



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Watson Davis Papers, 1921-1972

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Watson Davis Papers
Identifier:	Accession 13-197
Date:	1921-1972
Extent:	3.01 cu. ft. (3 record storage boxes) (1 oversize folder)
Creator::	Davis, Watson, 1896-1967
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession 13-197, Watson Davis Papers

Descriptive Entry

Watson Davis was Editor and later Director of Science Service. These papers consist of correspondence, transcripts of addresses by Davis, notes, miscellaneous press releases and publications, photographs, and other materials relating to Davis' personal life and career at Science Service.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Journalism, Scientific

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white negatives
Black-and-white photographs
Brochures
Clippings
Color photographs
Manuscripts
Newsletters
Nitrate materials

Names:

Davis, Watson, 1896-1967
Science Service

Container Listing

Box 1

- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - Future of Science - 1. Includes newspaper and other published materials, notes, and a transcript of the Frank A. Howard Lecture given by Watson Davis at the George Washington College of Engineering.
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis Papers - Watson Davis Biography. Includes typewritten, biographical materials related to Watson Davis's life and work.
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - Fruitful Techniques for Popularizing Science - Report of - for Guide in UNESCO's Work in this Field - July 1948. Includes: a copy of a UNESCO report entitled "Report on the Popularization and Interpretation of Science through the Press," prepared by Watson Davis, Davis Dietz, and New York Times science journalist Waldemar Kaempffert; correspondence related to the UNESCO report; and drafts of the UNESCO report.
- Box 1 of 3 The Shape of Things to Come (article), Not for Distribution under Any Circumstances. Includes a letter (1944) to Watson Davis from The Office of Censorship and a transcript of an address entitled "The Shape of Things to Come," given by Watson Davis at the Wartime Packaging Conference and Exposition of the American Management Association.
- Box 1 of 3 D-3 - From Now On. Includes: a publication by Watson Davis entitled "From Now On: A Look into the Possible and Probable Future" and correspondence related to this publication, as well as other miscellaneous published materials not authored by Davis.
- Box 1 of 3 From Now On - Future Science D-3. Includes: a typewritten copy of an address entitled "Science for Survival," presented by Davis at the Banquet of the Second International Symposium on Feelings and Emotions; a typewritten copy of an address entitled "Science's Next Great Steps," presented by Davis at the University of Virginia (1949); miscellaneous notes and press releases; and printed materials not authored by Davis.
- Box 1 of 3 Chapter 20 - The Future. Includes: drafts for a chapter entitled "The Enticing Future" from Science From Now On; a typewritten transcript (1960) from a lecture entitled "Youth and Science's Future," given by Watson Davis at Kansas City University; a typewritten transcript (1959) of a lecture entitled "New Frontiers in Science," presented by Watson Davis at Washington and Lee University; a typewritten transcript (1958) of a presentation given by Watson Davis entitled "New Frontiers in Science in 1958"; and miscellaneous publications and materials not authored by Davis.
- Box 1 of 3 Story on Future. Includes handwritten and typewritten materials related to "Future Story."

