Todd S. Purdum Papers 1950-2013: Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number: MC270
Repository: Princeton University. Library. Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections.
Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library. Public Policy Papers.
65 Olden Street Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA
Size: 2.42 Linear feet
3 boxes
Digital Files: 17
Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Todd S. Purdum (1959-) is a political journalist whose work has appeared in a number of publications, including Vanity Fair, The New York Times, and POLITICO. The collection is mostly composed of Purdum's research materials on various political and cultural figures created for his work with Vanity Fair. Other noteworthy materials in the collection relate to Purdum's senior thesis written for Princeton University's History Department on the Eisenhower-era State Department's Loyalty-Security Program.
Location: This collection is stored onsite at the Mudd Manuscript Library.
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Todd S. Purdum (1959-) is a political journalist whose work has appeared in a number of publications, including Vanity Fair, The New York Times, and POLITICO. After graduating from Princeton University in 1982, Purdum worked at The New York Times from 1994 to 2005, covering both local and national politics and serving as the paper's Los Angeles bureau chief. Purdum is currently a contributing editor of Vanity Fair and a senior writer at POLITICO. His features for Vanity Fair on well-known political figures such as Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, and Sarah Palin, published in the late 2000s, garnered a large amount of national attention. Purdum is the author of the 2014 book An Idea Whose Time Has Come: Two Presidents, Two Parties, and the Battle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Todd Purdum Papers are predominately composed of Purdum's research materials on various political and cultural figures, created for his work with Vanity Fair and for other projects and publications. Most of Purdum's research is in the form of interviews, existent in the collection as transcriptions or on audiocassette tapes.

With the exception of the Norman Sherman and the Bush administration files, all of the transcription files contain typed transcripts of interviews that Purdum conducted with the file's subject, mainly for Vanity Fair. A number of files include a small amount of clippings, notes, and e-mail correspondence related to the subject of the file. A significant portion of these transcripts relate to an oral history project on the George W. Bush administration. Others pertain to John F. Kennedy's 1961 inauguration, including the interviews with Sander Vanocur, Harry McPherson, Letitia Baldrige, and Harris Wofford. Rahm Emanuel and the speechwriter Jon Favreau's interviews offer insight into Barack Obama's administration. Purdum also conducted a number of interviews and/or corresponded with individuals active in the civil rights movement as research for his book on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These individuals include Nicholas Katzenbach, James Hamilton, Kenneth Teasdale, Cornelius "Neal" Kennedy, Walter F. Mondale, Daniel Inouye, John G. Stewart, John Dingell, Norman Sherman, and George Stevens, Jr. The "Hollywood Interviews" folders (identified as such by Purdum) include interviews with the children of widely known actors, producers, directors, and others involved with the entertainment industry during the industry's "Golden Age," including Marlo Thomas, Candice Bergen, Robert Wagner, Tina Sinatra, and many others.

Of particular note are the materials pertaining to Purdum's unpublished piece on Michelle Obama, including Purdum's working manuscript of the article; his interviews with Obama's associates, such as Sam Kass, Angela Acree, and Valerie Jarrett; and five notebooks, two specifically on the First Lady's travels in South Africa.

The collection also contains around 50 audiocassette tapes, mostly of interviews conducted by Purdum for The New York Times, though a few tapes are of speeches or other types of recordings. The audiocassette tapes focus on major political figures and those associated with them, including Bill Clinton, John Kerry, Edward Koch, John McCain, Ralph Nader, Barack Obama, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, and others.

Other noteworthy materials in the collection relate to Purdum's senior thesis written for Princeton University's History Department on the Eisenhower-era State Department's Loyalty-Security Program.
The original typescript of the thesis is included, as are some of Purdum's research materials, almost all of which are photocopies of the detailed diaries of Robert Walter Scott McLeod, who headed the Department of State's Bureau for Security and Consular Affairs from 1953 to 1957. To a lesser extent, Purdum's thesis research materials include copies of official State Department documents collected by McLeod, including correspondence and reports regarding suspected homosexual individuals in the department.

**Arrangement**

Materials remain in their original order as received from the donor.

**Access and Use**

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. For quotations that are fair use as defined under U. S. Copyright Law, no permission to cite or publish is required. For those few instances beyond fair use, researchers are responsible for determining who may hold the copyright and obtaining approval from them. Researchers do not need anything further from the Mudd Library to move forward with their use.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Access to audiocassette tapes in this collection follows the Mudd Manuscript Library policy for preservation and access to audiovisual materials.

Sixteen interview transcripts and one speech transcript are available to researchers as Microsoft Word documents. Researchers are responsible for meeting the technical requirements needed to access these materials, including any and all hardware and software.

**Acquisition and Appraisal**

Provenance and Acquisition

The collection was donated by Todd S. Purdum in two installments in 2014. The accession numbers associated with these donations are ML.2014.013 and ML.2014.015.

Appraisal

No materials have been separated from this collection.

