

## Pare Lorentz Finding Aid

### PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

Pare Lorentz (1905 – 1992) was a film critic, maker of documentary films, and a writer. He wrote and directed three award-winning films, “The Plow That Broke The Plains” (1936), “The River” (1938), and “The Fight For Life” (1940). He was appointed by President Roosevelt to head the U.S. Film Service in 1940. After World War II, he created a day-by-day chronology the life of Franklin D. Roosevelt (unpublished) and collected an archive of photographs of FDR.

#### Description:

The papers of Pare Lorentz cover his career as a documentary film maker and writer. They include film and radio scripts, a manuscript of his memoirs, a chronology of the life of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a historical chronology of events in the United States from 1882 to 1945 by subject, and research for his collection of photographs of FDR (the photographs are in the Library’s Photograph Archives).

The Papers do not contain material about Mr. Lorentz’s personal life.

Quantity: 7.5 ft. file boxes, 1 box oversize materials, 9 press books, 8 ring binders, 3 boxes index cards.

Donor: Elizabeth Meyer Lorentz

Restrictions:

Copyright:

## Biography – PARE LORENTZ

Pare Lorentz was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia in 1905. He attended West Virginia Wesleyan and West Virginia University, where he edited the college humor magazine, Moonshine.

In 1925, he moved to New York City where he worked as a film critic for several magazines, including McCall's and Vanity Fair. He co-authored "Censored – the Private Life of the Movies" with Morris Ernst in 1930. In 1934, he wrote a chronology of Franklin Delano Roosevelt titled "The Roosevelt Year".

In 1936, working for the U.S. Resettlement Administration, he wrote and directed "The Plow the Broke the Plains", a film depicting the cause and effects of dust storms in the southwest. Today, the film with its background music composed by Virgil Thompson remains one of the finest documentaries ever made. He followed this in 1938 with "The River", a film about the Mississippi, for the U.S. Farm Administration. It won the World Prize at the Venice Film Festival.

President Roosevelt appointed Lorentz head of the U.S. Film Service in 1940. That year, he wrote and directed "The Fight for Life", a film about pre-natal health care for poor women. It too won awards.

After Congress abolished the U.S. Film Service, Lorentz went back to McCall's as its National Defense Editor. In 1942, he was commissioned as a Major in the U.S. Air Corps and spent the war making training and technical films for the military. After the war, he worked for the War Department in charge of films, theatre and music in occupied Europe. He edited a documentary on Nazi atrocities to be shown at the Nuremberg trials. It was meant to be released to the general public, but was considered too controversial to be shown .

Returning to civilian life in 1947, Lorentz began work on a chronology of the life of Franklin D. Roosevelt, recording where he was, what he did, whom he saw, and what he said every day of his life. This was accompanied by a historical chronology of the United States during Roosevelt's lifetime, arranged in broad subject headings, and an archive of 4506 photographs of Roosevelt. Lorentz also resumed his career as a journalist, covering the 1<sup>st</sup> UN Conference on Peaceful Uses of the Atom in 1955.

Throughout the years, Lorentz received a steady stream of honors and awards for his films. In 1981, the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presented him with a special salute.

A biography, "Pare Lorentz and the Documentary Film" by Robert L. Snyder was published in 1968. A collection of his movie reviews, "Lorentz on Film: Movies 1927 to 1941", was published in 1975. The closest he came to an autobiography was published in 1992, "FDR's Filmmaker: Memoirs and Scripts". His massive chronologies were never published.

Pare Lorentz died in 1992 in Armonk, NY.

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

1. Biographical and Professional
  - Presentations and Lectures 1953-1978, Tributes
  - Awards – 1985
  - Awards – 1986: Washington Film Council: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of “The Plow That Broke the Plains” Observance
  - Correspondence: Robert deMott 1988-1992 (editor of John Steinbeck – Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath)
  - Interviews: Dr. Alan Fern with Pare Lorentz March 17 and 20, 1976
  - Script: “FDR’s Moviemaker – Memoirs and Scripts”
    - Folder 1: Pages 1-164
    - Folder 2: Pages 165-260
    - Folder 3: Pages 261-end
  - Speech: “Images, Words and Sound or The Dodo Bird Report” (Saul Haas Foundation, Seattle, Washington – May 1, 1978)
  
