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## Society of American Historians records 6915231

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Society of American Historians
<b>Title:</b>	Society of American Historians records
<b>ID:</b>	6915231
<b>ID:</b>	MS#1420
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1879-1976
<b>Date [bulk]:</b>	1939-1976
<b>Physical Description:</b>	10 linear feet 24 document boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	This collection contains the early records of the Society of American Historians (SAH). The bulk of the material relates to the founding of the magazine <i>American Heritage</i> in 1954, and the establishment of the Francis Parkman and the Allan Nevins Prizes, awarded by the SAH since 1957 and 1961, respectively. Also present is a small amount of research material collected by Allan Nevins, Columbia University history professor and one of the founders of the SAH.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Society of American Historians records; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

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The Society of American Historians (SAH) was founded in 1939 by Allan Nevins (1890-1971) and several other historians for the purpose of promoting literary distinction in the writing of history and biography.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Until the mid-1950s, the principal aim of the SAH was in launching a history magazine that could appeal to a wide audience beyond the academic community. Nevins, a history professor at Columbia University and a two-time Pulitzer winner, initially proposed the idea of publishing a popular magazine of history to the American Historical Association (AHA). The AHA declined this proposal, however, which induced Nevins to establish the SAH in 1939 to undertake the publishing project. It took the SAH fifteen years to realize the idea, and over the years tentative titles for the publication included History, Horizons, Living History, and Milestones. In 1954, in cooperation with the American Association for State and Local History, the magazine finally came into being as the American Heritage.

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## Biographical / Historical

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For a brief period from 1952 to 1953, the SAH also ran the History Agency, an organization with the goal of providing the media with the services of professional historians. Although the History Agency was short-lived, one of its products was a collection of scripts for the 1953 radio series Omnibus, which was aired by the National Broadcasting Company.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Since the mid-1950s, the SAH's main focus has been in awarding prizes to promote historical writing with an American theme. In 1957, in order to stimulate the writing of history as literature, the SAH established the annual Francis Parkman Prize to honor the best nonfiction book of the year. The first Parkman Prize was awarded to George F. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War* (Princeton University Press). Since 1960, the SAH has also awarded the Allan Nevins Prize, annually, for the best-written doctoral dissertation in history. Most of the winning dissertations have subsequently been published.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Presidents of the SAH have included Douglas Southall Freeman (1939-1944), James P. Baxter III (1944-1946), Allan Nevins (1946-1961), Eric F. Goldman (1961-1969), John A. Garraty (1969-1971) and Barbara Tuchman (1971-1975). After several revisions to its policy, the SAH limited its membership, in the the late 1960s, to invitation only.

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## Summary

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The Society of American Historians Records include material from the first four decades of the SAH. Available in this collection are administrative records such as minutes and membership lists, financial records, correspondence, printed materials, and photographs. The bulk of the collection concerns the founding of the magazine American Heritage in 1954. Included are minutes, correspondence, fundraising letters, and promotional materials. Aside from the letters among SAH members that discuss the scope of the magazine, fundraising letters comprise the bulk of the correspondence. Material related to the annual Francis Parkman and the Allan Nevins Prizes also comprises a large part of the collection. Correspondence with history departments regarding submissions for the awards, and with publishers makes up the bulk of the prize material, but guest lists, photos and documents relating to the annual awards dinner are also present. The collection includes a small amount of Allan Nevins' research material. The research notes and documents concern Nevins' books about the John D. Rockefeller and the Rockefeller family.

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## Arrangement

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This collection is arranged in seven series.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Revision Description

xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2010-09-16 2019-05-20

### Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

### Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

### Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--The Society of American Historians. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1990s.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--The Society of American Historians. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--2005.

## Processing Information

Papers processed Yuki Oda (GSAS 2013) 2010.

## Processing Information

Finding Aid written Yuki Oda (GSAS 2013) 08/--/2010.

