

Henry S. Pritchett Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2012

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Collection Summary

Title: Henry S. Pritchett Papers

Span Dates: 1876-1967

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1939)

ID No.: MSS36947

Creator: Pritchett, Henry S. (Henry Smith), 1857-1939

Extent: 3,700 items ; 18 containers plus 1 oversize ; 7.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English.

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

Abstract: Astronomer, superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, and president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Correspondence, travel diaries and autobiographical fragments, drafts and reprints of writings, speeches, essays, reports, Pritchett's book entitled *What is Religion?* (1906), and other papers relating to Pritchett's career in science and education.

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

Adams, Charles Francis, 1835-1915--Correspondence.

Bowles, Samuel, 1826-1878--Correspondence.

Butler, Nicholas Murray, 1862-1947--Correspondence.

Carnegie, Andrew, 1835-1919--Correspondence.

Dawes, Charles Gates, 1865-1951--Correspondence.

Eliot, Charles William, 1834-1926--Correspondence.

Hall, Samuel S.--Correspondence.

Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964--Correspondence.

Jessup, Walter A. (Walter Albert), 1877-1944--Correspondence.

Keppel, Frederick P. (Frederick Paul), 1875-1943--Correspondence.

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

Pritchett, Henry S. (Henry Smith), 1857-1939.

Pritchett, Henry S. (Henry Smith), 1857-1939. *What is religion?* and other student questions; talks to college students. 1906.

Rabitté, Margaret--Correspondence.

Reed, Alfred Zantinger, 1875-1949--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.

Root, Elihu, 1845-1937--Correspondence.

Root, Elihu, 1881-1967--Correspondence.

Storey, W. B. (William B.)--Correspondence.

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

Washington, Booker T., 1856-1915--Correspondence.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924.

Wister, Owen, 1860-1938--Correspondence.

Organizations

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Franklin Fund.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Massachusetts. Charles River Basin Commission.

Santa Barbara Relief Fund Committee.

U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

United States. Bureau of Standards.

Subjects

Astronomy.
Disaster relief--California.
Earthquakes--California--Santa Barbara.
Education--Societies, etc.
Education.
Endowments.
Medicine--Study and teaching.
Religious literature.
Rivers--Massachusetts.
Science.

Places

United States--Politics and government--1901-1953.
United States--Race relations.

Occupations

Astronomers.
Educators.
Public officials.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Henry S. Pritchett, astronomer, superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, and president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, were given to the Library of Congress by the Carnegie Foundation in 1964 and by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Waller Pritchett in 1966, 1972, and 1975

Processing History

The papers of Henry S. Pritchett were arranged and described in 1975. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Henry S. Pritchett 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, Henry S. Pritchett Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1857, Apr. 16	Born, Fayette, Mo.
1875	A.B., Pritchett Institute, Glasgow, Mo.
1878-1880	Assistant astronomer, United States Naval Observatory

1880-1881	Assistant to his father, Carr Waller Pritchett, Morrison Observatory, Glasgow, Mo.
1881	Appointed assistant professor of astronomy and mathematics, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
1882	Second in command to Edwin Smith, United States Coast and Geodetic Survey expedition to New Zealand to observe the transit of Venus
1883	Named professor of astronomy and director of the observatory, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
1889	Headed expedition to California to observe the solar eclipse, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
1894-1895	Studied astronomy, University of Munich, Munich, Germany, receiving a doctorate
1897	Appointed superintendent, United States Coast and Geodetic Survey
1900-1905	President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. 1905 Submitted to Andrew Carnegie a plan to establish a fund to provide retiring allowances for professors Served with the Charles River Basin Commission, the Lighthouse Board, and the Immigration Commission
1906	Published <i>What Is Religion?</i> Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1906-1930 President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
1911-1930	Trustee, Carnegie Corp. of New York (president, 1920-1923)
1930	Retired as president emeritus, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
1933	President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
1939, Aug. 28	Died, Santa Barbara, Calif