2. Biographical and Professional
  - Movie Manuscripts of Pare Lorentz, Copy 1:
    - “The Plow That Broke the Plains”
    - “The River”
    - “The Fight for Life”
    - “Ecce Homo”
  - Movie Manuscripts of Pare Lorentz, Copy 2:
    - “The Plow That Broke the Plains”
    - “The River”
    - “Fight for Life”
    - “Ecce Homo”
  - “The River” Release Publication
  - “The River” Still Photographs
  - Pamphlet: Documentary Film Classics:
    - Pare Lorentz and “The Films of Merit”* (pages 9-17)
  - Clippings, Articles and Correspondence 1937-1977
    - Folder 1: 1937-1959
    - Folder 2: 1946-1947
    - Folder 3: 1951-1979
    - Folder 4: 1960-1977
  - Congressional Record – January 30, 1963
  - National Archives Case Files Regarding Lorentz Films
  
3. Biographical and Professional
  - Clippings, Articles and Correspondence 1971-1990
    - Folder 1: 1971-1977
    - Folder 2: 1977-1979
    - Folder 3: 1980-1984
    - Folder 4: 1985-1990
  - Projects: Possible film subjects – 1947 (2 folders)

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

4. Biographical and Professional  
Projects: FDR Centennial 1982  
FDR Day – March 4, 1983 (New York State)  
Collection of FDR Photographs, Correspondence and Status Reports 1936-1951  
Photographs of FDR, and Booklets:  
The Little White House Warm Springs Georgia, 1948  
Twentieth Anniversary Annual Report GA Warm Springs Foundation, 1947  
The Franklin D. Roosevelt Home & Library Souvenir Guide Book, 1949  
Correspondence with FDR Library 1949-1950  
Information on Storing Photographs 1946-1949  
Government Picture Sources  
Picture File: Life Index 1936-1946  
Correspondence re: Request for FDR Photos  
Folder 1: Answered A-H, 1949
  
5. Collection of FDR Photographs, Correspondence and Reports 1945-1952  
Correspondence re: Request for FDR Photos  
Folder 2: Answered H-W, 1949-1950  
Folder 3: Unanswered  
Memos: Pare Lorentz/Jacqueline Bernard, 1950  
Status Reports: 1950-1951  
Printed Materials include:  
The Story of Food Preservation by Edith Elliott Swank  
Seventy-Five Years of Progress – Historical sketch of the Southern Pacific by Earle Heath  
Correspondence: FDR's Ancestors 1948-1950  
Correspondence: Photo Sources – Unanswered, 1950  
Correspondence: Photo Sources – A-M, 1950  
Correspondence: Photo Sources – N-Z, 1950  
Correspondence: Photo Sources – Cartoons, 1951  
Correspondence: Photo Sources – FDR Photos, 1949  
Photo Lists: Elliot Roosevelt's Pictures, 1949  
Photo Lists: Pictures copied at FDR Library, 1949  
Photo Lists: Pictures copied in Washington, D.C., 1949  
Photo Lists: Pictures, miscellaneous
  
6. Collection of FDR Photographs, Correspondence and Reports 1945-1952  
Report: Photo Sources Progress, Expenditures and Bibliography (Jacqueline Bernard), 1950  
Progress Report and Bibliography by Marion Stevens, March 17, 1950  
Niekrug Inventory and Appraisal

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

6. FDR Chronology
  - Early Version Draft
    - Folder 1: 1882-1900
    - Folder 2: 1900-1909
    - Folder 3: 1910-1928
    - Folder 4: 1933-1936
  
7. FDR Chronology
  - Early Version Draft 1937-1945
  - Early Version Draft 1882-1945
  - Early Version Drafts
    - Folder 1: 1882-1926
    - Folder 2: 1927-1945
  - Early Version Draft, Master Correction Copy
    - Folder 1: 1910-1927
    - Folder 2: 1928-1936
    - Folder 3: 1937-1945
  