- Box 1 of 3 Summary of Testimony to the Temporary National Economic Committee - War and Impending Technology. Includes a document entitled "Summary of Testimony to the Temporary National Economic Committee on 'New and Impending Technology'" by Watson Davis (1940).
- Box 1 of 3 Comments on Trip to Far East - 1960 - Watson Davis. Includes a document entitled "Comments on Trip to the Far East May-June 1960, by Watson Davis, Director of Science Service on Behalf of the Department of State."
- Box 1 of 3 From Now On A Portfolio of Predictions by Watson Davis. Includes a publication by Watson Davis entitled "From Now On: A Look into the Possible and Probable Future."
- Box 1 of 3 Science for Survival - Discovering Scientists for the Future - Address by WD. Includes: one transcript of an address entitled "Science for Survival," given by Watson Davis at Lehigh University (1949), and one transcript of a convocation address entitled "Discovering Scientists for the Future," given by Watson Davis at Denison University (1949).
- Box 1 of 3 China Science Service Vol. 1 No. 10 - Special Issue on Atomic Bomb and Radar 1946. Includes a letter (1946) from the Department of State to Science Service and a copy of China Science Service, volume 1, number 10.
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service Board of Trustees Meeting - April 24, 1966. Includes a copy of the minutes from a 1966 meeting of the Science Service Board of Trustees.
- Box 1 of 3 Trips for Science Fairs. Includes correspondence and notes related to science fairs in Latin America.
- Box 1 of 3 1965 - D-15 - Teaching Kits - The Gralier Society Inc. - Mr. Ellsworth Howell. Includes notes and correspondence related to Science Service and teaching kits.
- Box 1 of 3 WD Correspondence - 1957 - Includes miscellaneous professional and personal correspondence, as well as notes and newspaper materials. Also includes letter from artist Charles Bittinger.
- Box 1 of 3 Correspondence 1964-1967. Includes miscellaneous professional correspondence, notes, and newspaper materials.
- Box 1 of 3 The Story of Copper Reviews. Includes reviews and correspondence, including a letter from Herbert Hoover, related to The Story of Copper.
- Box 1 of 3 SS - Interpretation of Natural Sciences. Includes the first volume of a memorandum from the Conference on the Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for a General Public, in which Watson participated in 1938.

- Box 1 of 3 SS - Interpretation of Natural Sciences - Vol. II. Includes the second volume of a memorandum from the Conference on the Interpretation of the Natural Sciences for a General Public, in which Watson participated in 1938.
- Box 1 of 3 SS - Manuscripts/Clippings. Includes a Science Service booklet entitled "To Interest People in the Sciences."
- Box 1 of 3 A Survey - Interpretation of Science to the Public. Includes "A Survey of the Interpretation of Science to the Public, Made for The Rockefeller Foundation by Watson Davis, Director, Science Service."
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - United Features Spotlight Series Galley Copy: The Century of Science by Watson Davis - October 1963. Includes a United Features serialization of material from The Century of Science by Watson Davis, with accompanying illustrations.
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - Testimony before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor - 07/18/63 - And other papers. Includes Watson Davis's testimony (1963) before a House subcommittee, as well as other materials related to government testimony.
- Box 1 of 3 Hilda Heller Correspondence. Includes: photographic negatives; photographs of animals; and correspondence from Hilda Heller, including exchanges with Watson Davis.
[Digital Content: Andean Geese in Peru \[Image no. SIA2013-05509\]](#)
[Digital Content: Paulina \(penguin\) Wearing a Bow Tie \[Image no. SIA2013-05510\]](#)
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis - Hilda Heller Correspondence. Includes "The Little Tombs of Sandia" by Hilda Hempl Heller (including photographs), as well as correspondence from Hilda Heller, including exchanges with Watson Davis.
- Box 1 of 3 Hilda Heller Correspondence. Includes: correspondence between Hilda Heller and Watson Davis; correspondence from Watson Davis about Hilda Heller; and several articles written by Hilda Heller.
- Box 1 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis - Personal Account of Mrs. Hilda Hempl Heller - circa 1951 photos. Includes a piece entitled "Personal Account of Mrs. Hilda Hempl Heller," as well as photographs of Heller.
- Box 1 of 3 Hilda Heller Correspondence - 1951-1953 - Science Service - Watson Davis. Includes correspondence between Hilda Heller and Watson Davis in the years between 1951 and 1953.
- Box 1 of 3 Hilda Heller Correspondence - 1952 - Science Service - Watson Davis. Includes: notes; correspondence between Watson Davis and various publishers concerning materials received from Hilda Heller; a large map

of South America; and a document entitled "Hilda H. Heller's List of Article Material."