**Processing and Other Information**
Preferred Citation
Todd S. Purdum Papers; 1950-2013, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Processing Information
This collection was processed by Rachel Van Unen in 2014. At this time, loose papers were placed into archival housing, digital content was accessioned, and all materials were described in a finding aid.

Encoding
This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2014-07-09T11:28-0400

Descriptive Rules Used
Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings

- Boehner, John, 1949-
- Bush, George W. (George Walker), 1946-
- Clinton, Bill, 1946-
- Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963
- Kerry, John, 1943-
- Koch, Ed, 1924-2013
- McLeod, Scott, 1914-1961
- Nader, Ralph
- Obama, Barack, 1961-
- Obama, Michelle, 1964-
- Powell, Colin L.
- Rove, Karl, 1950-
- United States. Dept. of State.
- Civil rights movements -- United States -- History -- 20th century.
- Mayors -- New York (State) -- New York.
- Motion pictures -- United States -- History -- 20th century.
- Presidents -- United States -- 20th century.
- Born digital.
- Interviews.
- American politics and government
- Journalism
Transcribed Interviews, 2007-2013

accessionnumber: ML.2014.013

Size: Digital Files: 17

Description: With the exception of the Norman Sherman and the Bush administration files, all of the transcription files contain typed transcripts of interviews that Purdum conducted with the file's subject, mainly for Vanity Fair. A number of files include a small amount of clippings, notes, and e-mail correspondence related to the subject of the file.

A significant portion of these transcripts relate to an oral history project on the George W. Bush administration. Others pertain to John F. Kennedy's 1961 inauguration, including the interviews with Sander Vanocur, Harry McPherson, Letitia Baldrige, and Harris Wofford. Rahm Emanuel and the speechwriter Jon Favreau's interviews offer insight into Barack Obama's administration.

Purdum also conducted a number of interviews and/or corresponded with individuals active in the civil rights movement as research for his book on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These individuals include Nicholas Katzenbach, James Hamilton, Kenneth Teasdale, Cornelius "Neal" Kennedy, Walter F. Mondale, Daniel Inouye, John G. Stewart, John Dingell, Norman Sherman, and George Stevens, Jr.

The "Hollywood Interviews" folders (identified as such by Purdum) include interviews with the children of widely known actors, producers, directors, and others involved with the entertainment industry during the industry's "Golden Age," including Marlo Thomas, Candice Bergen, Robert Wagner, Tina Sinatra, and many others.

This portion of the collection also includes the transcription of Glenn Beck's keynote speech before the Christians United for Israel's sixth annual Washington summit.

Katzenbach, Nick, 2012 April

Hamilton, James, 2013 June 22

Kennedy, Neal and Teasdale, Ken, 2013

Mondale, Walter, 2012 June 22

Inouye, Daniel, 2012 June 25

Stewart, John, 2012 May 5

Stevens, George, 2012 January 26

Dingell, John, 2009, 2012

Sherman, Norman, 2012

Hollywood Interviews, 2008-2009
Size: 2 folders

Cantor, Eric, 2008 December    Box: 1
Adelman, Ken, 2008 October 27    Box: 1
Wilkerson, Larry, 2008 October    Box: 1
Boritt, Jake, 2008 November    Box: 1
McClellan, Scott, 2008 November    Box: 1
Bush Administration, 2008 November    Box: 1
Bellinger, John, 2008 December 8    Box: 1
Fleisher, Ari, 2008 December 10    Box: 1
Graham, Bob, 2008 November 15    Box: 1
Bartlett, Dan, 2008 November    Box: 1
Dowd, Matthew, 2008 November    Box: 1
Matalin, Mary, 2008 November    Box: 1
Ginsburg, Ben, 2008 September 16    Box: 1
Rodriguez, Noelia, 2008 October    Box: 1
Paulson, Henry, 2007-2009    Box: 1
Baldwin, Alec, 2012    Box: 1

Size: 2 folders

Stern, Phil, 2010
Size: 82.5 KB

Beck, Glenn, 2011
Size: 64.5 KB

Glenn Beck Speech to Christians United for Israel (CUFI), 2011
Size: 60 KB

Belafonte, Harry, 2010
Size: 24.7 KB

Wofford, Harris, 2010
Size: 71 KB

Favreau, Jon, 2010
Size: 78 KB

Craig, Greg, 2012
Size: 61.5 KB
Wyman, Rosalind, 2010
Size: 81.5 KB

Minow, Newt, 2010
Size: 49.5 KB

Emanuel, Rahm, 2010
Size: 72 KB

Baldridge, Letitia, 2010
Size: 48 KB

Suzuki, Pat, 2010
Size: 49 KB

Boehner, John, 2010
Size: 77.5 KB

McPherson, Harry, 2010
Size: 43.5 KB

Donahue, Richard, 2010
Size: 22.7 KB

Vanocur, Sander, 2010
Size: 69.5 KB

Dana, Bill, 2010
Size: 61 KB


accessionnumber: ML.2014.013

Description: These materials relate to Purdum's senior thesis written for Princeton University's History Department on the Eisenhower-era State Department's Loyalty-Security Program. The original typescript of the thesis is included, as are some of Purdum's research materials, almost all of which are photocopies of the detailed diaries of Robert Walter Scott McLeod, who headed the Department of State's Bureau for Security and Consular Affairs from 1953 to 1957. To a lesser extent, Purdum's thesis research materials include copies of official State Department documents collected by McLeod, including correspondence and reports regarding suspected homosexual individuals in the department.