8. FDR Chronology
  - “Chronology-Franklin D. Roosevelt” (Early Version Complete)
  - “The Days of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Chronicle” by Pare Lorentz
    - Folder 1: 1882-1899 (pages 20-149)
    - Folder 2: 1900-1909 (pages 150-312)
    - Folder 3: 1910-1932 (pages 313-426)
    - Folder 4: 1920-1932 (pages 427-560)
  - Early Version Draft (1952)
    - Folder 1: 1882-1900
    - Folder 2: 1900-1909
  
9. FDR Chronology
  - FDR – 1929-1945 (3rd copy)
    - Folder 1: 1929-1936
    - Folder 2: 1937-1945
  - “The Days of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Chronicle” by Pare Lorentz
    - Folder 1: January 30, 1882 – January 1, 1910, Volume I
    - Folder 2: January 1, 1910 – January 1, 1933, Volume II
    - Folder 3: January 1, 1933 – April 12, 1945, Volume III
    - Folder 4: Appendix, Index – Volume IV
  
10. FDR Chronology
  - Supplemental Information
    - Identification of People (Alphabetical List)
    - Bookseller Catalogues re: FDR 1946
    - “Counterpoint” – Draft 1942-1945

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

- 10.** Material for “Counterpoint” – 1952  
Genealogy Notes, 1952  
Miscellaneous Book Insertions and Notes (three folders)  
Supplemental Information Folder Contents:  
Letter from Pare Lorentz to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt (11/14/52)  
Letter from Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt to Pare Lorentz (11/14/52)  
Franklin D. Roosevelt Genealogy  
Unpublished Sources  
Bibliography  
Bibliography of Articles  
Bibliography of Franklin D. Roosevelt as an Author  
Dramatis Personae – See Folder Above: Identification of People  
(Alphabetical List)  
Cabinet and Assistant Cabinet Officers in Woodrow Wilson’s  
Administrations  
Ranking Civilians in Navy Department in World War I  
Members of New York State Democratic Committee in FDR’s Time  
from 1910 on  
Supplemental Information  
Supplemental Information Folder Contents:  
New York State Executive Appointees 1928-1932 When FDR was  
Governor  
Roster of Cabinets and Staff in FDR’s Administration 1933-1945  
Five Steno Notebooks and Note Cards
- 11.** “Historical Chronology – U.S. in General” (Loose-leaf Booklets):  
Agriculture – 1891-1943  
Agriculture – 1903-1932 (copy 2)  
Aviation – 1900-1930  
Aviation – 1900-1945  
Culture – 1898-1932 (copy 2)  
Culture – 1876-1945  
Culture – 1931-1945  
Defense – 1898-1930  
Defense – 1891-1945  
Economics – 1880-1933  
Economics – 1931-1942
- 12.** “Historical Chronology – U.S. in General” (Loose-leaf Booklets):  
Economics – 1880-1945  
Foreign Affairs – 1882-1946  
Foreign Affairs – 1886-1932 (Supplementary Material added 1952)  
Foreign Affairs – 1889-1946 (Supplementary Material added 1952)  
Foreign Affairs – 1931-1945 (Revised 1952 Master)

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

12. Foreign Events – 1898-1932  
Foreign Events – 1931-1945 (Master Copy)  
Groups and Associations – 1885-1929 (copy 2)  
Groups and Associations – 1931-1940  
Groups and Associations – 1880-1929
13. “Historical Chronology – U.S. in General” (Loose-leaf Booklets):  
Labor – 1876-1930  
Labor – 1880-1930  
Labor – 1931-1945 – Labor Legislation from September 1935-May 1942  
Legislative Chronology – 1902-1932 (copy 2)  
Legislation – 1883-1932  
Legislation – 1933, 1934, 1935  
Miscellaneous – Includes: politics, travels of FDR and Mrs. Roosevelt, matters of general interest, not fitting other categories ( i.e. important and newsworthy people, etc.); Development of War; Natural Phenomena of Interest  
Miscellaneous: Politics, travels, matters of interest: doings of important people, natural phenomena  
Miscellaneous Chronology (copy 2) – 1883-1931  
Science and Medicine – 1876-1930  
Science and Medicine – 1931-1943  
Science and Medicine – Chronology 1876-1930 (copy 2)  
  
