

# Guide to the John L. De Forest Papers

GEN MSS 885



by Beinecke staff

2007-05-16

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 885

**CREATOR:** De Forest, John L. (John Le Roy), 1916-

**TITLE:** John L. De Forest papers

**DATES:** 1875–2000

**BULK DATES:** 1934–2000

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 11.83 linear feet (21 boxes) + 1 roll

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The John L. De Forest Papers contain forty volumes of typescript diaries, 1935-2000, many with newspaper clippings and other related materials laid in. Diaries include entries relating to jazz musician and family friend Benny Goodman; Yiddish author Sholem Asch, for whom De Forest worked as a secretary in the 1940s; political associate John Davis Lodge, governor of Connecticut, 1951-1955; and Dutch historian and journalist Hendrik Willem Van Loon. The collection also includes typescript autobiographical writings and transcriptions of correspondence, based on excerpts from the diaries; research material and a biography of Tapping Reeve (1744-1823), Connecticut lawyer and educator, typescript draft; photographs of authors, musicians, and politicians represented in the diaries; photograph albums relating to family, friends, and the Brunswick School, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1930s-1940s; a scrapbook containing memorabilia from Oberlin College, 1935-1936; a scrapbook of clippings of newspaper articles written by De Forest for the Stamford Advocate and New Canaan Advertiser, about local news and Connecticut history, 1939-1940; scrapbooks of newspaper clippings concerning De Forest's work in Stamford politics, 1950s-1970s; scrapbooks of photographs, postcards, and ephemera relating to travel by De Forest in Europe, Canada, South America, and Mexico, 1940s-1950s; other newspaper clippings about local and national politics, 1920s-1970s; research materials on Connecticut history and De Forest family genealogy; and newsletters edited by De Forest for Electrolux.

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

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.deforest>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

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

b.        box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift and bequest of John L. De Forest, 1996-2000.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The John L. De Forest Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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### Preferred Citation

John L. De Forest Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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### Processing Information

This collection consists of materials formerly classed as Uncat MSS 57 and Uncat Ms Vault 775. In 2005, the collection received a preliminary level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization. A preliminary finding aid was compiled from lists created at the time of receipt by the Library. Folder titles were based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles were not verified against the contents of folders. In 2007-2008, the preliminary finding aid was revised to comply with current archival descriptive standards.

In 2012, the collection received a baseline level of processing, including partial rehousing and minimal organization. The collection was reclassified under one call number, materials were organized by acquisition, and containers were renumbered in a single sequence. For some folders, contents were verified and folder titles updated.

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### Associated Materials

John L. De Forest / Sholem Asch collection (GEN MSS 114)

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## John L. De Forest (1916-2000)

John L. De Forest, diarist and politician in Stamford, Connecticut. De Forest graduated from the Brunswick School, Greenwich, Connecticut, in 1935, and attended Oberlin College, 1935-1936. In the 1940s, De Forest worked as a secretary for Yiddish author Sholem Asch. For most of his life, De Forest lived in Stamford, where he was a member of the Republican Party, founded a Quaker Meeting in 1948, and served on the city Board of Representatives and Police Commission during the 1950s. During the 1970s, he worked

in the factory personnel department of Electrolux, a home appliance manufacturer in Old Greenwich, Connecticut. De Forest kept a diary, 1935-2000, in which he recorded events of his daily life, observations on local and world events, and meetings with friends in politics and the arts.

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## **Scope and Contents**

The John L. De Forest Papers contain forty volumes of typescript diaries, 1935-2000, many with newspaper clippings and other related materials laid in. Diaries include entries relating to jazz musician and family friend Benny Goodman; Yiddish author Sholem Asch, for whom De Forest worked as a secretary in the 1940s; political associate John Davis Lodge, governor of Connecticut, 1951-1955; and Dutch historian and journalist Hendrik Willem Van Loon. The collection also includes typescript autobiographical writings and transcriptions of correspondence, based on excerpts from the diaries; research material and a biography of Tapping Reeve (1744-1823), Connecticut lawyer and educator, typescript draft; photographs of authors, musicians, and politicians represented in the diaries; photograph albums relating to family, friends, and the Brunswick School, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1930s-1940s; a scrapbook containing memorabilia from Oberlin College, 1935-1936; a scrapbook of clippings of newspaper articles written by De Forest for the Stamford Advocate and New Canaan Advertiser, about local news and Connecticut history, 1939-1940; scrapbooks of newspaper clippings concerning De Forest's work in Stamford politics, 1950s-1970s; scrapbooks of photographs, postcards, and ephemera relating to travel by De Forest in Europe, Canada, South America, and Mexico, 1940s-1950s; other newspaper clippings about local and national politics, 1920s-1970s; research materials on Connecticut history and De Forest family genealogy; and newsletters edited by De Forest for Electrolux.

