

# Bainbridge Colby Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

Prepared by David Mathisen



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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# Collection Summary

Title: Bainbridge Colby Papers

Span Dates: 1863-1950

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1912-1950)

ID No.: MSS16360

Creator: Colby, Bainbridge, 1869-1950

Extent: 15,700 items; 74 containers plus 1 oversize; 30 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Lawyer, statesman, and cabinet member. Correspondence, letterbooks, speeches, notebooks, scrapbooks, printed matter, photographs, and other papers primarily relating to Colby's career as a politician and statesman after 1912, including his service as Woodrow Wilson's secretary of state.

## 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

Colby, Bainbridge, 1869-1950.

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

Hitchcock, Gilbert M. (Gilbert Monell), 1859-1934--Correspondence.

Hull, Cordell, 1871-1955--Correspondence.

Lloyd George, David, 1863-1945--Correspondence.

McCormick, Medill, 1877-1925--Correspondence.

Smith, Alfred Emanuel, 1873-1944--Correspondence.

Spargo, John, 1876-1966--Correspondence.

Tardieu, André, 1876-1945--Correspondence.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Progressive Party (1912)

### Places

United States--Foreign relations.

United States--Politics and government--20th century.

### Occupations

Cabinet officers.

Lawyers.

Statesmen.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The papers of Bainbridge Colby, lawyer, statesman, and cabinet member, were given to the Library of Congress between 1955 and 1963 by his wife, Anne Colby. A substantial addition was received in 1977 from Ernest D. Leet with a smaller addition added in 1982 from the Fenton Historical Society, Jamestown, N.Y.

## Processing History

The papers of Bainbridge Colby were arranged and described in 1957. The collection was revised and expanded in 1964 and again in 1979 with the inclusion of Addition I and in 1984 with Addition II. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

## Additional Guides

The Colby Papers are described in *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 15, no. 6 (6 Feb. 1956) and 16, no. 19 (13 May 1957).

## Transfers

Some photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Bainbridge Colby Papers.

## Copyright Status

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

# Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1869, Dec. 22	Born, St. Louis, Mo.
1890	A.B., Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.
1890-1892	Attended Columbia Law School and New York Law School, New York, N.Y.
1892	Admitted to New York State bar and began his own law practice in New York, N.Y.
1895	Married Nathalie Sedgwick (divorced 1929)
1901-1902	Member, New York State Assembly, 29th District
1912	Assisted in organizing the Progressive Party and supported the presidential candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt
1914	Progressive Party nominee for United States Senate
1916	Progressive Party nominee for United States Senate Counsel for a joint committee of the New York legislature in an investigation of public utility commissions and public service corporations

1917	Special assistant to the United States Attorney General in antitrust proceedings Member, American Mission to Inter-Allied Conference, Paris, France
1917-1919	Appointed to the United States Shipping Board, becoming trustee and vice president of the board's Emergency Fleet Corp.
1920-1921	Secretary of state
1921-1923	Practiced law in partnership with Woodrow Wilson
1923-1936	Established his own law practice; retired from the practice of law
1929	Married Anne von Ahlstrand Ely (died 1963)
1950, Apr. 11	Died, Bemus Point, N.Y.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Bainbridge Colby (1869-1950) span the years 1863-1950, with the bulk of the material dated from 1912 when he assisted in organizing the Progressive Party in support of Theodore Roosevelt's presidential campaign. The collection contains correspondence, letterbooks, notebooks, scrapbooks, photographs, and other papers concerning national politics, the Progressive Party, and American foreign policy. The papers are organized in the following eight series: [Notebooks](#), [Correspondence](#), [Addresses, Statements, and Articles](#), [Press Releases](#), [Scrapbooks](#), [Miscellany](#), [Additions](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [Correspondence](#) series contains a few early family letters but mostly documents Colby's career from 1912 onward. Correspondence with Woodrow Wilson predominately pertains to foreign policy issues and personal affairs, and although it represents the most extensive correspondence in the series, there are also exchanges with other public figures including James M. Cox, Josephus Daniels, Samuel Gompers, William Randolph Hearst, Gilbert M. Hitchcock, Cordell Hull, David Lloyd George, Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924), Medill McCormick, Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred Emanuel Smith, John Spargo, and André Tardieu.

Colby was an effective speaker, and the [Addresses, Statements, and Articles](#) series includes copies of his many political addresses over a long period of time. The series contains several drafts of the 1912 convention call of the Progressive Party annotated and initialed by Theodore Roosevelt. Drafts of Colby's best-known and most significant state paper, the note of August 10, 1920, enunciating America's refusal to recognize the new Russian government following the revolution of 1917, is also included in the series. United States policy with respect to Russia stood until reversed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933.

A large series of [Scrapbooks](#) contains newspaper clippings concerning speeches, political campaigns, and trips. Correspondence originally enclosed in the scrapbooks has been removed and filed in the [Correspondence](#) series.

The [Additions](#) series supplements similar material and topics found in the main body of the papers. Although he was an early supporter of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Colby eventually became a critic of the New Deal, formed the anti-Roosevelt American Liberty League, and supported the Republican Party candidate Alfred M. Landon in the 1936 presidential election. Addition I contains various types of material relating to Colby's political reversal as well as to other topics.

# Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- [Notebooks, undated](#)
- [Correspondence, 1864-1950](#)
- [Addresses, Statements, and Articles, 1912-1946](#)
- [Press Releases, 1920-1921](#)
- [Scrapbooks, 1886-1936](#)
- [Miscellany, 1863-1950](#)
- [Additions, 1889-1945](#)
- [Oversize, 1863-1939](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1	<u>Notebooks, undated</u> Notebooks. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 2-7	<u>Correspondence, 1864-1950</u> Letters received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 8	<u>Addresses, Statements, and Articles, 1912-1946</u> Drafts and copies of addresses, statements, and articles. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 9	<u>Press Releases, 1920-1921</u> Mimeographed press releases. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 10-24	<u>Scrapbooks, 1886-1936</u> Newspaper clippings of editorials, articles, and pictures. Arranged by volume number and therein chronologically.
BOX 25	<u>Miscellany, 1863-1950</u> Appointments, certificates, photographs, newspaper clippings, illustrations, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 26-74	<u>Additions, 1889-1945</u>
BOX 26-73	<u>Addition I, 1889-1945</u> Correspondence, letterbooks, drafts, legal and financial records, photographs, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 74	<u>Addition II, 1918-1932</u> Correspondence, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX OV 1	<u>Oversize, 1863-1939</u> Appointments, certificates, photographs, and miscellaneous items. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Notebooks, undated Notebooks. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 1	Undated (9 vols.)
BOX 2-7	Correspondence, 1864-1950 Letters received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 2	General correspondence, 1864-1920
BOX 2	Roosevelt, Theodore, 1912-1915
BOX 2	Wilson, Woodrow
BOX 2	1916-1920, Apr.
BOX 3	1920, May-Dec.
BOX 4	1921-1923
BOX 4	Miscellaneous correspondence
BOX 4	1921-1932
BOX 5	1933-1936, Oct.
BOX 6	1936, Nov.-1940, Nov.
BOX 7	1940, Dec.-1950
BOX 8	Addresses, Statements, and Articles, 1912-1946 Drafts and copies of addresses, statements, and articles. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 8	Campaign speeches, 1920
BOX 8	Miscellaneous material, 1912-1946
BOX 8	Policy note regarding nonrecognition of Russia, 1920
BOX 8	Progressive Party convention call, 1912
BOX 9	Press Releases, 1920-1921 Mimeographed press releases. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 9	1920-1921
BOX 10-24	Scrapbooks, 1886-1936 Newspaper clippings of editorials, articles, and pictures. Arranged by volume number and therein chronologically.
BOX 10	Vols. 1-2, includes Progressive Party presidential campaign of 1912 and various speaking engagements, 1909-1913

## Scrapbooks, 1886-1936

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 11	Vols. 3-4, includes Progressive Party material, 1913-1915
BOX 12	Vol. 5, includes Progressive Party national convention and presidential campaign, 1915-1915
BOX 13	Vols. 6-7, includes Progressive Party material, 1912-1926
BOX 14	Vols. 8-10, includes clippings relating to the George F. Thompson Committee investigation of public utility commissions and public service corporations in New York state, 1916
BOX 15-17	Vols. 11-17, editorials, 1930-1936
BOX 18	Vols. 18, includes personal material concerning Williams College, Williamstown, Mass., 1886-1889
BOX 19	Vols. 19-20, includes material concerning the Progressive Party, New Deal, and Constitutional Democratic Party of Russia, 1912-1936
BOX 20	Vols. 21-22, includes memorabilia and the presidential campaign of 1932, 1913-1932
BOX 21-22	Vols. 23-26, miscellaneous clippings, 1916-1933
BOX 23	Vols. 27-29, includes material concerning South American trip of 1920, 1920-1934
BOX 24	Vols. 30-31, includes criticism of the New Deal and support of the Republican Party candidate Alfred M. Landon against Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1936 presidential election, 1935-1936
BOX 25	Miscellany, 1863-1950 Appointments, certificates, photographs, newspaper clippings, illustrations, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 25	Appointments, certificates, and photographs, 1863, 1886, 1915-1921, 1931-1942 <u><i>See also Oversize</i></u>
BOX 25	Printed matter, 1920-1950
BOX 26-74	Additions, 1889-1945
BOX 26-73	Addition I, 1889-1945 Correspondence, letterbooks, drafts, legal and financial records, photographs, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 26	Letterbooks
BOX 26	1930-1931
BOX 27	1932-1933
BOX 28	1933-1939
BOX 29	1934-1936
BOX 30	1936-1938
BOX 31-39	Correspondence, 1918-1945
BOX 40-41	Campaign materials, 1912, 1936
BOX 42	Wills
BOX 43-49	Legal file, 1920-1940
BOX 50-56	Financial and business file, 1920-1940
BOX 57-60	Income taxes, 1930s



## Additions, 1889-1945

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 61-68	Speeches and articles, drafts and related correspondence, 1920-1930
BOX 69-71	Secretary of state material, 1920-1921
BOX 72	Address books, scrapbooks, and papers relating to Nathalie Colby, 1889-1905
BOX 73	Photographs and miscellaneous material
BOX 74	Addition II, 1918-1932 Correspondence, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 74	General correspondence, 1918-1932 (10 folders)
BOX 74	Miscellany
BOX 74	Printed matter
BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1863-1939 Appointments, certificates, photographs, and miscellaneous items. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	Appointments, certificates, and photographs, 1863, 1886, 1916-1921, 1931-1939 (Container 25)