Social Security – 1931-1941 (lacks 1932 and 1933)  
Summary from Dulles “Twentieth Century America”
14. Oversize Material\*  
Fortune Magazine, October 1938  
FDR “Counterpoint” 1882-1894 (Early Version Draft)  
Photostats of: Introductions, Forwards and Articles by FDR  
FDR Centennial – 1982  
Newspaper – The Reporter Dispatch, January 24, 1982  
Exhibition Catalogue – FDR The Intimate Presidency (two copies)  
An Exhibition to Commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of the President of the United States  
Form of questionnaire sent out by Jacqueline Bernard requesting photographic information re: FDR Project
15. FDR Chronology  
FDR Bibliography Sources (Index Box)

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

<u>Container</u>	<u>Contents</u>
16.	FDR Chronology FDR Photo Collection: Sources for Permission - Books used in Marion Stevens' research for <u>The Days of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Chronicle</u> (Index Box)
17.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – Clippings, 1938-1941
18.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – Clippings, 1940-1941
19.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – Clippings, 1940
20.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – Clippings, 1938-1941
21.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – Clippings, 1938 (by States)
22.	Press Notices Scrapbook* – Pare Lorentz and His Work Volume I “The River” Contents: Short Subject Award, selected newspaper and magazine reviews and British reviews Press Notices Scrapbook* – Pare Lorentz and His Work Volume II Comments and Fan Letters: “The River,” “The Fight For Life,” “Ecce Homo”
23.	Press Notices Scrapbook* – “Pare Lorentz and His Work” Volume III Interviews, Fan Letters and Reviews: “The Plow That Broke the Plains,” “The River,” “Ecce Home” Press Notices Scrapbook* – “Pare Lorentz and His Work” Volume IV Contents: Periodical articles
24.	Scrapbook* – Fan Letters 1937-1940 Pare Lorentz Press Book* – <u>McCall's</u> Movie Reviews: July 1937-September 1941
25.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – <u>McCall's</u> National Defense Section: February-September 1941
26.	Pare Lorentz Press Book* – “The River” 1937-1938 (dup. of Volume I, see Box 22) Pare Lorentz Press Book* – “The River,” “The Fight For Life,” “Ecce Homo” (duplicate of Volume II, see Box 22) Pare Lorentz Press Book* – “The Plow That Broke the Plains,” “The River,” “Ecce Homo” (duplicate of Volume III, see Box 23)



**PARE LORENTZ PAPERS**

**Container**

**Contents**

**MARION STEVENS' FILES**

27. FDR Project Work – 1944-1952  
Bibliographies  
Book Orders  
Book Outline  
Copyright, 1950  
Lorant, Stefan  
Marion Stevens to Pare Lorentz – Correspondence, Lists and Reports:  
Folder 1: 1948-1952  
Folder 2: 1944, 1949-1951  
Folder 3: 1949-1952  
Marion Stevens to Jacqueline Bernard – Correspondence, Lists  
and Reports 1949-1950  
Microfilm Orders, 1950  
Photo File Information 1949-1950  
Printed Material Orders 1950-1951  
Scope of Project
28. FDR Project Work – Pare Lorentz Correspondence, 1936-1977  
Pare Lorentz – Correspondence 1936-1937  
Pare Lorentz – Correspondence, (Eleanor Roosevelt and others), 1948-  
1961  
Pare Lorentz – Correspondence, re: Publication, 1948-1977  
Sources A-D, 1949-1950  
Sources E-L, 1949-1950  
Sources M-P, 1949-1950  
Sources Q-Z, 1949-1950  
Sources Unanswered, 1949-1950  
Copies of Correspondence re: FDR Project, 1948-1957 – Unarranged  
Eleanor Roosevelt Letter, April 25, 1939
29. FDR Project Notes: FDR Family and Personal Life  
Delano Family  
Memoirs – Mrs. Charles Sumner Hamlin, Henry Hooker and others  
Roosevelt, Eleanor  
Roosevelt, Eleanor – Dinner Book 1912-1920  
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano:  
As Author (2 folders)  
Business Career  
Characterizations  
Harvard Diary – 1901-1903  
Infantile Paralysis  
Interests and Activities

