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William E. Colby Papers, 1935-1996 (bulk 1975-1995): Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number:	MC113
Location:	Princeton University Library. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library. Public Policy Papers. 65 Olden Street Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA
Size:	8.31 linear feet (15 archival boxes, 3 8x10 boxes)
Language(s) of material:	English.
Abstract:	William E. Colby, Princeton University Class of 1940, was a career agent in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Director of Central Intelligence from 1973-1976. However, the bulk of the collection documents his post-CIA career and contains correspondence, speeches, writings, newspaper clippings, and subject files that reflect Colby's professional and private interests.

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Biography of William Egan Colby

Born on January 4, 1920 in St. Paul, Minnesota, William Egan Colby was the son of an Army officer, and he grew up on various U.S. Army posts as well as spending a three-year stint in Asia (Tientsin, China and Japan). In 1936 he entered Princeton University with the Class of 1940; while a student there, his extracurricular activities included the Triangle Club, Theatre Intime, and Whig-Clio. After graduating cum laude from Princeton with an A.B. in Political Science (International Affairs), Colby entered Columbia University to pursue a law degree. However, military service soon beckoned, and in August 1941 he enlisted in the Army.

Colby's service in World War II primed him for his future work in the Foreign Service and CIA. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service on behalf of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) as an organizer and director of resistance forces in France from August 14, 1944 to September 26, 1944. Other awards garnered from the war include the Silver Star, St. Olaf's Medal (Norway), and the Croix de Guerre (France).

Colby married Barbara Heinzen on September 15, 1945; the couple had five children over the next fifteen years: Jonathan, Catherine, Paul, Carl, and Christine. In November 1945, Colby was discharged from the Army with the rank of major. He then returned to Columbia to complete his law degree, graduating in 1947. He was a member of the Columbia Law Review's Editorial Board.

Colby's first job out of law school was as an associate attorney for the New York City firm of Donovan, Leisure, Newton, & Irvine, headed by William J. Donovan, the OSS director during World War II. After about two years, Colby desired experience in government litigation, and accepted an associate position with the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C.

In early 1951 Colby ostensibly joined the Department of State's Foreign Service, and his first tour was as a political officer in Stockholm, Sweden where he was responsible for following and reporting on Swedish political affairs. In October 1953 he was transferred to Rome, Italy with a similar job description. This tour ended in 1958, when he came back to the United States for a few months as a desk officer in Washington, D.C. In January 1959 he was assigned to Saigon, Vietnam where he was a Special Assistant to the U.S. Ambassador. Four years later, in early 1963, he was named the CIA's Far East Division Chief and stationed in Washington, D.C.

Colby went back to Vietnam in March 1968 to work for the Agency for International Development as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS). He was then promoted to the rank of ambassador and served as the Deputy to Commanders United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV). In this position he was the principal U.S. advisor to the Government of Vietnam on pacification and local development matters.

In June 1971 Colby was reassigned to the Department of State in Washington, D.C. Six months later, however, he was appointed Executive Director-Comptroller of the CIA and then, in March 1973, was promoted to Deputy Director for Operations. He did not remain long in the latter position, for in early May of that year, President Nixon announced Colby's nomination as the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI).

After an intense summer of confirmation hearings, Colby became the tenth Director of the CIA in September 1973. However, his tenure came at a time of great controversy for the Agency, and he spent much of 1975 enmeshed in congressional hearings. Towards the end of that year, President Ford asked for Colby's resignation, which became official in January 1976.

In 1977 Colby went back to practicing law, as an attorney and partner with the Washington, D.C. firm of Colby, Miller, and Hanes. While working there, he devoted his spare time to writing his memoirs, *Honorable Men*, published in 1978. In 1979 Colby joined the law firm of Reid & Priest, where he stayed through 1984. During these years he branched out into international consulting, taking on the additional position of Senior Advisor at International Business-Government Counselors Inc. in 1981. It was at this corporation that he met his future second wife, Sally Shelton, a former ambassador to countries in Latin America. They married in November 1984.

Colby used his prior experience to help start a new international consulting firm called Colby, Bailey, Werner, and Associates. However, this partnership did not last long. Robert Werner was the first to leave, and Colby followed in mid-1987 to accept a position as counsel in the firm he started out in, Donovan, Leisure, Newton, & Irvine. He continued to be heavily involved in international business, especially in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Colby remained active in the professional world up until his death. On April 27, 1996 he disappeared while canoeing on the Wicomico River near his home in Maryland, and his body was found several days later. His death was ruled an accident, and authorities presumed he had suffered a stroke or heart attack before falling into the water.