Box 2

- Box 2 of 3 Science Service - Hilda Heller's photos, negatives, and notes - 1952 - Some photos dated 1941 in H. Heller's accompanying notes and negatives. Includes: notes; photographs and photographic negatives from Hilda Heller. NOTE: Nitrate negatives removed to separate storage.
[Digital Content: Hilda Hempl Heller \(1891-1964\), with portable camera \[Image no. SIA2017-095017\]](#)
- Box 2 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis - Hilda Heller Correspondence and News Releases - 1952-1963. Includes: correspondence from and about Hilda Heller; general notes and press releases; articles by Hilda Heller; and one issue of the magazine Natural History.
- Box 2 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis - Personal Correspondence - 1958-1961, with Hilda Heller - Hilda Heller Correspondence. Includes: correspondence between Heller and Davis; other correspondence from Watson Davis or Hilda Heller; one photograph and one negative of Hilda Heller; and notes.
- Box 2 of 3 Science Service - 1939 news release from General Electric Co. on woven wood - The Shape of Things to Come - Watson Davis, 1943. Includes: a press release from General Electric Co.; a typewritten transcript from an address entitled "The Shape of Things to Come" by Watson Davis; and miscellaneous other materials.
- Box 2 of 3 Science Service - Scripps-Howard News, July 1959 - Science Service photo. Includes an issue of Scripps-Howard News (1959) and a photograph of a Science Service display booth.
- Box 2 of 3 Taffy - Century of Science - W.D. Book. Includes: correspondence from and to Watson Davis, mostly in relation to The Century of Science; of note is a letter from the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Also includes reviews of The Century of Science.
- Box 2 of 3 Daily Science News Bulletin, 93A-105F, January-March, 1923. Includes a bound volume of the Daily Science News Bulletin, edited by Watson Davis. The volume contains numbers 93A-105F, which span January-March 1923.
- Box 2 of 3 Science News Bulletin, 62-92. Includes a bound volume of the Science News Bulletin, containing numbers 62-92 (1922).
- Box 2 of 3 Science News Bulletin, 1-61. Includes a bound volume of the Science News Bulletin, containing numbers 1-61 (1921-1922).

- Box 2 of 3 Writing and Science Presentations. Includes: general notes; a pamphlet entitled "The Rise of Science Understanding" by Watson Davis; a piece (1959), presented at the Conference on Scientific Communication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, entitled "Writing and Science Presentation" by Watson Davis; and a piece (1962) entitled "The Rise of Science Understanding" by Watson Davis.
- Box 2 of 3 Book Out of WD Speeches. Includes: "An Invitation to All Parts of the World to Participate in the National Science Fair-International" by Watson Davis; copies of Science News Letter; a typewritten transcript of "Science for the General Public" by Watson Davis; "Documentation Unfinished" by Watson Davis; "Science From Now On" by Watson Davis; "Reporting the Science in Your Future" by Watson Davis; "The Next Twenty Years in Science Reporting" by Watson Davis; "The Public Be Informed!" by Watson Davis; "Youth and Science's Future" by Watson Davis; "What Mass Media Could Do" by Watson Davis; "The Future of Science in Relation to Museums What We Can Expect to See in the Year 2000" by Watson Davis; "Science for Youth" by Watson Davis; and general notes and article clippings.
- Box 2 of 3 Recordings of Our Past Programs, Radio, 8/8/1949. Includes a list of Science Service radio programs (1949), as well as notes and correspondence.
- Box 2 of 3 Copyright and Plates to Creative Chemistry. Includes correspondence from Preston Slosson, Helen Davis, and others related to Creative Chemistry.
- Box 3
- Box 3 of 3 National Association of Science Writers - La Prensa Medica Mexicana, Chemistry Magazine 1966. Includes: La Prensa Medica Mexicana; correspondence from John L. Bach to "Faye"; a copy of a newsletter from the National Association of Science Writers, which contains writings about Watson Davis; and a 1966 issue of Chemistry.
- Box 3 of 3 Goddard Rocket - Trip to the Moon Revision. Includes correspondence and handwritten and typewritten materials related to a "modern" revision of Trip to the Moon (Jules Verne). The 1924 letters concern Smithsonian Institution and funding of Goddard's rocket project.
- Box 3 of 3 W.D. Personal. Includes: notes; a copy of The January Scientific Monthly; a 1930 issue of the Junior-Senior High School Clearing House; a letter from John Pickett Turner to Watson Davis (1934); and a notebook belonging to Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Plant Growth Kit UNESCO. Includes correspondence and typewritten Science Service materials about plant growth kits; general notes; a copy of the January 1949 issue of the National 4-H News; a packet of agricultural publication materials; and press releases.