**PARE LORENTZ PAPERS**

**Container**

**Contents**

- 29.** Newspaper Comments – 1910-1932  
Quotes  
Roosevelt, James – Letters to FDR, Sara Roosevelt (FDR’s mother) and  
Biographical Excerpts  
Roosevelt, Sarah Delano – Diary and Correspondence, 1880-1907  
(excerpts)  
Roosevelt Family and Friends (2 folders)  
Speeches (excerpts) – 1914-1938
- 30.** FDR Project  
Folder 1: Material from Oral History Project, Columbia University –  
March 1950  
Statement re: James Walker, FDR and Catholic Church  
Norman Thomas  
William J. Schieffelin  
Edward P. Farley  
Laurence Arnold Tanzer  
Mrs. Walter Bunzl (L. Tanzer’s daughter)  
Jackson E. Reynolds  
Lawson Purdy  
Leonard M. Wallstein  
Homer Folks  
Geoffrey Parsons  
Henry Bruere  
Langdon Marvin  
Marvin Papers  
Earl R. Miller  
Arthur Nazro  
Margaret Suckley  
William Amory Gardner  
Mary Eliot Vaughan Marvin (Mrs. Langdon Marvin)  
Dr. Russell Bowie  
Mrs. Charles Sumner Hamlin  
Edmund Pendleton Rogers  
Judge Jerome Frank  
Mrs. Roosevelt  
Mr. Edwin Bachtel (Carter, Ledyard & Milburn)  
Miss Marshall (Col. R. B. Marshall’s daughter)  
E. Steuart Davis  
Miss Frances Porter  
Lathrop Brown  
Fanya Carter?  
George Draper  
Thomas F. Leonard

PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

Container

Contents

30. Mr. Moses Smith  
Old Ironside Script Correspondence  
Marion Stevens

Folder 2: Interviews:

Adams, Frederick, Jr. – 1949  
Davis, E Stuart – 1950  
Bowie, Dr. Russell – 1950  
Frank, Judge Jerome – 1949  
Roosevelt, Ellen – 1949  
Wilkins, Georgia – 1949  
Marvin, Langden P. – 1949  
Nazro, Arthur  
Tully, Grace – 1949  
Delano, Mrs. Lyman – 1949  
Clay, John  
deSieves Bernard, Jacqueline – 1950  
Haviland, Ben – 1947  
Porter, Frances  
McGaughey, Robert – 1947  
Rogers, Edmund Pendleton – 1949  
Richards, H.H. (Groton Teacher)  
Mack, Judge John E. (from Wire Recording, NPS)  
Leonard, Tom F. (from Wire Recording, NPS)  
Haviland, Benjamin (from Wire Recording, NPS)  
Smith, Moses – 1948  
Plog, William A. – 1947  
Killmer, Thomas – 1948  
Mack, Judge John – 1949  
Leonard, Thomas F. – 1949  
Dickinson, Mr. & Mrs. Grant – 1949  
Depew, Louis – 1948

Folder 3: Biographical Excerpts and Notes:

Frank Walker  
“Turkey Cabinet”  
James M. Cox  
Arthur E. Morgan  
Eleanor Roosevelt  
Smith & Roosevelt  
James A. Farley  
Moley, Raymond (Brain Truster)  
Insurgents in Legislature (NYS) in session of 1911  
Roosevelt in Trinidad (Calypso)

