



The New York Public Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

**New York Times Company records. William Safire papers**

1973-1997

MssCol 17809

Compiled by Philip Heslip, 2013

## Summary

**Creator:** New York Times Company

**Title:** New York Times Company records. William Safire papers

**Date:** 1973-1997

**Size:** 7.14 linear feet (17 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by The New York Times Company, 2007.

**Abstract:** William Safire (1929-2009) was a political speechwriter, journalist, and longtime columnist for The New York Times. The William Safire papers contain correspondence with colleagues, acquaintances, and news sources (1973-1989); readers' mail regarding his political "Essays" column (1990-1998); and research files that Safire created to support his political reporting during the 1970s and early 1980s.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Sound recordings are unavailable for use pending preservation transfer.

**Conditions Governing Use:** Copyright for documents created by New York Times Company principals and staff has been transferred to The New York Public Library.

**Preferred citation:** New York Times Company records. William Safire papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Philip Heslip, 2013 Original order was maintained.

### Related Materials:

Forms part of New York Times Company records

William Safire papers, 1949-2009. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.

William Safire papers, 1953-1980. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Creator History

William Lewis Safire (1929-2009) was an author, political speechwriter, journalist, and longtime columnist for The New York Times. Early in his career, Safire worked as a newspaper correspondent and a producer for radio and television. During the 1960s, Safire became increasingly involved in political campaigns and public relations for politicians. He joined Richard Nixon's staff as an advisor and speech writer in 1968. The New York Times hired Safire as a political columnist in 1973; he contributed to the paper's op-ed page for the next 32 years. In addition to political commentary, Safire also wrote the popular "On Language" column for the New York Times Sunday Magazine from 1979 until 2009.

Safire was the author of several novels and non-fiction books. He served on the boards of the Pulitzer Prize and Syracuse University, and was the chief executive of the Charles A. Dana Foundation. Safire married Helene Belmar Julius in 1962; together they had two children. Safire died in Rockville, Maryland, in 2009.

## Custodial History

Safire began sending his papers to The New York Times Archives in 1983. By 1987, he had deposited approximately 15 linear feet of personal letters and research files to be kept "as is" for his future use. Throughout the 1990s, Times archivists added 1.5 linear feet of selected readers' mail to the collection.

## Scope and Content Note

The William Safire papers contain office files that Safire kept while working as a columnist at The New York Times. These include correspondence with colleagues, acquaintances, news sources, and readers (1970-1987); readers' mail responding to his political "Essays" column (1990-1997); and research files that Safire created to support his political reporting during the 1970s and early 1980s. The collection does not contain material related to Safire's "On Language" column or his pre-Times career.

The Personal and Miscellaneous Correspondence section is made up of letters sent to Safire's Times office, many of which are accompanied by copies of Safire's outgoing responses. These letters are grouped alphabetically by writer's last name. Included in this section are a small number of communications with his colleagues at The Times, including Publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and editors Arthur Gelb and Seymour Topping, among others. Also present is correspondence with fellow journalists discussing his columns. Letters from friends concern invitations to social events and congratulations on becoming a Times columnist, publishing books, winning awards, and other achievements.

Readers' Mail is made up of letters addressed to Safire and the editors of The Times in response to many of Safire's columns between 1990 and 1998. Letters are loosely grouped by year and sometimes by topic. The most substantial portion of these concerns the Persian Gulf War and its aftermath; many letters discuss the war's effects on the Kurdish population in the region (1991-1993). Among the other subjects discussed are the 1990s Yugoslav wars, the O.J. Simpson trial, and same-sex marriage.

The Research Files are an alphabetical run of papers, grouped by topic, which Safire compiled over the course of writing his twice-weekly "Essay" column. Files pertain to national and global political stories on which Safire reported. They contain letters from sources providing Safire with background information in the attempt to influence his coverage, Safire's requests for information from sources and

from the government (including FOIA requests), transcripts of interviews conducted by Safire and others, and Safire's research notes. The most extensive files concern President Jimmy Carter's administration, including scandals involving Carter's brother, Billy Carter; Carter's director of the Office of Management and Budget, Bert Lance; and Philadelphia attorney general, David Marston. Other notable files include those on government wiretapping practices and Safire's reporting on and trips to Israel and China. Also present is Safire's appointment book for 1981.

