

**PAPERS OF LOUIS McHENRY HOWE**  
**1912 – 1936**

Accession Numbers: 41 - 63, 59 - 17

The majority of the Howe Papers were sent to the Library by President Roosevelt. One container was donated by Lela Stiles, one of Mr. Howe's secretaries.

Restrictions: None

Copyright in these papers has not been donated to the United States Government.

Quantity: 42 linear feet

Related Materials: Roosevelt Papers – New York State Senator  
Assistant Secretary of the Navy Papers, 1920-1928  
Campaign of 1920  
Campaign of 1924  
Family, Business and Personal  
Papers as Governor of New York  
President's Personal File 2095 Howe, Louis McHenry  
Papers from Mary Howe Baker (Restricted)  
Democratic Party National Committee Papers  
Papers of Mary W. Dewson  
Papers of Stephen T. Early  
Morgenthau Diaries  
New York State Records, Office as Governor, 1928-1932  
Scattered materials are found in many other collections  
Papers of Lela Stiles

Louis McHenry Howe was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on January 14, 1871. When Louis was five years old, financial reversals forced the family to move to Saratoga Springs, New York. As a young man, he attended the Saratoga Institute, a private day school, but he had no formal college training. His father had purchased the Saratoga Sun in 1882 and Louis worked for him, eventually taking charge of the publication when his father became ill. He also assumed his father's supplemental position as local reporter for the New York Herald.

In 1906, Howe became involved in an attempt to reform the Democratic Party in New York State. As a newspaperman, Howe was able to serve the anti-Tammany Hall organization in many ways. In 1910, he met the young Senator from Dutchess County, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Drawn together by mutual political interests, the two became close friends. When Roosevelt was ill with typhoid fever during his 1912 campaign for re-election to the State Senate, Howe carried the campaign to a successful conclusion.

Howe went to Washington in 1913 as secretary, and later special assistant, to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt. He was mainly a "trouble-shooter" using his political acumen to cut through government red tape.

The eight years in Washington were probably the most stable ones the Howe family ever enjoyed. When Roosevelt contracted polio in 1921, Howe committed himself to the job of secretary, friend and confidant to FDR, which was to be his role for the rest of his life. He was a nurse, business manager and morale booster for FDR. He encouraged FDR to make ship models, which were pitted against other models in challenge cup races. Howe wrote skits and poems and made up watercolor booklets about experiences he and Roosevelt shared. One such story was "The Log of the Houseboat Larooco," (located in the *Roosevelt Family, Business and Personal Papers*). He also managed to keep Roosevelt's name before the public in anticipation of the time when FDR would be ready to re-enter the political arena. Howe's timetable called for FDR to run for Governor of New York in 1932 and for the Presidency in 1936. The 1928 draft for Governor of Roosevelt changed the timetable, but not the program. Howe managed FDR's gubernatorial campaigns and acted as his secretary and chief advisor during the two terms as Governor of New York State. In 1932, he and James Farley went to the convention in Chicago to secure the presidential nomination for Roosevelt. After the election, Howe supposedly remarked that he had probably worked himself out of a job. To some degree this was true. Howe lived at the White House and had an office close to the President, but it was no longer possible for him to handle all the demands the job placed on a secretary. He established the first Press Intelligence Service; he was secretary and later executive director of the National Crime Commission; and he was actively involved in plans for the Civilian Conservation Corps and Subsistence Housing projects, particularly Arthurdale, West Virginia.

The heart condition and chronic asthma that had plagued Howe most of his life began to take its toll. He was dangerously ill by April 1935, but even after he was hospitalized in August of that year, he continued to be involved in affairs of government and the plans for the 1936 campaign. He suggested the creation of a Roosevelt Good Neighbor League to organize "non-partisan" clubs throughout the country. This was an effort to involve Republicans who supported Roosevelt but did not wish to be labeled Democrats. Howe did live to see Roosevelt re-elected. He died on April 18, 1936.

The Howe Papers reflect the elusive quality of the man. Most of the materials concern Howe's work and offer little insight into his life or his relationship with Franklin D. Roosevelt.

**The Howe Papers are divided into seven series as follows:**

<u>Containers</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1 – 16	<b>Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913 – 1921:</b> Subject files and a small correspondence file both arranged alphabetically. The series also contains some oversize material, which is listed at the end of the series.
16 – 19	<b>Personal Papers, 1912 – 1928:</b> Incoming and outgoing correspondence arranged chronologically, materials on FDR's 1912 campaign, speech drafts, financial statements and correspondence with FDR.
19 – 36	<b>Secretary to FDR, 1928 – 1932:</b> Incoming and outgoing correspondence arranged chronologically, subject files on prisons, the campaigns, and a small amount of personal correspondence arranged alphabetically by subject or surname of correspondent.
37 – 61	<b>Secretary to the President, 1933 – 1936:</b> Subject files arranged alphabetically. This series also contains some oversize materials, printed matter, scrapbooks, and ledgers which are listed at the end of the series.
62 – 73	<b>Personal Papers, 1933 – 1936:</b> Incoming and outgoing correspondence arranged alphabetically by subject or surname of correspondent. Materials found in this series include articles and radio scripts written by Mr. Howe, letters on Mr. Howe's illness, and invitations, as well as general correspondence.
74	<b>Papers of Grace H. Howe, 1931 – 1936:</b> Correspondence of Mrs. Howe. Much of the material concerns Mr. Howe's last illness and his death.
75	<b>Papers Donated by Lela Stiles (secretary to Mr. Howe):</b> Newspaper clippings, mainly on Mr. Howe's death, some articles by Mr. Howe and a small amount of correspondence.

# LOUIS McHENRY HOWE PAPERS

1912 – 1936

## **ASSISTANT to the ASSISTANT SECRETARY of the NAVY, 1913-1921**

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<b>3</b>	Daniels, Josephus Erie Forge Fore River Shipbuilding General Electric Company Housing, 1918 – 1919 (January – September 1918) Housing, October 1918 – 1919
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### **PAPERS of GRACE H. HOWE, 1931 – 1936**

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### **PAPERS DONATED by LELA STILES**

75 Material presented by Lela Stiles (Secretary to Howe):  
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"One of a Series of Scratch Board Illustrations of the Allied  
Leaders," (Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill)  
(reverse side of each board is a "The Neil House" menu)  
Folders 2 - 4: Newspaper clippings, mainly on Howe's death, articles by  
Howe, and a small amount of correspondence