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

30. Warm Springs Show  
Bonus Army  
The Proclamation  
Dr. Russell Bowie  
“Two Roosevelts at Chatauqua” Thornton  
Notes re: Lucy Mercer Rutherford, Mrs. Thomas E. Collins  
(Missy Lehand’s niece), Harvard  
Bonneville Dam Dedication – September 28, 1937  
List of FDR’s Friends  
Inanimate Objects (list of places and things relative to FDR)  
Groups (organizations, events, and people relative to FDR)  
New Deal Philosophies (excerpt from Roosevelt and Hopkins, page 70)  
People: Frank Walker, William Amory Gardner and other associates  
Excerpts from Roosevelt and Hopkins re: Harry L. Hopkins pgs. 25, 26,  
45, 51 re: Harry Hopkins, Origin of CWA
- Topical Correspondence – Excerpts:  
Folder 1: Cooke, Morris  
Folder 2: House, Col. Edward M.  
Folder 3: Naval Matters – 1914-1941  
Folder 4: Pinchot, Gifford  
Folder 5: Roosevelt, Theodore  
Folder 6: Smith, Alfred E.  
Folder 7: Various People 1911-1941  
Folder 8: Water Power  
Folder 9: Wilson, Woodrow  
Folder 10: Duplicate Copies of Previous Files  
Miscellaneous Photostat Copies
31. FDR Project – FDR Political Life  
Democratic National Committee Members 1884-1944  
German Debts, 1934  
Navy Department – Ranking Civilians 1914-1918  
New York State Democratic Committee 1910-1945  
New York State – FDR as Governor  
New York State – Executive Appointments 1928-1932  
Periodical, Articles about FDR 1910-1934  
Politics – Miscellaneous  
Presidential Appointments 1933-1945  
Presidential Appointment Diaries 1944-1945 by J. Romagna (Official  
Reporter)  
Sullivan’s Historical Summary 1936-1946 (Author Unknown)

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

31. "U.S.S. Shangri-La" – Guest Book of FDR's Retreat 1942-1944  
Wilson Administration – Cabinet Officers 1913-1920
32. FDR Project – Book Excerpts  
Book Excerpts, Assorted Titles: folders 1, 2, 3 (folder 3 – duplicates of folders 1 and 2)  
The President Makers  
The Stricken Land by Tugwell, Rexford  
Fifty Years of Public Life by Roper, Daniel  
Saga of Society (re: N.Y.S. history) by Wecter, Dixon
33. FDR Project – Printed Materials  
Bibliography – Power  
Federal Power Commission – Press Releases 1951  
Rural Electric Administration – Hints to Farmers  
Rural Electric Administration – Information  
Rural Electric Administration – Reports  
Public Power – TVA (folders 1 and 2)  
Department of Agriculture – Publications Catalogue 1948  
Department of Commerce – Bureau of the Census Publications  
Department of Interior – Publication Lists  
Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management re: Public Domain  
National Archives, FDR Library  
Securities and Exchange Commission, January 1, 1951  
Notes re: Steamboats  
Chronology of World War I & II and Map of the Half Century, 1900-1950  
(including key world events)
34. FDR Project – Biography Excerpts from Periodicals  
Gunther, John, "Inside FDR" (Look, March 28, April 11 & 25, May 9, 1950)  
Hassett, William D., "The President Was My Boss" (Saturday Evening Post, September 1953)  
Ickes, Harold L., "My Twelve Years With FDR" (Saturday Evening Post, September 1948)  
Morgenthau, Henry, Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries" (Colliers, October 1947)  
Roosevelt, Eleanor, "This I Remember" (McCall's, June 1949)  
Smith, Ira, "Fifty Years in the White House" (Saturday Evening Post, 1948-1949)  
Stettinius, Edward R. Jr. "What FDR and Stalin Really Did at Yalta" (Look, 1949); "After Yalta: Why the FDR-Stalin Pacts Broke Down" (Look, 1949)

