952	Published with the collaboration of Esther S. Bailey <i>Funds and Foundations: Their Policies Past and Present</i> (New York: Harper & Bros. 146 pp.)
1959, Sept. 21	Died, Falls Church, Va.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Abraham Flexner (1866-1959) span the years 1865-1989 with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1900-1959. The collection is organized into the following series: [Correspondence](#), [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Addition](#).

The [Correspondence File](#) includes family and general correspondence. Family correspondence consists primarily of Flexner's letters to his wife, playwright Anne Crawford Flexner, and their

daughters Jean Atherton Flexner and Eleanor Flexner. General correspondence includes letters exchanged with a wide range of correspondents reflecting Flexner's activities in educational reform and his work with foundations to expand research and educational opportunities. Significant and frequent correspondents include Louis Bamberger, John D. Barrett, E. Michael Bluestone, Welles Bosworth, W. R. Boyd, Wallace Buttrick, Huntington Cairns, Evans Clark, Richard Courant, Thomas S. Cullen, Harold W. Dodds, Albert Einstein, Bernard Flexner, Raymond Blaine Fosdick, Robert J. Getty, Jean Gottmann, Paul H. Hanus, Caryl Parker Haskins, James Hazen Hyde, William S. Learned, Herbert H. Lehman, Charles A. Lindbergh, E. A. Lowe, Paul Mantoux, Violet R. Markham, Thomas H. McKittrick, Benjamin Dean Meritt, Allan Nevins, John D. Rockefeller (1874-1960), Julius Rosenwald, Dean Rusk, Ellery Sedgwick, William Henry Welch, Hermann Weyl, and Sir E. L. Woodward.

The [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#) series contains material pertaining to Flexner's work with the foundation and includes research files for his work, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada* (1910). Impressed with Flexner's critical writings on higher education, Carnegie Foundation president Henry S. Pritchett hired Flexner in 1908 to study and report on the status of education in the medical profession. Significant for its frank and unflattering appraisal of medical training, the report effected numerous changes in medical schools and established Flexner as an authority in the field. The [medical education files](#) include correspondence, reports, and notes relating to the universities and schools Flexner examined. The [general correspondence](#) chiefly documents Flexner's continuing relations with the foundation after he had been appointed secretary of the General Education Board, an educational fund created by John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937). The series also includes correspondence of Henry S. Pritchett pertaining to his service as a civilian representative on the [Light-House Board of the Department of Commerce and Labor](#) from 1901 to 1910. Flexner published *Henry S. Pritchett: A Biography* in 1943. Pritchett's papers are also in the Manuscript Division.

The [Addition](#) series has extensive family correspondence and includes letters between Flexner and his wife and daughters. The correspondence is mostly personal with occasional discussions of world and national politics, literary publications, cultural events, and research projects. Correspondents include Bernard Flexner, Hortense Flexner, and James Thomas Flexner. A small group of general correspondence primarily from Flexner's retirement years documents his undiminished interest in educational foundations and their activities. Significant and frequent correspondents include the Ford Foundation, Paul Mellon, Lessing J. Rosenwald, and Sir E. L. Woodward. A speeches and writings file contains printed and typescript versions of articles and lectures, a memoir of the Flexner family, and writings about Flexner.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in four series:

- [Correspondence File, 1876-1961](#)
- [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1873-1935](#)
- [Miscellany, 1865-1962](#)
- [Addition, 1888-1989](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-18	<u>Correspondence File, 1876-1961</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged as received, with family correspondence organized chronologically and general correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of person, organization, or topic and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 18-25	<u>Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1873-1935</u>
BOX 18-19	<u>General Correspondence, 1909-1935</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 19-24	<u>Medical Education File, 1873-1912</u> Correspondence, reports, notes, and printed matter. <u>See also Container 13, same heading</u> Arranged alphabetically by name of institution and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 24-25	<u>Light-House Board, United States Department of Commerce and Labor, 1901-1910</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent by Henry S. Pritchett. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 25-26	<u>Miscellany, 1865-1962</u> Writings, birthday greetings, family papers, testimonials, photographs, clippings, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material or topic.
BOX 27-35	<u>Addition, 1888-1989</u> Family and general correspondence and speeches and writings, including articles, lectures, contracts, notebooks, and printed matter. Correspondence including letters received and copies of letters sent is arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder. Speeches and writings file is arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-18	Correspondence File, 1876-1961 Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged as received, with family correspondence organized chronologically and general correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of person, organization, or topic and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 1	Family 1905-1917 (19 folders)
BOX 2	1918-1921 (16 folders)
BOX 3	1922-1930 (12 folders)
BOX 4	1931-1939, undated (8 folders) General Anderson, Donald G., 1951-1957 <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> , 1917-1937 "A" miscellaneous, 1929-1958, undated (3 folders) Bamberger, Louis, 1939-1944 (2 folders)
BOX 5	Barrett, John D., 1949-1958 Bluestone, E. Michael, 1950-1958 Bosworth, Welles, 1929-1951 (2 folders) Boyd, W. R., 1934-1954 (3 folders) Brissett, Vincent L. N., 1950-1956 Buttrick, Wallace, 1912-1954 (2 folders) Business education, 1951 "Ba-Bo" miscellaneous, 1931-1957, undated (4 folders)
BOX 6	"Br-Bu" miscellaneous, 1924-1957, undated (3 folders) Cairns, Huntington, 1952-1957 Canada, lake property, 1929-1958 (5 folders) Carnegie Corp. of New York, 1937-1957 Carruthers, Violet Markham, 1945-1958, undated Chapman, R. W., and family, 1943-1955 Clark, Evans, 1951-1957

Correspondence File, 1876-1961

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	<i>Funds and Foundations: Their Policies Past and Present</i> , 1952
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BOX 13	Medical education, 1898-1955 <u>See also Containers 19-24, same heading</u> (2 folders)
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	Rosenwald, Julius, 1924-1957
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Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1873-1935

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX 27-35	Addition, 1888-1989 Family and general correspondence and speeches and writings, including articles, lectures, contracts, notebooks, and printed matter. Correspondence including letters received and copies of letters sent is arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically thereunder. Speeches and writings file is arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder.
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