A timeline of Colby's career can be found at the end of this finding aid.

Description

The William E. Colby Papers reflect primarily Colby's post-CIA career as a consultant in international relations. However, there is a small amount of materials from his tenure at the CIA, including the texts of his testimony before Congress. Also of interest is material relating to the forty-year reunion of OSS officers who had served in France and Norway (including a thesis manuscript on the group's activities during the war). No classified materials are found within this collection, and materials in Colby's possession relating to Vietnam were donated to the Vietnam Collection at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996, arranged alphabetically, contains a great deal of thank-you notes and other routine letters that he mailed out to each of his international contacts when appropriate. Very little correspondence exists from Colby's early career, although there are a few personal letters that can be found in the Colby family folder. This folder includes V-Mail that Colby's father, Colonel Elbridge Colby, sent to his wife while he was stationed in Europe during World War II. The majority of the correspondence is post-1976. As a public figure, politicians and other important figures often contacted Colby. Letters from noteworthy individuals include: Stephen Ambrose, Les Aspin, William Bundy, George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, William Casey, William Donovan, Gerald Ford, Robert Gates, John Glenn, Lyndon Johnson, Ted Kennedy, Henry Kissinger, George McGovern, Dan Rather, Carl Sagan, and Stansfield Turner.

Series 2, Congressional Testimony and Speeches, 1970-1996

Series 2, Congressional Testimony and Speeches, 1970-1996, is divided into Congressional testimony, and speeches, both arranged chronologically. The speeches are a combination of texts of speeches given by Colby and programs or newspaper clippings that give information about these speeches and other public appearances.

Series 3, Writings, 1935-1995

Series 3, Writings, 1935-1995, is arranged into three groups: articles written by Colby, articles about Colby, and interviews with Colby, each arranged chronologically. The second group includes a folder with articles written in French, Italian, Japanese, and Norwegian, among other languages. In the collection of articles written by Colby, the published form of the article is often accompanied by one or more rough drafts.

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996, contains an alphabetical run of folders organized by specific subject. Professional organizations to which Colby belonged, such as the Committee for National Security (CNS), and information collected by Colby on subjects like the Office for Strategic Services (OSS) are well documented in this series. There is a significant amount of material from Identix, a corporation that included Colby on its board of directors. Also included throughout the series is a sampling of hand-written notes that Colby took at conferences or meetings.

Series 5, Photographs and Oversize Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1990s

Series 5, Photographs and Oversize Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1990s, is arranged in approximate chronological order, with many of the photographs unlabeled or undated, and includes portraits of Colby as well as casual snapshots taken by others. There are also several black and white photographs of Colby as an officer during World War II.

Arrangement

Organized into the following series:

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996

Series 2, Congressional Testimony and Speeches, 1970-1996

Series 3, Writings, 1935-1995

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996

Series 5, Photographs and Oversize Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1990s

Access and Use

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish materials from the collection must be requested from the Curator of the Public Policy Papers . Researchers are responsible for determining any copyright questions.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition

The William E. Colby Papers were donated to Princeton University by Colby's wife, Sally Shelton-Colby, in 1997 (ML#1997-5).

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); William E. Colby Papers, Box and Folder Number; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Anastasia Karel in Summer 2002. Finding aid written by Anastasia Karel in Summer 2002.

Encoding

Machine-readable finding aid encoded in EAD 2002 by Techbooks and Cristela García-Spitz on October 13, 2006.

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Subject Headings

These materials have been indexed in the [Princeton University Library online catalog](#) using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

- Colby, William Egan, 1920- -- Speeches in Congress.
- Colby, William Egan, 1920- -- Photographs.
- United States. Central Intelligence Agency.
- United States. Office of Strategic Services.
- Business consultants -- United States -- 20th century.
- Espionage -- United States -- 20th century.
- Intelligence officers -- United States -- 20th century -- Correspondence.
- Intelligence service -- United States -- 20th century.
- Spies -- United States -- 20th century -- Correspondence.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Secret service -- United States.