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

34. Various Printed Materials, folder 1:
- “The Early Life of Franklin D. Roosevelt” picture story from “His Family Albums” (Life, 1949)
  - “Mrs. Roosevelt in Quadruplicate” (copy of a portrait by Douglas Chandor)
  - “Appraisal of FDR - A Decade Later” by Jonathan Daniels (New York Times Magazine, April 1955)
  - “Eleanor Roosevelt: A Great Lady’s Last Brave Days” by Patricia Peabody Roosevelt (Good Housekeeping, 1967?, excerpt from I Love a Roosevelt published by Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967)
  - “My Life with FDR” by Anna Roosevelt (The Woman with Woman’s Digest six part series, part one not included)
  - “Poliomyelitis: A Case History” by Bentz Plagemann (Life, August 1949)
  - “The Government’s Unofficial Trouble Shooter” by Samuel Lubell (The Saturday Evening Post, June 1950)
  - “The Roosevelt Myth” by Marquis W. Childs (Look, October 1949)
  - “The Democrats Went Crazy First” by Beverly Smith (The Saturday Evening Post, July 1948)
  - “This was Bill Knudsen” by Edward S. Greenbaum (The Saturday Evening Post, June 1948)
  - “Candidate Truman’s Magic Brew” by Joseph and Stewart Alsop (The Saturday Evening Post, December 1949)
  - “F.D.R. a Growing Legend” (Look, August 1949)
  - “Stories and Anecdotes about FDR My Boss” by Grace Tully (Ladies Home Journal, July 1949)
  - “Here’s FDR” - photograph (Pageant, October 1949)
  - “Five Ways FDR Changed Your Life by Richard Wilson (Look, April 1949)
  - “My Secret Talks with FDR” by Mary McLeod Bethune (Ebony, April 1949)
  - “Was There Really A Man Named FDR” by William Harlan Hale (New Republic, January 1949)
  - “Who Really Elected Truman?” by Samuel Lubell (The Saturday Evening Post, January 22, 1949)
- Various Printed Materials, folder 2:
- “Personal Glimpses: Another Roosevelt Headed for the White House” (Literary Digest, July 31, 1920)
  - “Mr. Roosevelt’s Imaginary League” (The New Republic, August 25, 1920)
  - “Twentieth Anniversary Annual Report” (The Warm Springs Georgia Foundation, 1947)
- Excerpt from The American Review of Reviews, vol. 47, April 1913

## PARE LORENTZ PAPERS

### Container

### Contents

34. FDR Project – Biography Excerpts from Periodicals:  
Various Printed Materials, folder 2:  
“Rebel in Illinois” by Joe Alex Morris (The Saturday Evening Post, April 2, 1949)  
“The Roosevelt Yearbook,” Vol. I-1949, Vol. II-1950 (Americans for Democratic Action, publisher)  
“Inside Pegler: As Pilat Sees Him – Late FDR and Family Pet Targets of Peg” by Oliver Pilat (New York Post, May 31, 1950)  
“A Friend Returns to F.D.R.’s Home” by Robert E. Sherwood (The New York Times Magazine, April 9, 1950)  
“1901-1950: The Half Century in History” by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (New York Post, January 1, 1950)  
“Franklin Roosevelt: A New Self-Portrait” by Karl Schriftgiesser (The New York Times, March 26, 1950)  
“Do the Soviet Leaders Want War?” by Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith (The Saturday Evening Post, December 31, 1949)  
“Another Roosevelt Makes His Pitch” by Joe Alex Morris (The Saturday Evening Post, October 7, 1950)  
“Polio Did Not Stop Him” (The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, July 1950)  
“FDR Censor-In-Chief” by Laurance Stallings (Esquire, March 1951)  
“Tuxedo Park – Black Tie” by Cleveland Amory (Harper’s Magazine, 1952?)  
“MGM’s 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday” - excerpt  
Poem: “For Franklin Delano Roosevelt” by Pauli Murray (April 15, 1945)  
Typed note from New Colophon, December 1950, p. 265
35. FDR Project – Historic Chronology  
Agriculture – 1903-1932  
Aviation – 1900-1930  
Chronology – 1882-1897  
Chronology – 1914-1921  
Culture  
Defense – 1898-1930  
Economics  
Foreign Affairs – 1891-1946  
Foreign Events – 1898-1932  
Groups and Associations – 1885-1929  
Labor  
Legislation – 1902-1932  
Miscellaneous – 1891-1930  
Science and Medicine – 1902-1930  
Duplicates

**PARE LORENTZ PAPERS**

**Container**

**Contents**

- 36.** FDR Project – Historic Chronology  
Excerpts and notes (folders 1, 2 and 3)  
Revisions – 1892-1897  
Revisions – 1892-1897 (duplicates)  
Revisions – 1949 (folders 1 and 2)  
U.S. Chronology – 1917-1945

- 37.** FDR Project – Historic Chronology  
Notes (folders 1, 2 and 3)  
Marion Stevens Stenographic Books  
Marion Stevens Index Cards