- Box 3 of 3 Professional Engineers Registration. Includes correspondence with and materials from the District of Columbia Board of Registration for Professional Engineers, as well as notes and application materials from Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 S.S. Booklets. Includes one copy of a Health Careers Guidebook and one copy of Partners for Health.
- Box 3 of 3 Photograph - Watson Davis 1961. Includes one letter from Victor L. Summers of the Ascension Academy and an enclosed photograph of Watson Davis taken in November, 1961.
- Box 3 of 3 Photographs. Includes five unlabeled photographs, some of which feature Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 ** Box = American Documentation Institute, Watson Davis, 1960s - Personal papers, notes, identification cards, miscellaneous. Includes: a lottery bill from the Republic of Cuba; a number of passport photographs of Watson Davis and other identifying materials, including his press courtesy cards; a recipe card for the ochi chorniya cocktail and beef stroganoff; a certificate indicating Davis's vaccination against smallpox; and a memorandum from the U.S. Navy Department to Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis papers - Photos and Section D Newspaper. Includes: assorted notes and poetry; a copy of a 1972 National Geographic School Bulletin; one postcard and pieces of personal correspondence; one photograph of Watson Davis taken during a trip; a letter from the U.S. Department of Commerce to the National Inventors Council; a photograph of members of the National Inventors Council (1964); and one photograph of the Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Board on Educational Requirements, which features Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Science Service - Watson Davis Pin from Department of Commerce, 03/29/1949; photos, 1955 and 1956. Includes: correspondence from the Department of Commerce and an enclosed pin; one photograph of Watson Davis from 1955; and one letter (1956) from the General Motors Corporation with an enclosed photograph of Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Letter from G. Natta and Card from Frederick Seitz. Includes correspondence from G. Natta of the Instituto di Chimica Industriale del Politecnico and a Christmas card (1963) from Frederick and Elizabeth Seitz.
- Box 3 of 3 Dedication of the Museum of History and Technology, SI, 1/22/1964. Includes: an invitation to the 1964 dedication of the Smithsonian's Museum of History and Technology; a program from this dedication; admission cards to this dedication; a press pin from this event; and copies of remarks given at this event.
- Box 3 of 3 Adventures in Science Award. Includes: one certificate from the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation awarding a National Mass Media Award to Adventures

in Science; one certificate from the American Medical Association indicating that Watson Davis participated in the 1948 Heath Education Program; and one certificate from the American Medical Association indicating the Science Service participated in the 1947 Health Education Program.

- Box 3 of 3 Publications, Photos, Passports (cont.). Includes: a packet of materials from Vice President Hubert Humphrey, including correspondence to Watson Davis and a photograph featuring Davis and the VP; one unlabeled photograph featuring Watson Davis; a photograph featuring Watson Davis, Basil O'Connor and others, signed by Basil O'Connor; and preliminary materials and the report from the Conference on the Role of Schools of Journalism in the Professional Training of Science Writers.
- Box 3 of 3 Publications, Photos, Passports. Includes: one copy of the University of Iowa Extension Bulletin; notes; a press release on antihistamine tablets from the Special Science Feature Service; a 1943 address by Watson Davis entitled "Scientific Questions for the Future"; one photograph (1944) addressed to Science Service; and numerous forms of identification belonging to Watson Davis and Helen Davis, including their passports, which contain miscellaneous items and photographs.
- Box 3 of 3 Photography. Includes: numerous unlabeled photographs; a Fotoshop pamphlet; photographs of Helen Davis (with other individuals) and a house, taken in Syracuse, New York (1932); photographic negatives from Tipton & Myers; additional negatives in an envelope addressed to Science Service; photographs of Watson Davis and Helen Davis, in an envelope marked "Cent. Of Progress photos"; photographs of children; and additional photographic negatives. NOTE: Nitrate negatives removed to separate storage.
- Box 3 of 3 Fiction. Includes: a large envelope containing a piece entitled "The Last of the Morlands" by Helen Davis, along with a letter of rejection from Picture-Play Magazine; a rejection letter from Harper & Brothers Publishers; and a piece by Watson Davis entitled "Cane the Canes."
- Box 3 of 3 Harvard Project Physics. Includes six photographs of individuals involved with Harvard Project Physics, featuring Arnold Thackray, Gerald James Holton, and others.
- Box 3 of 3 Science Service - Science's Next Great Steps, 1949. Includes a typewritten copy of an address (1949) by Watson Davis entitled "Science's Next Great Steps," as well as other miscellaneous materials.
- Box 3 of 3 Science Service - Helen M. Davis correspondence, 1942; 1934; Copy of script of radio talk presented September 29, 1936, featuring Mr. Davis; Correspondence. Includes correspondence to and from Helen Davis and a transcript of a Watson Davis radio talk (1936) entitled "A Dog's World."
- Box 3 of 3 Science Service - Drafts, handwritten or typed, of The Child's Stories of Science Series, 1939, by Helen Miles Davis. Includes: miscellaneous notes