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## **Arrangement**

Organized into two groupings: July 2000 Acquisition and September 1996 Acquisition.

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## Collection Contents

### July 2000 Acquisition, 1875-2000

11 linear feet (19 boxes) + 1 roll

Organized into two subseries: Writings and Other Papers.

#### Writings

b. 1	Diaries, volumes 1-7 <i>7 Folders</i>	1935-1953
b. 2	Diaries, volumes 8-15 <i>8 Folders</i>	1953-1963
b. 3	Diaries, volumes 16-22 <i>7 Folders</i>	1963-1970
b. 4	Diaries, volumes 23-30 <i>8 Folders</i>	1970-1979
b. 5	Diaries, volumes 31-37 <i>7 Folders</i>	1979-1994
b. 6	Diaries, volumes 38-40 <i>4 Folders</i>	1995-2000
b. 6	Diary excerpts	1935-1961
b. 6	Diary excerpts	1942-1959
b. 6	"School Days," typescript	[1994]
b. 6	"A Barrister Builds A Schoolhouse," typescript	undated
b. 6	"Student Days At Oberlin," typescript <i>3 Folders</i>	1935-1936
b. 6	"Our Neighbor Benny Goodman," typescript <i>6 Folders</i>	1949-1986
b. 6	"School Days, School Days. A Nostalgic Glance at an Academic Past," typescript <i>10 Folders</i>	undated
b. 6	"John Davis Lodge," typescript <i>3 Folders</i>	1950-1986
b. 7	"Albert Bigelow," typescript	1956-1997
b. 7	"Hendrik Willen Van Loon," typescript	1939-1995
b. 7	"Once On A Long, Long Ridge," typescript <i>12 Folders</i>	1980-1985
b. 7	"Small Ring--Big Fight, The Lachlan Slope, Love Letter," typescript	undated
b. 7	"Stamford-Greenwich Meeting," diary excerpt	1940-1990

## Writings (continued)

b. 7	"Letters to Jack De Forest," typed transcripts	1954-1984
b. 7	"Tributes to Mother," typed transcripts	1966
Other Papers		
b. 7	Recollections of Shadrach Brush	1900
b. 7	Marshall Family genealogy	undated
b. 7	Sholem Asch Christmas pageant	undated
b. 7	Maps and town plans	1875-1995, undated
b. 7	Memberships and awards	1951-1991
b. 7	Sons of the American Revolution	1930-1990
b. 7	<i>Electrolux Factory News</i>	1974-1976
b. 8	Newspapers 17 Folders	1929-1969
b. 9	<i>Yale University Library Gazette</i> 8 Folders	1994-1999
b. 9	De Forest, John L. <i>Anthony De Forest of Stamford, Connecticut, 1739</i> (2 copies) 2 Folders	1983
b. 9	<i>The Original Proprietors, Descendants Of The Founders of Hartford</i> (2 copies)	1986
b. 9	<i>The First Ten Years: Yale Library Associates Endowment Fund</i>	1996
b. 9	<i>The Beinecke Rare Book &amp; Manuscript Library: A Guide To The Collections</i>	1994-1996
b. 9	Florence travel guide	1970
b. 9	Maïeu, Bernard and André Pierrard. <i>Promenade dans la mémoire de l'Avesnois</i> . Tome 1: le cadre de vie	1984
b. 9	Kreisel, Henrich. <i>Würzburg: die alte Stadt</i>	1951
b. 9	Herbert Hoover presidential inauguration program	1929
b. 9	Clippings	1939-1996
b. 9	Genealogy research files 5 Folders	1937-1975; undated
b. 9	Photographs 3 Folders	1964-1970; undated
b. 9	Newspaper articles about De Forest	1985-1999