**FDR DAY BY DAY CHRONOLOGY FINAL VERSIONS**

- 38.** FDR Chronicle and Counterpoint 1882 – 1914, Early Version  
Folder 1  
Folder 2  
FDR Chronicle and Counterpoint 1895 – 1914, Early Version  
Folder 1  
Folder 2  
FDR Chronicle and Counterpoint 1915 – 1922, Early Version  
Folder 1
- 39.** FDR Chronicle and Counterpoint 1915 – 1922, Early Version  
Folder 2  
Folder 3  
FDR Chronicle and Counterpoint 1930 – 1935, Early Version  
Folder 1  
Folder 2  
Folder 3  
FDR Counterpoint 1895 – 1914, Early Version  
Folder 1  
Folder 2
- 40.** FDR Counterpoint 1895 – 1914, Early Version  
Folder 1  
Folder 2  
FDR Counterpoint 1923 – 1929, Early Version  
Folder 1  
Folder 2  
Folder 3



**PARE LORENTZ PAPERS**

<b><u>Container</u></b>	<b><u>Contents</u></b>
40.	FDR Counterpoint 1936 – 1945 Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3
41.	<u>The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt</u> Volume 1, 1882 – 1910 Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Volume 2, 1911 – 1919 Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Folder 4
42.	<u>The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt</u> Volume 3, 1920 – 1924 Folder 1 Folder 2 Volume 4, 1925 – 1929 Folder 1 Folder 2 Volume 5, 1930 – 1934 Folder 1
43.	<u>The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt</u> Volume 5, 1930 – 1934 Folder 2 Folder 3 Volume 6, 1935 – 1939 Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Volume 7, 1940 – 1945 Folder 1
44.	<u>The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt</u> Volume 7, 1940 – 1945 Folder 2 Folder 3 Volume 1, 1882 – 1910, Copy 1 Folder 1 Folder 2

**PARE LORENTZ PAPERS**

**Container**

**Contents**

44.            The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt  
                  Volume 2, 1911 – 1919, Copy 1  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2  
                  Volume 3, 1920 – 1924, Copy 1  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2
45.            The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt  
                  Volume 4, 1925 – 1929, Copy 1  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2  
                  Volume 5, 1930 – 1934, Copy 1  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2  
                  Volume 6, 1935 – 1939, Copy 1  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2  
                  Volume 7, 1940 – 1945, Copy 1  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2
46.            The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt  
                  Volume 1, 1882 – 1910, Copy 2  
                  Volume 2, 1911 – 1919, Copy 2  
                  Volume 3, 1920 – 1924, Copy 2  
                  Volume 4, 1925 – 1929, Copy 2
47.            The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt  
                  Volume 4, 1925 -1929, Copy 2  
                  Volume 5, 1930 – 1934, Copy 2  
                  Volume 6, 1935 – 1939, Copy 2
48.            The Life and Times of Franklin D. Roosevelt  
                  Volume 1, 1882 – 1910, Copy 3  
                  Volume 2, 1911 – 1919, Copy 3  
                  Volume 3, 1920 – 1924, Copy 3
49.            The Days of FDR: A Chronicle  
                  Volumes I & II  
                  Folder 1  
                  Folder 2  
                  Folder 3  
                  Folder 4

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<b><u>Container</u></b>	<b><u>Contents</u></b>
49.	Volumes I & II Folder 5 Volumes III & IV Folder 1
50.	<u>The Days of FDR: A Chronicle</u> Volumes II & IV Folder 2 Folder 3 Folder 4 Volumes I & II, Copy Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Folder 4
51.	<u>The Days of FDR: A Chronicle</u> Volumes I & II, Copy Folder 5 Folder 6 Volumes III & IV, Copy Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Folder 4

**FDR DAY BY DAY: PHOTOS SELECTED FOR CHRONOLOGY**

52.	Photos: 1883 – 1920
53.	Photos: 1921 – 1930
54.	Photos: 1931 – 1933
55.	Photos: 1934 – 1936
56.	Photos: 1937 – 1938
57.	Photos: 1939 – 1941
58.	Photos: 1942 – 1943
59.	Photos: 1944 – 1946 & Undated

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The Film as a Medium of Government Information  
The Motion Picture as a Tool of Popular Government  
United States Government Film Chart  
Script of “The Fight for Life” by Pare Lorentz