and notecards; portions of a piece entitled "Michael and the Planets" by Helen Miles Davis; a piece entitled "Michael and the Moon" by Helen Miles Davis; handwritten drafts of materials; and one Science Service article entitled "Planets Shine in Night Sky" by James Stokley.

- Box 3 of 3 SS - Chemistry Magazine - Helen Miles Davis 1. Includes: correspondence to Helen Davis; a copy of materials labeled "Theory and the Index User"; a transcript of a radio talk (1940) by Watson Davis entitled "Adventures in Science"; miscellaneous notes, notecards, and a press release; one transcript copy of an address (1957) given by Watson Davis entitled "Scientific Admixtures and Supplements to the Public's Knowledge"; a banquet program from a 1957 annual meeting of the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists, which featured Watson Davis as a guest speaker; and a program from the 1946 Smithsonian Institution Centennial.
- Box 3 of 3 SS - Chemistry Magazine - Helen Miles Davis 2. Includes: correspondence from Helen Davis to Watson Davis; correspondence from Any Thyregod to Charlotte Davis; correspondence from Helen Davis to Charlotte Davis; and correspondence from Miles Davis to Charlotte Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Davis, Helen Miles, 1895-1957. Includes: one copy of Chemistry containing an obituary for Helen Miles Davis; one copy of Science News Letter containing an obituary for Helen Miles Davis; notes; numerous newspaper clippings of obituaries of Helen Davis; photographs of Helen Davis; and a copy of a Helen Davis biography (listing of major facts about her life).
- Box 3 of 3 Scientific Instruments You Can Make. Includes a copy of Scientific Instruments You Can Make by Helen Miles Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Communication. Includes copies of a drafted chapter entitled "Communication" and a transcript of a keynote address (1956) given by Watson Davis entitled "You Tell the World."
- Box 3 of 3 WD Correspondence - 1957 - Folder 2 of 2. Includes: miscellaneous notes, notecards, postcards, and a press release; a booklet entitled What to Do About "Junk"; and correspondence to and from Watson Davis.
- Box 3 of 3 Passports. Includes Watson Davis's passports and other identifying materials, including his passport to the World Congress of Universal Documentation in Paris, as well as miscellaneous notes and Science Service materials.
- Box 3 of 3 The Rise of Science Understanding, for Science, 1948. Includes: miscellaneous notecards and printed materials; drafts of "The Rise of Science Understanding" by Watson Davis; and a copy of an address (1937) given by Watson Davis entitled "The Popularization of Science."
- Box 3 of 3 W.D. Biographical. Includes a biographical sketch of Watson Davis.

Oversize

Oversize

Watson Davis Photographs, 1949 and 1959. Includes a 1959 letter from Lawrence Langner at the U.S. Department of Commerce to Watson Davis, with an enclosed photograph featuring Davis, and an additional photograph from 1949 featuring Watson Davis.