## Accrual

No additional material is expected

## Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared.  
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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Historians -- United States
- Historians -- United States -- Correspondence
- Baxter, James Phinney, 1893-1975
- Canby, Courtlandt
- Freeman, Douglas Southall, 1886-1953
- Garraty, John A (John Arthur), 1920-2007
- Goldman, Eric Frederick, 1915-1989
- Nevins, Allan, 1890-1971
- Parkman, Francis, 1823-1893
- Tuchman, Barbara W (Barbara Wertheim), 1912-1989
- American Heritage Publishing Company
- Columbia University -- Faculty
- National Broadcasting Company
- Rockefeller Foundation

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## Collection Inventory

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**Series I: Administrative Records, 1939-1975**

**Scope and Contents**

This series includes charters of the SAH, and minutes from annual meetings and council meetings. The minutes are arranged chronologically. Also included are membership lists, correspondence and inquiries regarding membership.

Title/Description	Instances	
Annual Meetings, 1944-1968		
<b>Scope and Contents</b>		
(Missing 1949 and 1959)		
1944-1951	box 1	folder 1-7
<u>Physical Description:</u> (7 Folders)		
1955-1961	box 1	folder 8-13
<u>Physical Description:</u> (6 Folders)		
1966-1968	box 1	folder 14-16
<u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)		
Board--Executive, 1968	box 1	folder 17
Council Meetings, 1941-1966		
<b>Scope and Contents</b>		
(Missing 1942,1949,1952, 1962-1963)		
1941-1953	box 1	folder 18-27
<u>Physical Description:</u> (10 Folders)		
1957-1966	box 1	folder 28-35
<u>Physical Description:</u> (8 Folders)		
Charters, 1939-1960		
Certificate of Incorporation, 1939, 1960, 1939, 1960	box 1	folder 36-37
<u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)		
Certificate of Resolution, 1951	box 2	folder 1
Constitution--Draft, 1939	box 2	folder 2
Constitution and By-Laws, 1944, 1960, Undated, 1944, 1960, Undated	box 2	folder 3-6
<u>Physical Description:</u> (4 Folders)		
Membership, 1939-1975		
Correspondence		
Inquiries, 1953-1975	box 2	folder 7-8



Physical Description: (2 Folders)

Invitation, 1939-1964	box 2	folder 9
Invitation, 1970-1975	box 2	folder 10-11
<u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)		
Reorganization, 1958-1960	box 3	folder 1
List, 1939, 1943-1954, 1939, 1943-1954	box 3	folder 2-8
<u>Physical Description:</u> (7 Folders)		
List, 1956-1974, Undated, 1956-1974, Undated	box 4	folder 1-9
<u>Physical Description:</u> (9 Folders)		

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## Series II: Correspondence, 1939-1975

### Scope and Contents

Correspondence among SAH members regarding the general business of the SAH can be found here. The series also includes inquiries from the public regarding the activities of the SAH. Correspondence related to the magazine project was filed separately by the SAH and can be found in Series III: Magazine Project.

Title/Description	Instances	
Boyd, Julian P, 1941-1950	box 4	folder 10
Clemen, Rogers		
Garraty, John A., 1959-1961	box 4	folder 11
Krout, John A., 1943-1947	box 4	folder 12
Nevins, Allan, 1943-1960	box 4	folder 13
Counsellors at Law, 1944-1962	box 5	folder 1-2
<u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)		
Krout, John A.		
Freeman, Douglas, 1941-1944	box 5	folder 3
Nevins, Allan, 1941-1947	box 5	folder 4
Nevins, Allan, 1953-1959	box 5	folder 5
Council and Directors, 1939-1974		
Appointment of Officers, 1939-1959	box 5	folder 6
Council, 1961-1967	box 5	folder 7-13
<u>Physical Description:</u> (7 Folders)		
Directors, 1968-1974	box 5	folder 14-17

Physical Description: (4 Folders)