- Correspondence.
- Manuscripts.
- Photographs.
- American history/20th century
- American literature
- World War II

Contents List

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996

Series Description

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996, arranged alphabetically, contains a great deal of thank-you notes and other routine letters that he mailed out to each of his international contacts when appropriate. Very little correspondence exists from Colby's early career, although there are a few personal letters that can be found in the Colby family folder. This folder includes V-Mail that Colby's father, Colonel Elbridge Colby, sent to his wife while he was stationed in Europe during World War II. The majority of the correspondence is post-1976. As a public figure, politicians and other important figures often contacted Colby. Letters from noteworthy individuals include: Stephen Ambrose, Les Aspin, William Bundy, George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, William Casey, William Donovan, Gerald Ford, Robert Gates, John Glenn, Lyndon Johnson, Ted Kennedy, Henry Kissinger, George McGovern, Dan Rather, Carl Sagan, and Stansfield Turner.

Series Arrangement

[arranged alphabetically]

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>
Ab-Ash, 1977-1995	1	1
Asp-Av, 1986-1992	1	2
Ba-BI, 1982-1995	1	3
Bo-Bu, 1976-1996	1	4
Bird, Robert and Bird, Willis, 1987-1988	1	5
Ca-Cha, 1978-1994	1	6
Che-Coh, 1976-1992	1	7
Coh-Cos, 1972-1994	1	8
Cou-Cu, 1978-1995	2	1
CIA publication board letters, 1977-1993	2	2
Colby family, 1943-1992	2	3

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996 ... (Continued)

D-De, 1980-1996	2	4
De-Dy, 1950-1995	2	5
E, 1981-1996	2	6
Fa-Fre, 1973-1996	2	7
Fri-Fu, 1981-1993	2	8
Ga-Go, 1981-1996	2	9
Go-Gw, 1976-1995	2	10
Ha-Har, 1978-1995	3	1
Har-Hil, 1973-1995	3	2
Hil-Hon, 1978-1992	3	3
Hon-Hy, 1978-1993	3	4
Heimark, Bruce (includes thesis on OSS), 1989-1995	3	5-8
I, 1978-1992	4	1
J, 1968-1995	4	2
Ka-Ken, 1978-1994	4	3
Ken-Kim, 1973-1991	4	4
Kin-Kor, 1976-1995	4	5
Kor-Ky, 1977-1991	4	6
La-Lev, 1976-1993	4	7
Lev-Lip, 1976-1993	4	8
Lo-Ly, 1985-1995	5	1
M-McE, 1977-1995	5	2
McF-Mi, 1976-1995	5	3
Min-My, 1975-1994	5	4
N, 1978-1996	5	5

Series 1, Correspondence, 1943-1996 ... (Continued)

O, 1978-1995	5	6
Pa-Pen, 1976-1995	5	7
Pen-Pro, 1973-1995	5	8
Pu-Q, 1984-1995	6	1
Ra-Ro, 1972-1995	6	2
Ros-Ry, 1976-1990	6	3
Sa-Ser, 1976-1996	6	4
Sew-Smi, 1977-1996	6	5
Smi-Ste, 1978-1996	6	6
Ste-Swe, 1978-1994	6	7
Stone, Jeremy, 1989-1992	6	8
Ta-Thu, 1972-1995	6	9
Thun, Eric, 1989	7	1
Thur-Tsu, 1981-1992	7	2
U-V, 1978-1995	7	3
Wa-Wat, 1976-1994	7	4
Wea-Wil, 1977-1996	7	5
Win-Wy, 1979-1995	7	6
Y-Z, 1969-1994	7	7
Miscellaneous, 1976-1995	7	8
Miscellaneous–hate mail, 1978-1986	7	9
Miscellaneous–letters in support of Colby as DCI, 1975 Jan-Aug	7	10
Miscellaneous–Record of Correspondence notebooks, 1978-1983	7	11

Series 2, Congressional Testimony and Speeches, 1970-1996

Series 2, Congressional Testimony and Speeches, ... (Continued)

Series Description

Series 2, Congressional Testimony and Speeches, 1970-1996, is divided into Congressional testimony, and speeches, both arranged chronologically. The speeches are a combination of texts of speeches given by Colby and programs or newspaper clippings that give information about these speeches and other public appearances.

Series Arrangement

[arranged chronologically]

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>
Congressional testimony, 1970-1992 May	8	1-3
Speeches, 1974-1979	8	4-7
Speeches, 1979-1996	9	1-2

Series 3, Writings, 1935-1995

Series Description

Series 3, Writings, 1935-1995, is arranged into three groups: articles written by Colby, articles about Colby, and interviews with Colby, each arranged chronologically. The second group includes a folder with articles written in French, Italian, Japanese, and Norwegian, among other languages. In the collection of articles written by Colby, the published form of the article is often accompanied by one or more rough drafts.