**Arrangement:** The collection is grouped into three sections: Personal Correspondence, Readers' Mail, and Research Files. Personal Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by last name, Reader's Mail is ordered chronologically by year and often grouped by topic, and Research Files are organized alphabetically by file title.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Audio cassettes  
Letters to the editor  
Research notes

### **Subjects**

Journalism -- United States -- 20th century  
Persian Gulf War -- 1991  
Wiretapping -- United States

### **Occupations**

Journalists

### **Names**

Carter, Billy  
Carter, Jimmy, 1924-  
Lance, Bert, 1931-2013  
Safire, William, 1929-2009

## Container List

### Personal and Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987

- b. 1 f. 1 A-B--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 1 f. 2 Baker, Howard H., Jr. 1974
- b. 1 f. 3 Burns, Arthur (Prof.) 1975
- b. 1 f. 4 Bush, George H. 1974-1975
- b. 1 f. 5 C-D--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 1 f. 6 Calderone, Mary S. (Dr.) 1981-1986
- b. 1 f. 7 Chapin, Dwight 1975-1976
- b. 1 f. 8 Colson, Charles W. 1974-1975
- b. 1 f. 9 Crane, Philip M. 1978
- b. 1 f. 10 E-F--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 1 f. 11 Eizenstat, Stuart E. 1981
- b. 1 f. 12 Ehrlichman, John 1974-1977
- b. 1 f. 13 Ernst, Morris L. 1973-1974
- b. 1 f. 14 Ford, Gerald (Pres.) 1974-1976
- b. 1 f. 15 G-H--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 1 f. 16 Griffin, Robert (Sen.) 1976
- b. 1 f. 17 Halberstam, David 1979
- b. 1 f. 18 Helms, Richard 1978
- b. 1 f. 19 Humphrey, Hubert H. 1976
- b. 1 f. 20 Hunt, Howard 1976
- b. 1 f. 21 I-K--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 1 f. 22 Katzenbach, Nicholas deB. 1975
- b. 1 f. 23 L-M--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 1 f. 24 Liddy, G. Gordon 1975-1976
- b. 1 f. 25 Markel, Lester 1976
- b. 1 f. 26 Mitchell, John 1977
- b. 2 f. 1 N-O--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 2 f. 2 Nixon, Richard 1974-1975
- b. 2 f. 3 Oakes, John 1974-1976
- b. 2 f. 4 P-R--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 2 f. 5 Pei, Mario 1973-1977
- b. 2 f. 6 Percy, Charles H. (Sen.) 1974-1975
- b. 2 f. 7 Rafshoon, Gerald M. 1981
- b. 2 f. 8 S-V--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 2 f. 9 St. Clair, James 1976
- b. 2 f. 10 Salisbury, Harrison 1973
- b. 2 f. 11 Sherrill, Robert 1975
- b. 2 f. 12 Silberman, Lawrence H. 1975

Personal and Miscellaneous Correspondence (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 13 Viereck, Peter 1979-1980
- b. 2 f. 14 W-Z--Miscellaneous Correspondence 1973-1987
- b. 2 f. 15 Woods, Rose Mary 1975

Readers' Mail 1990-1997

- b. 2 f. 16 1990
- b. 3 f. 1-15 1990-1991
- b. 4 f. 1-26 1991-1995
- b. 5 f. 1-15 1994-1995
- b. 6 f. 1-6 1996-1997

Research Files 1973-1984

- b. 7 f. 1 ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) 1973
- b. 7 f. 2 Agnew, Spiro 1973
- b. 7 f. 3 Airline Deregulation 1977
- b. 7 f. 4 Anti-Semitism 1977
- b. 7 f. 5 Appointment Book 1981
- b. 17 f. 4 Arab Lobby 1978
- b. 7 f. 6 Arms Control 1974
- b. 7 f. 7 Atlanta Constitution 1977
- b. 7 f. 8 Belgrade 1978
- b. 7 f. 9 Bell, Griffin (Attorney General) 1977
- b. 7 f. 10 Bellino, Carmere 1976
- b. 7 f. 11-12 Blindness 1977
- b. 17 f. 5 Bourne, Peter (Dr.) 1978
- b. 7 f. 13 Caddell, Pat 1979
- b. 7 f. 14 Cambodia 1978
- b. 7 f. 15-18 Carter, Billy 1979-1980
- b. 8 f. 1-2 Carter, Billy 1979-1980
- b. 8 f. 3-8 Carter, Jimmy 1976-1980
- b. 8 f. 9 Carter, Tom 1977
- b. 8 f. 10 Catholics 1981-1983
- b. 8 f. 11-14 CBS 1973-1984
- b. 9 f. 1-6 China Trips and Notes 1976-1977  
Includes photographs from Safire's travels
- b. 9 f. 7-9 Church 1975-1976
- b. 9 f. 10 CIA 1974
- b. 9 f. 11 Citizens and Southern National Bank 1977
- b. 9 f. 12 Coke and Sugar 1977
- b. 9 f. 13 Column Ideas 1977
- b. 17 f. 6 Connally, John 1979
- b. 10 f. 1 Corrections 1973
- b. 10 f. 2 Cuba 1976

Research Files (cont.)