General, 1943-1959 <u>Physical Description:</u> (9 Folders)	box 5	folder 18-26
General, 1960-1975 <u>Physical Description:</u> (11 Folders)	box 6	folder 1-11
Inquiries, 1952-1975 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 6	folder 12-13
Inquiries--regarding Society of American Historians, 1956-1974	box 6	folder 14
<b>Projects</b>		
<i>American Heritage</i> , 1971-1972	box 7	folder 1
American Presidents Project-- <i>Reader's Digest</i> , 1955	box 7	folder 2
Book Plan, 1951	box 7	folder 3
Fellowship, 1958	box 7	folder 4
Newcomen Society, 1944-1957	box 7	folder 5
World of History and the American Story, 1953-1957	box 7	folder 6

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### Series III: Magazine Project, 1941-1959

#### Scope and Contents

This series consists of materials related to the founding of the *American Heritage* magazine. The bulk of the material dates from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. Included are minutes from magazine committees, correspondence and memorandum among the SAH members. This series also contains numerous fundraising letters sent to various individuals and organizations. Lists and clippings regarding prospective donors, and progress reports sent to the contributors can also be found here. Letters to and from Courtland Canby, who was in charge of the financial campaign, comprise the bulk of the correspondence, which is arranged alphabetically.

#### Scope and Contents

This series also contains materials relating to a 1951-1952 survey on the use of history in the mass media. The SAH presented its findings at a conference in 1952, and along with papers and speeches, research materials such as clippings, articles, and questionnaires are available. Correspondence with the Rockefeller Foundation, which funded the survey, is here as well.

#### Scope and Contents

Advertisements, pamphlets, prospectuses and other promotional material are included in this series.

Title/Description	Instances
Committee Minutes	

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Continuing and Advisory, 1944-1953	box 7	folder 7
Finance, 1951	box 7	folder 8
Joint, 1949	box 7	folder 9
Liaison, 1953	box 7	folder 10
Magazine, 1949-1951	box 7	folder 11
Steering, 1949	box 7	folder 12
Correspondence and Memorandum, 1941-1959		
General, 1948-1954 <u>Physical Description:</u> (6 Folders)	box 7	folder 13-18
<i>American Heritage</i> --Joint Sponsorship, 1954-1959	box 7	folder 19
Burlingame, Roger		
General, 1949	box 7	folder 20
Canby, Henry, 1949-1950	box 8	folder 1
Clemen, Rudolf, 1949	box 8	folder 2
Pringle, Henry, 1949	box 8	folder 3
Canby, Courtland		
General, 1949-1951 <u>Physical Description:</u> (8 Folders)	box 8	folder 4-11
General, 1950-1953, Undated, 1950-1953, Undated <u>Physical Description:</u> (4 Folders)	box 9	folder 1-4
Applicants, 1948-1952	box 9	folder 5
Authors--Potential, 1949-1951	box 9	folder 6
Burlingame, Roger, 1949-1951	box 9	folder 7
Canby, Henry, 1949-1952	box 9	folder 8
Clemen, Rudolf, 1948-1953 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 9	folder 9-10
D-F, 1949-1950 <u>Physical Description:</u> (4 Folders)	box 9	folder 11-14
K1949-1951 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 10	folder 1-2
Keener, Ruth, 1948-1949	box 10	folder 3
L1949-1951	box 10	folder 4
Library of Congress--Copyright, 1949	box 10	folder 5

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M1949-1951 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 10	folder 6-7
Nevins, Allan, 1950-1954	box 10	folder 8
Pringle, Henry, 1949-1951	box 10	folder 9
R-W, 1950-1951 <u>Physical Description:</u> (7 Folders)	box 10	folder 10-16
Wecter, Dixon, 1949-1950	box 10	folder 17
Y-Z, 1949-1951	box 10	folder 18
Canby, Henry		
General, 1949-1954	box 10	folder 19
Clemen, Rudolf, 1950-1952	box 11	folder 1
Pringle, Henry, 1949	box 11	folder 2
Nevins, Allan, 1949	box 11	folder 3
Clemen, Rudolf		
General, 1947-1952	box 11	folder 4
Gross, Nancy, 1950-1954	box 11	folder 5
Nevins, Allan, 1943-1955 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 11	folder 6-7
Gross, Nancy, 1950-1953	box 11	folder 8
History Publisher's Foundation, 1943-1953	box 11	folder 9
Krout, John A., 1941-1943	box 11	folder 10
Nevins, Allan, 1944-1952	box 11	folder 11
Pringle, Henry, 1948-1949	box 11	folder 12
Richardson Wood and Co., 1950-1951	box 11	folder 13
Subscription Queries, 1942-1951	box 11	folder 14
Fundraising, 1944-1953		
Donors--Prospective		
General--List--Index Cards, 1950	box 24	folder 1
General--List, 1949-1952 <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)	box 11	folder 15-17
Foundations		
General, 1944-1950	box 11	folder 18
Ford Foundation, 1948-1953		