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Henry Smith Pritchett (1857-1939) span the period 1876-1967, with the bulk of the material dated between 1900 and 1939. Although there are comprehensive letter files only for the years 1932-1935, a much longer span of select correspondence with notable political leaders and educators has been preserved. The collection also includes a partial autobiography, several shorter autobiographical documents, reprints and drafts of Pritchett's articles and speeches, and subject files that document certain phases in Pritchett's public life including his term as president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The collection is organized into seven series: [Travel Diaries and Autobiographical Fragments](#), [Special Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

Pritchett's career as a scientist and educator of wide interests and as a leader and initiator of social projects is reflected in the [Special Correspondence](#) with Nicholas Murray Butler; Andrew Carnegie, Charles William Eliot, Herbert Hoover, Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Root, William H. Taft, Woodrow Wilson, and others. Among other topics, Pritchett wrote to Roosevelt his opinion of the president's relations with leaders in the South and elicited in return the president's views of racial matters. The correspondence with Taft, includes exchanges regarding Woodrow Wilson, about whom both shared a caustic opinion. Pritchett's most faithful correspondent was Nicholas Murray Butler, longtime president of Columbia University and trustee with Pritchett of various of the Carnegie endowments. The two men shared many of the same views

in correspondence that lasted forty years. Also extensive are letters to and from Elihu Root, who shared political affiliations and an interest in the administration of the Carnegie endowments.

The [General Correspondence](#) features administrators and staff of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, of which Pritchett was president for more than twenty-five years. Included are Samuel S. Hall, Walter A. Jessup, Frederick P. Keppel, William S. Learned, Gladys Noon, Margaret Rabitte, and Alfred Zantzing Reed. Other prominent correspondents include Charles Francis Adams, Samuel Bowles, Charles Gates Dawes, Elihu Root, Jr. (1881-1967), and W. B. Storey.

The [Subject File](#) is arranged largely as the Library received it. In addition to files on the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching donated by that organization, the series includes material on Pritchett's role in the Charles River Basin Project (1901-1908), the Santa Barbara Relief Fund Committee (1925-1926), the formation of the U.S. Bureau of Standards (1900-1919), and his work as a trustee of the Franklin Fund (1903-1938). Of particular interest is material on controversy over Woodrow Wilson's attempt to get a pension from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The [Speeches and Writings File](#) contains a published volume of addresses to students titled *What is Religion?* (1906) as well as articles on scientific subjects from the early phase of his career and on education in later decades. Included are drafts and reprints of writings and typescripts and transcripts of speeches.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Travel Diaries and Autobiographical Fragments, 1876-1939](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1898-1939](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1900-1939](#)
- [Subject File, 1897-1939](#)
- [Speeches and Writings File, 1889-1939](#)
- [Miscellany, 1890-1967](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1	<u>Travel Diaries and Autobiographical Fragments, 1876-1939</u> Diaries, fragments, and notes. Arranged by type of material in chronological order.
BOX 2-4	<u>Special Correspondence, 1898-1939</u> Letters received from and copies of letters sent to Pritchett's major correspondents, with related correspondence and inserts. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically.
BOX 5	<u>General Correspondence, 1900-1939</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent, chiefly 1932-1935, with attachments. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically.
BOX 8-10	<u>Subject File, 1897-1939</u> Correspondence, reports, memoranda, cables, and clippings. Arranged alphabetically by subject and therein chronologically.
BOX 11-17	<u>Speeches and Writings File, 1889-1939</u> Holograph and typescript drafts and reprints of speeches, essays, reports, and a book. Arranged by type of writing or title.
BOX 17-18	<u>Miscellany, 1890-1967</u> Scrapbook, clippings, memorabilia, and miscellaneous correspondence. Arranged by type of material
BOX OV 1	<u>Oversize</u> Awards, diplomas and certificates. Described according to the series, container and folder from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Travel Diaries and Autobiographical Fragments, 1876-1939 Diaries, fragments, and notes. Arranged by type of material in chronological order.
BOX 1	Autobiographical fragment, undated
BOX 1	Memory of William McKinley, "President McKinley's Words to the Boys of America"
BOX 1	Notes on the Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, Pa., 1876
BOX 1	Travel diary, 1882-1883
BOX 1	Notes of journey in Austria, 1894
BOX 2-4	Special Correspondence, 1898-1939 Letters received from and copies of letters sent to Pritchett's major correspondents, with related correspondence and inserts. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically.
BOX 2	Brookings, Robert S., 1901-1927
BOX 2	Butler, Nicholas Murray, 1900-1939 (4 folders)
BOX 2	Carnegie, Andrew, 1901-1913
BOX 3	Eliot, Charles William, 1900-1925 (2 folders)
BOX 3	Higginson, Henry L., and Lee, Higginson and Co., 1900-1919
BOX 3	Hoover, Herbert, 1920-1937
BOX 3	Page, Thomas Nelson, 1901-1921
BOX 3	Roosevelt, Theodore, 1898-1918 (2 folders)
BOX 4	Rhodes, James Ford, 1902-1926
BOX 4	Root, Elihu (1845-1937), 1899-1936 (2 folders)
BOX 4	Stone & Webster and Blodget, financial correspondence, 1931-1935
BOX 4	Taft, William H. 1904-1929
BOX 4	Washington, Booker T., 1900-1905
BOX 4	Wilson, Woodrow, 1902-1911
BOX 5	General Correspondence, 1900-1939 Letters received and copies of letters sent, chiefly 1932-1935, with attachments. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically.
BOX 5	A-G (7 folders)
BOX 6	H-R (9 folders)