## Other Papers (continued)

b. 9	Scrapbook of newspapers articles by De Forest Contains clippings from the <i>Stamford Advocate</i> and <i>New Canaan Advertiser</i> about local news and Connecticut history	1939-1940
b. 9	Scrapbook about Brunswick School (Greenwich, Connecticut)	circa 1934-1935
b. 9	Scrapbook about trip to Canada	1940s
b. 9	Scrapbook of humorous clippings	circa 1890
b. 10 (Oversize)	Scrapbook of newspapers articles and printed material about De Forest and Connecticut politics	1955-1960
b. 10 (Oversize)	Scrapbook of newspapers articles and printed material about De Forest and Connecticut politics	1960-1962
b. 11 (Oversize)	Scrapbook of newspapers articles and printed material about De Forest and Connecticut politics	1962-1963
b. 11 (Oversize)	Scrapbook of newspapers articles and printed material about De Forest and Connecticut politics	1963-1964
b. 12 (Oversize)	Scrapbook of newspapers articles about De Forest and Connecticut politics	1964-1968
b. 13 (Oversize)	Clippings, printed material, and photographs about De Forest and Connecticut politics <i>2 Folders</i>	1960s-1970s
b. 14 (Oversize)	Clippings, printed material, and photographs about De Forest and Connecticut politics <i>2 Folders</i>	1960s-1970s
b. 15 (Oversize)	Scrapbook about trip to Europe	1950s
b. 16 (Oversize)	Scrapbook about trip to Europe	1950s
b. 17 (Oversize)	Scrapbook about trip to Mexico	1940s
b. 17 (Oversize)	Scrapbook about trip to South America	1940s
b. 18 (Oversize)	Scrapbook about Oberlin College	1930s
b. 18 (Oversize)	Scrapbook of family and school photographs	1930s-1940s
b. 19 (Oversize)	Sons of the American Revolution	1935-1966
b. 19 (Oversize)	Printed material	1951
b. 20 (Roll)	Photograph of a school class Possibly Oberlin College	undated



**September 1996 Acquisition, 1956, undated***0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Contains materials relating to a biography of Tapping Reeve by De Forest

Organized into two subseries: Research Materials about Tapping Reeve and Writings about Tapping Reeve.

## Research Materials about Tapping Reeve

b. 21	"I. Reeve Family"	undated
b. 21	"II. Tapping Reeve (cont.)"	undated
b. 21	"III. Letters sent to Reeve"	undated
b. 21	"IV. Letters written by Reeve and Mrs. Reeve"	undated
b. 21	"V. Reeve material in Monitor"	undated
b. 21	"VI. The Witness. Articles"	undated
b. 21	"VII. Reeve notes from Fairfield Historical Society"	undated
b. 21	"VIII. Politics"	undated
b. 21	"IX. Law School Bldgs. and student letters"	undated
b. 21	"X. Aaron Burr and Edwards-Burr Family"	undated
b. 21	"XI. Law School Courses"	undated
b. 21	"XII. Reeve opinions and writings"	undated
b. 21	"XIII. History of Litchfield"	undated
b. 22	"XIV. Miscellany: Litchfield Republican, American Eagle, Enquirer"	undated
b. 22	"XV. Other letters by outsiders in which Reeves are mentioned"	undated
b. 22	"XVI. Religion in Litchfield"	undated
b. 22	"XVII. Notes on Jefferson with special references to policies that bothered Reeve and other Federalists"	undated
b. 22	"XVIII. William and Mary Law School"	undated
b. 22	"XIX. Bibliography"	undated
b. 22	"Statement to the Public by President Jacobs and Others on the Occasion of the Anniversary of Judge Tapping Reeve's Birth," <i>Connecticut Bar Journal</i> (Volume XXX, Number 3)	1956 September

## Writings about Tapping Reeve

b. 22	"Tapping Reeve -- Lawyer Extraordinary," <i>The Connecticut Antiquarian</i> (Volume VIII, Number 2)	1956 December
b. 22	<i>Tapping Reeve</i> (biography), typescript 7 Folders	undated

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## 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.

Republican Party (Conn.)

### Subjects

Politicians -- Connecticut -- Stamford -- Archives  
Quakers -- Connecticut -- Stamford  
Society of Friends -- Connecticut -- Stamford

### Geographic Names

Stamford (Conn. : Town) -- Politics and government -- 20th Century  
Stamford (Conn. : Town) -- Social life and customs

### Genres / Formats

Diaries -- Connecticut -- Stamford -- 20th Century  
Ephemera (general object genre) -- United States -- 20th Century  
Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century  
Scrapbooks -- United States -- 20th Century

### Occupations

Politicians -- Connecticut -- Stamford -- 20th Century

### Names

Asch, Sholem, 1880-1957  
De Forest, John L. (John Le Roy), 1916-  
Goodman, Benny, 1909-1986  
Lodge, John Davis, 1903-1985  
Reeve, Tapping, 1744-1823  
Van Loon, Hendrik Willem, 1882-1944

### Families

De Forest family

### Corporate Bodies

Brunswick School (Greenwich, Conn.)  
Electrolux Group  
Oberlin College