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	box 12	folder 1
Labor Union, 1948-1950	box 12	folder 2
Founders		
Budget Proposal, 1950	box 12	folder 3
List, 1948-1950	box 12	folder 4
Pledges		
Original and Extension, 1950-1951 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 12	folder 5-6
Release of, 1952	box 12	folder 7
Stock Proposal, 1952	box 12	folder 8
Dinners and Luncheons		
Boston, 1950	box 12	folder 9
California, 1950	box 12	folder 10
Chicago, 1950 and 1952, 1950, 1952	box 12	folder 11
Denver, 1950	box 12	folder 12
New York, 1949-1950 <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)	box 12	folder 13-15
Philadelphia, 1950	box 12	folder 16
St. Louis, 1950	box 12	folder 17
Texas, 1950	box 12	folder 18
Union League, 1950	box 12	folder 19
Washington, 1950	box 12	folder 20
Subscribers--Index Cards, 1951	box 24	folder 2
History in the Mass Media, 1941-1953		
Correspondence--Rockefeller Foundation, 1941-1953 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 13	folder 1-2
Conference, 1952 <u>Physical Description:</u> (4 Folders)	box 13	folder 3-6
Survey		
General, 1951-1952	box 13	folder 7
Periodicals, Radio, and Televisions, 1951-1952 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 13	folder 8-9
Periodicals, Radio, and Television, 1951-1952	box 14	folder 1

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Television and Film, 1951-1952 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 14	folder 2-3
Promotional, 1941-1952		
<i>History</i>		
Advertisement-- <i>New York Times Book Review</i> ,, 1951	box 14	folder 4
Direct Mail, 1951	box 14	folder 5
Dummy Copy, 1951	box 14	folder 7
Letters from Readers, 1952	box 14	folder 8
Prospectus, 1950	box 15	folder 1
<i>Horizons</i>		
Prospectus, 1944	box 15	folder 2
"Widening Our Horizons in Time and Space,", 1944	box 15	folder 3
"What Makes History Readable,", 1944	box 15	folder 4
<i>Living History</i>		
"A Monthly Magazine"--Henry Seidel Canby, 1948	box 15	folder 5
Comments--From Members, 1948	box 15	folder 6
"Plan for Experimental Production"--For Henry Luce, 1948	box 15	folder 7
<i>Milestones</i>		
Comments, undated	box 15	folder 8
Prospectus, 1949	box 15	folder 9
Table of Contents, circa, 1949	box 15	folder 10
Nevins, Allen		
Folkways, Undated	box 15	folder 11
Historical Quiz, Undated	box 15	folder 12
Letters to Editors, Undated	box 15	folder 13
News and Backgrounds, 1949	box 15	folder 14
Popular Misconceptions, Undated	box 15	folder 15
Reprints, Undated	box 15	folder 16
Words, 1951	box 15	folder 17
Projected Articles, late 1940s-early, 1950s	box 15	folder 18
Projected Articles, late 1940s-early, 1950s	box 16	folder 1-4

Physical Description: (4 Folders)

Report and News Release, 1941-1952	box 16	folder 5
Sample of Direct Mails--Other Magazines, 1950s	box 16	folder 6

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## Series IV: History Agency, 1952-1953