General Correspondence, 1900-1939

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 7	S-Z (7 folders)
BOX 8-10	Subject File, 1897-1939 Correspondence, reports, memoranda, cables, and clippings. Arranged alphabetically by subject and therein chronologically.
BOX 8	Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1908-1938 (6 folders)
BOX 8	Charles River Basin Dam, 1901, Mar.-1908, Nov. (2 folders)
BOX 9	Franklin Fund, Pritchett's work as a trustee of, 1903-1938
BOX 9	National Bureau of Standards, concerning the establishment of the metric system, 1900-1919
BOX 9	Pension controversy: Woodrow Wilson and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1913-1932
BOX 9	Santa Barbara earthquake, Santa Barbara, Calif. (1925, June 29), Santa Barbara Relief Fund Committee, 1925, July-1926, Aug. (2 folders)
BOX 10	U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey
BOX 10	Letters supporting Pritchett's proposed directorship, 1897-1898
BOX 10	Correspondence with Superintendent O. H. Tittman, 1900-1909
BOX 10	Related correspondence, 1898-1935
BOX 11-17	Speeches and Writings File, 1889-1939 Holograph and typescript drafts and reprints of speeches, essays, reports, and a book. Arranged by type of writing or title.
BOX 11	Reports and articles, 1898-1935 (3 vols.)
BOX 12	Speeches and writings
BOX 12	A-D (6 folders)
BOX 13	E-H (5 folders)
BOX 14	I-P (5 folders)
BOX 15	P-S (5 folders)
BOX 16	S-W (6 folders)
BOX 17	<i>What Is Religion?</i> (1906)
BOX 17	Correspondence
BOX 17	Copy of the book
BOX 17	Untitled speeches
BOX 17	Miscellany

Speeches and Writings File, 1889-1939

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 17	Clippings
BOX 17-18	Miscellany, 1890-1967 Scrapbook, clippings, memorabilia, and miscellaneous correspondence. Arranged by type of material
BOX 17	Awards, diplomas, appointments <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 17	Clippings and memorabilia, 1890-1935
BOX 18	Various reports and correspondence, 1900-1920
BOX 18	Printed matter relating to Child Labor Amendment, 1934-1935
BOX 18	Mrs. Leonard Waller Pritchett's correspondence with Cardinal Eugène Tisserant regarding Pritchett's attempt to modernize the Vatican Library's cataloging system, 1967
BOX 18	Scrapbooks, circa 1900-1935
BOX OV 1	Oversize Awards, diplomas and certificates. Described according to the series, container and folder from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Awards, diplomas, appointments (Container 17)