- b. 17 f. 7 Curran, Paul J. 1979
- b. 10 f. 3-4 Dead Sea Scrolls 1976
- b. 10 f. 5 Dean, John 1974
- b. 10 f. 6 Dean, Gunua 1973
- b. 10 f. 7 DeLeoach, C.D. 1977
- b. 10 f. 8 Doar, John 1976
- b. 10 f. 9 Eilberg, Joshua, and Flood, Daniel 1978
- b. 10 f. 10 Energy 1977
- b. 10 f. 11 European Security Conference 1975
- b. 17 f. 8 Exner, Judith 1978
- b. 10 f. 12 Fairness Doctrine 1974
- b. 17 f. 9 FBI 1978
- b. 10 f. 13 Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIA) 1977-1978
- b. 10 f. 14 Gene Splicing 1983-1984
- b. 10 f. 15 Golding, James 1977
- b. 10 f. 16 Grain 1977
- b. 10 f. 17 Grand Jury 1973
- b. 10 f. 18 Gross National Product 1975
- b. 10 f. 19 Gulf Oil Corporation Case 1975
- b. 10 f. 20 Haldeman, H.R. 1975
- b. 17 f. 10 Heymann, Philip B. 1979  
Includes a audiocassette of Safire's 1979 interview with Heymann. Access to this recording is restricted pending preservation.
- b. 10 f. 21 Hoover, J. Edgar 1977
- b. 17 f. 11 Huyser Mission in Iran 1980
- b. 10 f. 22 Israel 1976-1977
- b. 11 f. 1 Israel--Carter 1977-1978
- b. 11 f. 2 Italy 1976
- b. 11 f. 3 Japan 1978
- b. 11 f. 4 Jaworski, Leon 1977
- b. 11 f. 5 Justice--Lying and Fraud 1977
- b. 11 f. 6 Katzenbach, Nicholas deB. 1975
- b. 11 f. 7 Kennedy, John F.--Mafia 1975-1979
- b. 11 f. 8 Khashoggi, Adnan 1978
- b. 11 f. 9-12 Kissinger, Henry A. 1972-1980
- b. 12 f. 1-4 Korea and "Koreagate" 1972-1976
- b. 12 f. 5-6 Kurds 1976-1978
- b. 12 f. 7-9 Lance, Bert 1977-1980
- b. 13 f. 1-6 Lance, Bert 1977-1980
- b. 13 f. 7 Limousine 1973
- b. 13 f. 8 Longworth, Alice 1973-1974
- b. 13 f. 9-16 Marston, David, Affair 1978

Research Files (cont.)

- b. 14 f. 1-12 Marston, David, Affair 1978
- b. 14 f. 13 MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) 1975
- b. 14 f. 14 Mexico 1978
- b. 14 f. 15 Mitchell, John N. 1976
- b. 14 f. 16 Moore, John (Mr. Ethics) 1977
- b. 14 f. 17 Nixon, Richard M. 1972-1979
- b. 14 f. 18 *NOW! Magazine* 1979
- b. 15 f. 1 One-Liners 1974
- b. 15 f. 2 O'Neil, Tip, and Koreagate 1977
- b. 15 f. 3 Opinion Leaders List 1974
- b. 17 f. 12 Ostrow, Stuart, Foundation 1980
- b. 15 f. 4 Pakistan 1976
- b. 15 f. 5-6 Panama 1977
- b. 15 f. 7 Passports for Diplomats (FOIA Requests) 1978
- b. 15 f. 8 Patronage 1975
- b. 15 f. 9 Percy, Charles H. 1975
- b. 15 f. 10 *Playboy* 1975
- b. 15 f. 11 Poetry Ideas 1973
- b. 15 f. 12 Porn 1977
- b. 15 f. 13 Privacy 1974
- b. 15 f. 14 Rabhan, David 1977
- b. 17 f. 13 Readers' Digest 1977
- b. 15 f. 15 Republicans 1975
- b. 15 f. 16 Regulation Reform 1976
- b. 15 f. 17 Resentments of Nixonmen 1973
- b. 16 f. 1 Rockefeller, Nelson A. 1977
- b. 16 f. 2 Rogers, William 1972
- b. 16 f. 3 SALT: Strategic Arms Limitation Talks 1977
- b. 16 f. 4 Schorr, Daniel 1976
- b. 16 f. 5 Sea Law 1977
- b. 16 f. 6 Short Column Ideas 1977
- b. 16 f. 7 Speeches 1976
- b. 16 f. 8 Thevis, George 1977
- b. 16 f. 9 Tidewater Conference 1978
- b. 16 f. 10 Trips 1974-1975
- b. 16 f. 11 Trips--Moscow 1974
- b. 16 f. 12 Velikovsky, Immanuel 1977
- b. 16 f. 13-14 "Vogue Words" (Popular Words) 1976-1977
- b. 16 f. 15 Walters, Barbara, Dinner 1977
- b. 16 f. 16 Watergate 1977

Research Files (cont.)

- b. 16 f. 17 Weicker, Lowell P., Jr.; Thompson, Fred; Baker, Howard H., Jr.; Gurney, Edward 1976
- b. 16 f. 18 White House Staff 1975-1978
- b. 17 f. 1-3 Wiretapping 1973-1976  
Includes files concerning governmental wiretapping practices and the tapping of Safire's phone