

Guide to the Maurice Parmelee Papers

MS 1744



compiled by Tom Hyry

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1744

CREATOR: Parmelee, Maurice, 1882-1969

TITLE: Maurice Parmelee papers

DATES: 1905-1967

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.75 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, writings, subject files, legal papers, personal papers, and photographs that document the life and career of Maurice Parmelee, eminent sociologist and economist. Correspondents include Louis Gaspar, Franklin H. Giddings, Russell Knutson, and H. L. Mencken. The completed manuscript of an unpublished biography comprises a particularly substantive portion of the papers.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Judith Parmelee Hudson, 1999.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Maurice Parmelee Papers (MS 1744). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Maurice Parmelee was born on October 20, 1882 in Istanbul, where his parents were Protestant missionaries. The family spent the first twelve years of Maurice's life in the eastern Mediterranean region before returning to the United States and settling in New York state. Parmelee attended finishing school at Oberlin College and received a B.A. in 1904 and an M.A. in 1908 in economics from Yale University and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1909. For two years following his graduation from Yale College, he worked through the University Settlement House as a "probation fellow." This position allowed him to closely observe the criminal justice system and led to many articles and books on criminology.

In the years leading up to World War I, Parmelee held academic appointments in the fields of economics and sociology at Syracuse University (summer 1909), University of Kansas (1909-1910), University of Missouri (1910-1913), College of the City of New York (1913-1914 and 1917-1918), and the University of Minnesota (1915-1916). In 1918 he served as a representative of the United States on the War Trade Board in London and he subsequently served the U.S. government as an economist for the Department of State in 1920 and as an economic consul in Berlin from 1920 to 1923.

In 1923, Parmelee resigned from the government and spent twelve years traveling widely, doing research, and writing on a number of topics including economic warfare, poverty, gymnosophy, sexuality, Bolshevism, fascism and world government. During this period, Parmelee published the books *Blockade and Sea Power*(1924), *The New Gymnosophy*(1927), *Oriental and Occidental Culture, An Interpretation*(1928), *Bolshevism, Fascism, and the Liberal-Democratic State*(1934), and *Farewell to Poverty*(1935).

Parmelee began working for the government again in 1935 briefly as an economist in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in the Department of Agriculture. In 1938 he began a number of successive government positions as an economist working in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture (1938-1939), the Division of Monetary Economics of the Treasury Department (1939-1940), the Department of Interior (1940-1941), the Board of Economic Warfare (1941-1942), and the Railroad Retirement Board (1942-1952). While working for the Board of Economic Warfare, Parmelee was accused of subversion by Congressman Martin Dies. The accusation was based on the content of Parmelee's books on nudism and socialism and led to his dismissal from the Board. While working for the Railroad Retirement Board, Parmelee again came under scrutiny and was investigated by the Kerr Committee, a subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. He was not found guilty however, and he continued with the Retirement Board until his retirement in 1952. After retiring, Parmelee resumed his world travels and also

finished a book he referred to as his "magnum opus," *The History of Modern Culture*. He married three times and had one daughter. Maurice Parmelee died in 1969.

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of correspondence, writings, subject files, legal papers, personal papers, and photographs that document the life and career of Maurice Parmelee, eminent sociologist and economist. Correspondents include Louis Gaspar, Franklin H. Giddings, Russell Knutson, and H. L. Mencken. The completed manuscript of an unpublished biography comprises a particularly substantive portion of the papers.

Arrangement

Arranged in four series:

[I. Correspondence, 1910-1968.](#)

[II. Subject Files, 1950-1967.](#)

[III. Writings, 1905-1965.](#)

[IV. Personal Papers, Legal Papers, and Photographs, 1906-1963.](#)

Collection Contents

Correspondence, 1910-1968

The series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and includes substantive letters between Parmelee and Louis Gaspar, Franklin Giddings, Russell Knutson, and H. L. Mencken. The correspondence predominantly concerns Parmelee's publications and intellectual concerns. The series also holds some short letters from well known individuals such as Walter Lippmann, Eleanor Roosevelt, Upton Sinclair, and H. G. Wells. Also included are a small number of personal letters between Parmelee and his brother Julius, his wife Ruth, and his daughter Judith Hudson. Three folders of miscellaneous and unidentified correspondence are filed at the end of the listing.

b. 1, f. 1	Arnaldo, Solomon	1949
b. 1, f. 2	Booth, Harold	1927
b. 1, f. 3	Ellis, Albert	1962-1963
b. 1, f. 4	Farmer, W. W.	1962
b. 1, f. 5	Gaspar, Louis	1962-1968, undated
b. 1, f. 6	Giddings, Franklin H.	1927
b. 1, f. 7	Haynes, Wallace	1964
b. 1, f. 8	Hoffman, Hallock	1964
b. 1, f. 9	Hudson, Judith [daughter]	1964
b. 1, f. 10	Huntington, Henry	1963-1964
b. 1, f. 11-12	Knutson, Russell	1951-1964
b. 1, f. 13	Lippmann, Walter	1918
b. 1, f. 14	Mencken, H. L. (Henry Louis)	1923-1927
b. 1, f. 15	Miller, Justin	1952
b. 1, f. 16	Overstreet, Harry	1928, 1962
b. 1, f. 17	Parmelee, Julius [brother]	1960-1964
b. 1, f. 18	Parmelee, Ruth [third wife]	1963-1967
b. 1, f. 19	Philosophical Library, Inc.	1960-1961
b. 1, f. 20	Roosevelt, Eleanor	1951
b. 1, f. 21	Rutgers University Press	1964-1965
b. 1, f. 22	Scott, Howard	1961-1962
b. 1, f. 23	Shugg, Roger W.	1958
b. 1, f. 24	Sinclair, Upton	1927