### Scope and Contents

This series contains materials related to the History Agency, an organization that from 1952-1953 attempted to connect professional historians with members of the media in need of history services. In addition to correspondence and prospectuses, the series contains radio scripts that the agency prepared for the National Broadcasting Company's series, *Omnibus*, in 1953.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence--Fundraising, 1952-1953 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 16	folder 7-8
<i>Omnibus</i> , NBC Radio Scripts		
"Letters of Mozart," 1953	box 17	folder 1
"Napoleon," 1953	box 17	folder 2
"Roger Williams and the Tradition of Civil Liberties," 1953	box 17	folder 3
"Stroke of Fate," 1953	box 17	folder 4
Prospectus, 1952-1953	box 17	folder 5
"World of History and the American Story," 1953-1957	box 17	folder 6

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## Series V: Awards and Special Occasions, 1944-1976

### Scope and Contents

Correspondence, printed material and photographs related to awards and ceremonies constitute this series. The bulk of the material relates to the annual Allan Nevins Prize and the Francis Parkman Prize, and includes, primarily, submission letters from history departments and from publishers. Correspondence regarding the founding of the prizes, guest lists, photos, and reprints of speeches can also be found here.

Title/Description	Instances	
Allan Nevins Prize		
List of Winners, 1960-1973	box 17	folder 16
1960 Prize-1964 Prize, 1957-1965, 1960, 1957-1965	box 17	folder 17-20

Physical Description: (4 Folders)

1965 Prize-1974 Prize, 1965-1975, 1965, 1965-1975	box 18	folder 1-10
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Physical Description: (10 Folders)

## Francis Parkman Prize

List of Winners, 1956-1973	box 19	folder 1
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1955-1959	box 19	folder 2-6
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Physical Description: (5 Folders)

1959-1967	box 20	folder 1-9
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Physical Description: (9 Folders)

1967-1975	box 21	folder 1-8
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Physical Description: (8 Folders)

Mock Certificate, Undated	box 22	folder 10
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Scribner Prize, 1944-1945	box 21	folder 9
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## Special Occasions, 1957-1976

Allan Nevins Testimonial Dinner, 1957-1958	box 21	folder 10
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Annual Awards Dinner, 1966-1968	box 21	folder 11-13
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Physical Description: (3 Folders)

Annual Awards Dinner, 1969-1976	box 22	folder 1-8
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Physical Description: (8 Folders)

St. Louis Breakfast, 1976	box 22	folder 9
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**Series VI: Financial Records, 1941-1974****Scope and Contents**

This series contains annual financial statements and tax records. Financial records relating to the magazine project can be found both in this series and in Series III: Magazine Project.

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
General, 1950-1970	box 22	folder 11
<i>American Heritage Magazine</i> , 1957-1966	box 22	folder 12
Magazine Account, 1948-1952	box 22	folder 13
Account Book, 1951-1954	box 22	folder 14
Correspondence, 1947-1954	box 22	folder 15
General Account--Reports, 1941-1961	box 22	folder 16



General Account--Statements and Notes, 1957-1974	box 22	folder 17
Tax Exemption, 1953-, 1973	box 22	folder 18
Tax Returns, 1967-1974	box 23	folder 1
Royalties, 1956-1972	box 23	folder 2

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## Series VII: Allan Nevins--Personal Research Files, 1879-1886, undated

### Scope and Contents

A small collection of Allen Nevins' research files, which include original documents, a box of index cards and handwritten research notes on the Rockefellers, make up this series.

Title/Description	Instances	
American States during and after the Revolution--Books and Articles on--Index Cards,, Undated	box 24	folder 3
Rockefeller Records		
Folder Notes 2-29--1875-1885, Undated	box 23	folder 3
Folder Notes 31-69--1886-1915, Undated	box 23	folder 4
Letter Book Notes--1877-1882, Undated	box 23	folder 5
Originals--1879-1886, Undated	box 23	folder 6-9
<u>Physical Description:</u> (4 Folders)		

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