



New York State Archives

**New York State Defense Council Correspondence Files
A4234**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	The series consists of correspondence files, maintained by Assistant Secretary Frederic E. Foster, relating to general information and functions of the State Defense Council. The bulk of the records consist of of correspondence with civilian relief organizations, patriotic societies, emergency industrial organizations, advocacy groups, other state councils, and state and national government officials. Also included are circulars, pamphlets, and bulletins; and wartime messages and proclamations by Governor Charles S. Whitman and President Woodrow Wilson.
Creator:	New York State Defense Council
Title:	Correspondence files
Quantity:	1 cubic foot
Inclusive Date:	1917-1918
Series:	A4234

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Arrangement

Alphabetical by name of correspondent.

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of correspondence files, maintained by Assistant Secretary Frederic E. Foster, relating to general information and functions of the State Defense Council. The bulk of the records are copies of incoming and outgoing correspondence with civilian relief organizations, patriotic societies, emergency industrial organizations, advocacy groups, other state councils, and state and national government officials. The series also includes copies of circulars, pamphlets, and bulletins produced by various private and governmental

organizations; copies of federal laws and congressional acts; and copies of wartime messages and proclamations by Governor Charles S. Whitman and President Woodrow Wilson.

The series documents the work of the State Defense Council and its responsibility (under Chapter 369 of the Laws of 1917) to "render possible immediate concentration and utilization of state resources for military purposes." As reflected in the series, preparedness meant the organization and coordination of the civilian as well as military population, including the important areas of medical services and supervision of aliens. The council controlled appropriations for general mobilization of the state's resources; plans were worked out by the Adjutant General's Office. Governor Charles S. Whitman was chairman, William A. Orr was secretary, and Joseph H. Wilson was auditor of the council. These individuals, offices, and program areas are all represented in the series correspondence.

Topics covered by the correspondence files include: requests for employment and financial assistance; pay allotment and appeals; offers of services, especially for speaking engagements and providing publicity; inquiries about State Defense Council publications, including lists of home defense committees or officers; questions concerning loyalty, recruitment, and the draft; and requests for reports on the loyalty of prospective employees (e.g., for positions in foreign service with the Red Cross).

Examples of records of special interest include: copies of circulars and pamphlets published by the American Red Cross (including issues of the Red Cross Bulletin) containing information on regulations for sending parcels to prisoners of war, cooperative work on legal plans, and descriptions of home service volunteer work and work for civilian relief; copies of federal laws and congressional acts on appropriations for the armed forces and of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Rights Bill; correspondence relating to the American Defense Society's questions on the loyalty of several newspapers and periodicals held in subscriptions by the New York Public Library; pamphlets, bulletins, and copies of addresses or appeals by such groups as the League to Enforce Peace (including its platform), the New York Peace Society, and the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief; a press edition of the "War Information Series" published by the Committee on Public Information in Washington, D.C.; correspondence between the council and the Charity Organization Society of New York regarding the requirements necessary for inclusion of war relief organizations in bulletins of "Approved War Relief Organizations" produced jointly by the council and the society (copies of the listing also included);

messages from the U.S. War Department, including its Commission on Training Camp Activities (on developing community councils), the Office of the Chief Military Censor (on photographing of production plants), and the U.S. Surgeon General (on building a convalescent home, data on disease conditions among troops in the U.S., and a syllabus to instruct "Drafted Men in the Knowledge and Avoidance of Venereal Diseases"); correspondence from Governor Whitman (to exemption boards on diagnosing tuberculous recruits) and gubernatorial proclamations (on public productivity, support for the Liberty Loan program, and fire and waste prevention during wartime); and copies of President Wilson's war message (April 2, 1917), his reply ("America's Terms of Peace") to Pope Benedict XV's peace note (August 28, 1917), proclamations (on licensure of commodities, Liberty Day, manufacture of explosives, regulation of wartime exports and imports, the state of war with the Austro-Hungarian empire, and establishment of a military proving ground), and executive orders (establishing the War

Trade Board, providing for requisitioning of food and feed, and establishing defensive sea areas).

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Microform is available at the New York State Archives through interlibrary loan.

[Correspondence files, 1917-1918](#)

Access Terms

- Military readiness
- World War, 1914-1918--Censorship
- Investigating patriotism
- Coordinating emergency services
- New York (State)
- Pamphlets
- New York (State)--History
- War and emergency powers
- War--Economic aspects
- Civil defense
- War relief
- Newsletters
- Liberty bonds
- World War, 1914-1918--Civilian relief
- Loyalty
- Supervising military personnel
- Letters (correspondence)
- Proclamations
- World War, 1914-1918--War work--New York (State)--Red Cross
- Coordinating citizen participation
- Patriotism
- Bills (legislative records)
- Executive orders

- American Defense Society
- Orr, William A.
- New York (State). Governor (1915-1918 : Whitman)
- Charity Organization Society of the City of New York
- Whitman, Charles S., 1868-1947.
- American Red Cross
- American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief
- Wilson, Joseph H.
- Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924.
- United States. President (1913-1921 : Wilson)
- Foster, Frederic E.