Series Arrangement

[arranged chronologically]

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>
Articles by Colby, 1976-circa 1990s	9	3-7
Articles by Colby—"Food Stamps for International Neighbors" (includes statistics and notes), 1975-1978	10	1
Articles by Colby—"Intelligence in the 1980s" (multiple revisions and correspondence), 1980-1981	10	2
Articles about Colby, 1935, 1968-1995	10	3-4
Articles about Colby—in foreign periodicals, 1945, 1977-1995	10	5

Series 3, Writings, 1935-1995 ... (Continued)

Articles about Colby–World War II, 1945-1947	10	6
Interviews with Colby, 1974-1994	10	7

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996**Series Description**

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996, contains an alphabetical run of folders organized by specific subject. Professional organizations to which Colby belonged, such as the Committee for National Security (CNS), and information collected by Colby on subjects like the Office for Strategic Services (OSS) are well documented in this series. There is a significant amount of material from Identix, a corporation that included Colby on its board of directors. Also included throughout the series is a sampling of hand-written notes that Colby took at conferences or meetings.

Series Arrangement

[arranged alphabetically]

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>
Air America, 1987-1992	11	1
American Committee on U.S.–Soviet Relations, 1988-1990	11	2
BASIC (British American Security Information Council), 1989-1992	11	3
Bulgaria, 1991-1992	11	4
Cambodia, 1990-1991	11	5
Cambodia Study Group, 1990	11	6
Campaign for New Priorities; Center for Defense Information, 1991-1992	11	7
Center for War, Peace, and the News Media; China (1 item), 1989-1991	11	8
CIA and intelligence, 1975-1976, undated	11	9
CIA and intelligence, 1977-1995	12	1
Coalition for Democratic Values, 1991-1992, undated	12	2-3
Colby–CIA, 1973-1977	12	4
Colby–family (Carl, Christine, Elbridge, Jonathan, Paul, Sally Shelton), 1968-1991	12	5

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996 ... (Continued)

Colby–personal, 1945-1987, circa 1990s	12	6
Colby–post-CIA work, 1978-1995, undated	12	7
Colby–miscellaneous, 1972-1992, undated	12	8
Committee for National Security, 1988-1989	12	9
Committee for National Security, 1990-1995, undated	13	1-2
Committee on Common Security, 1989	13	3
Comprehensive Test Ban Coalition, 1990-1991	13	4
Financial statements, 1981-1996	13	5
France; Germany; Hong Kong, 1981-1991	13	6
Identix, 1986-1996	13	7-10
India, 1983	13	11
Iran; Iraq, 1985-1992	14	1
Italy; Jamaica; Japan, 1985-1993	14	2
Korea, 1984-1988, undated	14	3
Laos; LAWS (Lawyers Alliance for World Security), 1984-1994, undated	14	4
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), 1988-1995	14	5
OSS (Office of Strategic Services) (contents in alphabetical order by military unit), 1944-1945	14	6-7
OSS, 1945, 1976-1988	14	8
OSS, 1988-1995, undated	15	1
Peru; Philippines, 1985-1992, undated	15	2
Russia, 1991, undated	15	3
Search for Common Ground; Singapore (1 item), 1989-1990, undated	15	4
SOPAG (Special Operations Policy Advisory Group), 1980-1993, undated	15	5-6
SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty), 1976-1978	15	7-8

Series 4, Subject Files, 1944-1996 ... (Continued)

Sweden; Taiwan, 1986-1992	15	9
Thailand, 1986-1987, undated	15	10
Turkey, 1986-1987	15	11
“U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s: Shaping a Durable Peace,” by Richard Nixon, 1973	15	12
Vietnam, 1989-1993, undated	15	13

Series 5, Photographs and Oversize Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1990s

Series Description

Series 5, Photographs and Oversize Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1990s, is arranged in approximate chronological order, with many of the photographs unlabeled or undated, and includes portraits of Colby as well as casual snapshots taken by others. There are also several black and white photographs of Colby as an officer during World War II.

Series Arrangement

[arranged chronologically]

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BOX</u>
Photographs, circa 1940s-circa 1970s	16
Photographs, circa 1980s-circa 1990s	17
Photographs, circa 1990s	18
Japanese promotional poster; Russian diagram, circa 1978, undated	Cabinet 1 Drawer 6