b. 1, f. 25	Sisson, Albert F.	1961
b. 1, f. 26	Usborne, Henry	1960-1961
b. 1, f. 27	Wells, H. G. (Herbert George)	1927
b. 1, f. 28-29	Miscellaneous	1910-1966, undated
b. 1, f. 30	Unidentified	1961, 1963, undated

Subject Files, 1950-1967, undated

Arranged alphabetically by name of organization, Subject files document organizations in which Parmelee participated. With the exception of the American Gymnosophical Society, the files concern Parmelee's involvement in groups and conferences advocating world government.

b. 2, f. 1	American Gymnosophical Society	undated
b. 2, f. 2	Japan Parliamentary Committee for World Federation. Conference of Non-members of the United Nations	1950
b. 2, f. 3	Toward World Democracy	1955-1962
b. 2, f. 4	World Constitution Coordinating Committee	1967, undated
b. 2, f. 5	World Movement for World Federal Government	1953

Writings, 1905-1965, undated

Articles, books, lectures, and reviews written about Parmelee's books comprise Writings. Researchers should consult the bibliography at the beginning of the series for a detailed listing of his most relevant work. The writings cover a wide variety of sociological, anthropological, political and economic topics including gymnosophy (nudism), poverty, criminology, capitalism, communism, fascism, and world government.

Books include three unpublished manuscripts, the most significant of which is Parmelee's autobiography, entitled "Adventures in Many Lands: An Autobiographical Memoir." A draft of *The History of Modern Culture*, which contains many files that Parmelee labeled "Omitted Chapters," constitutes another significant portion of the series. One folder of lectures on a variety of topics and two folders of reviews of Parmelee's books complete the series.

b. 3, f. 1	Bibliography [books, articles, and reviews written between 1908 and 1954]	undated
b. 3, f. 2-6	Articles	1905-1951, undated
Books		
"Adventures in Many Lands: An Autobiographical Memoir" [unpublished]		
b. 3, f. 7-12	Early draft A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	undated
b. 3, f. 13-16	Later draft A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	undated
b. 4, f. 17	"Association in the Animal World" [unpublished] English	undated
"Dynamic Cultural Evolution" [working title for <i>The History of Modern Culture</i>]1960		
b. 4, f. 18-30	Book typescript	
b. 5, f. 31-45	Omitted chapters	
b. 6, f. 46	"The Heritage of Nudism" [unpublished] English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	undated
b. 6, f. 47	Nudism in Modern Life A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	undated

Books (continued)

b. 6, f. 48-50	The Play Function of Sex A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	undated
b. 6, f. 51	Pornography and Obscenity: A Handbook for Censors [two essays by D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller, with an introduction by Maurice Parmelee] A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	
b. 6, f. 52	"The Psychology of Clothing and Nudity" [unpublished] English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	undated
b. 6, f. 53	Unidentified	undated
b. 6, f. 54	Lectures	1954, 1965, undated
b. 6, f. 55-56	Reviews of Maurice Parmelee's books	1909-1962, undated

Personal Papers, Legal Papers, and Photographs, 1906-1963, undated

Arranged alphabetically by type of material, the series is comprised of a variety of items relating to Parmelee's personal life and career. A small number of items in Government appointments discuss charges Parmelee faced of subversive activities during World War II. Approximately twenty-five glass slides depicting life in a nudist colony during the 1920s or 1930s are listed at the end of the series.

b. 7, f. 1	Announcements [flyers for speeches and books]	1936-1937, undated
b. 7, f. 2	Biographical clippings	1960-1963
b. 7, f. 3	Book contracts	1923-1958, undated
b. 7, f. 4	Divorce papers	1933
b. 7, f. 5	Government appointments	1940-1948
b. 7, f. 6	Maurice Parmelee vs. The United States of America, United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia [re: censorship of <i>Nudism in Modern Life</i>]	
b. 7, f. 7	Passports and travel papers	1906-1936
	Photographs	
b. 7, f. 8	International Sociological Congress	1937
b. 7, f. 9	Portrait of Maurice Parmelee	1931
	Travel	
b. 7, f. 10-11	Italy	1929
b. 7, f. 12-13	Russia	1928
b. 8	Slides [nudist camps] Due to the physical nature of the material in box 8, staff supervision is required. Special handling note: Box 8, glass slides, needs notification by public services supervisor to the LSF manager for special handling during transport.	undated

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.

Subjects

Nudism
Sociologists
Sociology

Names

Gaspar, Louis
Giddings, Franklin Henry, 1855-1931
Knutson, Russell
Mencken, H. L. (Henry Louis), 1880-1956
Parmelee, Maurice, 1882-1969