

# Guide to the George William Watt Papers

MS 665



compiled by Lisa Newman

November 1978

Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

---

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	3
Conditions Governing Use .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	4
Collection Contents .....	5
Series I: Correspondence, 1930-1954 .....	5
Series II: Writings, [1920s-1950s?] .....	6
Series III: Notes, [1920s-1950s?] .....	7
Selected Search Terms .....	8

---

## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 665

**CREATOR:** Watt, George W. (George William), 1878-

**TITLE:** George William Watt papers

**DATES:** 1920-1954

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 9.25 linear feet (13 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, research notes, clippings, and a book-length manuscript on Woodrow Wilson written by Watt, a lawyer and Wilson enthusiast. The correspondence consists mainly of Watt's requests for information about Wilson and an attempt to ascertain whether Theodore Roosevelt actually fought in the battle on San Juan Hill. Although much of the correspondence is perfunctory, there is a letter from Winston Churchill on World War I, another from Josephus Daniels on Wilson, and several replies from "Rough Riders" attesting to Roosevelt's participation in the battle.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0665>

---

## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0665>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

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

b.      box

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

---

## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

---

## Preferred Citation

George William Watt Papers (MS 665). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

---

## Biographical / Historical

George William Watt (1878-1955) was a Woodrow Wilson enthusiast who spent many years collecting information about Wilson through reading and correspondence. Watt graduated from Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. He practiced law in New York and Philadelphia, and he became interested in Wilson through one of his clients in 1902. Having retired to Florida in 1920, Watt thereafter devoted much of his time to work on his Wilson manuscript, which apparently was never published. He moved from Clearwater, Florida, to Hot Springs, Arkansas, a few years before his death, and died in Arkansas on May 28, 1955.

---

## Scope and Contents

The George W. Watt Papers consist of nine linear feet of correspondence, writings, and notes related to Watt's research on Wilson and other historical subjects.

Series I, CORRESPONDENCE, spans the years ca. 1930-1954. It consists mainly of Watt's requests for information about Wilson. He addressed his inquiries to authors and publishers of books and articles about Wilson, to members of the Wilson administration, to people who had known Wilson or members of his family, to historical societies and libraries, and to churches and colleges that Wilson or one of his ancestors attended. The papers include replies to little more than half of these letters, and many are brief and uninformative. There are, however, a few letters from historically important correspondents that offer significant information or opinion, and many others contain some biographical data about Wilson. Watt also wrote to a number of college and university presidents asking their opinion of Wilson's presidency at Princeton, and he received several brief replies.

The other principal subject of Watt's correspondence is Theodore Roosevelt. He wrote a number of letters asking whether Roosevelt took part in the fighting on San Juan Hill and whether he knew, some years before the outbreak of World War I, of Germany's plan to invade Belgium. Several Rough Riders confirmed that Roosevelt participated fully in the battle, but no one confirmed his foreknowledge of Germany's military plans.

Series II, WRITINGS, contains two drafts of Watt's book-length manuscript on Woodrow Wilson, drafts of writings on the Wilson era and other topics, and notes for the Wilson manuscript.

Series III, NOTES, is comprised of reading notes on books related to the Wilson era, research notes on several twentieth-century figures, and annotated magazine and newspaper clippings.

---

## Arrangement

Arranged in three series: I. Correspondence. II. Writings. III. Notes.

---

**Collection Contents**  
**Series I: Correspondence, 1930-1954**  
*2 linear feet (5 boxes)*

The arrangement is alphabetical by Watt’s correspondent.

b. 1	A - Colebaugh
b. 2	Coletta - He
b. 3	Hi - Min
b. 4	Mis - Saint M
b. 5	Saint P - Z, Unidentified

**Series II: Writings, [1920s-1950s?]**  
*.75 linear feet (2 boxes)*

b. 6	Two drafts of Watt’s book-length manuscript on Woodrow Wilson and notes
b. 7	Other writings by Watt

**Series III: Notes, [1920s-1950s?]***6 linear feet (6 boxes)*

b. 8	Notes on readings, organized by author
b. 9	Notes on readings, organized by author
b. 10	Notes on readings, organized by author
b. 11	Notes on readings, organized by author
b. 11	Notes on readings, organized by subject
b. 12	Notes on readings, organized by subject
b. 13	Notes on readings, organized by subject

---

## **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**

Armed Forces

### **Geographic Names**

United States -- Foreign relations

United States -- Politics and government

### **Occupations**

Authors

### **Names**

Churchill, Winston, 1874-1965

Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919

Watt, George W. (George William), 1878-

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924