Correspondence re: Thesis, 1982, 2012  Box: 1
Unbound Original Typescript of Thesis, 1982 April 14  Box: 1
Thesis Research, 1950-1957  Box: 1
Audiocassette Tapes, 1988-2008

accessionnumber: ML.2014.013

Description: This portion of the collection contains 50 audiocassette tapes, mostly of interviews conducted by Purdum for The New York Times, though a few tapes are of speeches or other types of recordings. The audiocassette tapes focus on major political figures and those associated with them, including Bill Clinton, John Kerry, Edward Koch, John McCain, Ralph Nader, Barack Obama, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, and others.

Chatauqua, circa 1988  
   Description: Mayor Edward I. Koch of New York in a freewheeling humorous lecture.

Koch re: Ben Ward, circa 1988  
   Description: The mayor on some controversy involving his police commissioner.

Virginia Kelley, 1992  
   Description: Bill Clinton's mother

Gerry F. Defeat, 1992 November  
   Description: Geraldine A. Ferraro in interview on her Senate primary defeat

DND (Mayor David N. Dinkins), circa 1990

Al Gore, 1995 February  
   Size: 2 folders  
   Description: Vice President Al Gore, interviewed in his White House office, various topics for NYT profile

Rosemary Clooney, 1998  
   Description: On Ira Gershwin and life on Roxbury Drive in Beverly Hills in Hollywood's "Golden Age."

Michael Feinstein, 1998  
   Description: On Ira Gershwin and life on Roxbury Drive in Beverly Hills in Hollywood's "Golden Age."

Esther Williams, 1999 August 26  
   Description: At her home on Readcrest Drive in Beverly Hills

Mike Nichols, circa 1999  
   Description: Interviewed re: film of Primary Colors in Bel Air Hotel

Merv Griffin, 2001  
   Description: Interviewed in his office, Beverly Hilton Hotel
Colin Powell, circa 2002  
   Description: Receipt of Hans Morgenthau Award  
Box: 2

Colin Powell, 2003 June 26  
   Description: Interviewed on Iraq for A Time of Our Choosing, book by TSP  
Box: 2

Howard Dean, 2002 December  
   Description: Interviewed Waldorf-Astoria, NYC  
Box: 2

Jack Valenti, circa 2004 April  
   Description: In his office in Washington  
Box: 2

John Kerry, Portsmouth, NH, circa 2003 October  
Box: 2

John Kerry, circa 2004  
Box: 2

Wilkans, undated  
Box: 2

Teresa Heinz Kerry, circa 2004  
Box: 2

Ralph Nader, 2004 March  
Box: 2

Sally Field, circa 2004 June  
   Description: In Washington, DC  
Box: 2

Laura Bush, 2005 January 14  
   Description: Small group interview, Map Room of White House  
Box: 2

Jane Fonda, 2005 April 1  
   Size: 2 folders  
   Description: At home in Atlanta  
Box: 2

Jerry Lewis, 2005 October 24  
   Description: At Waldorf-Astoria  
Box: 2

George Elsey, 2005 November  
   Description: George Elsey '39 at home in Washington  
Box: 2

Bill Clinton on Dick Morris, undated  
Box: 2

Bill and Hilary Clinton, 2006 May  
Box: 2

Lynne Cheney, 2006 February 28  
   Description: Vice president's residence, Washington  
Box: 2

Dick Scarlett/Jackie Montgomery, 2006 February  
   Description: Dick Scarlett, Jackson Wyo. Banker, and Jackie Montgomery, realtor (Cheney friends)  
Box: 2

John McCain, 2006 September 18  
Box: 2
John Sununu, 2006 November 10
   Description: Senator, R-NH
   Box: 2

Valerie Jarrett, 2007 February 15
   Description: In her Chicago office
   Box: 2

Lisa Madigan, 2007 February 15
   Description: IL atty gen.
   Box: 2

Emil Jones, 2007 February 16
   Description: IL state senate
   Box: 2

OB. Hawaii- Lum/Kunosuki, 2007 February
   Description: Eric Lum and (?) Kunosuki, Obama Punahou School classmate/teacher
   Box: 2

Alice Dewey, 2007 February
   Description: Ann Dunham thesis adviser, Honolulu
   Box: 2

Maya and Konrad Ng, 2007 February
   Description: Obama half sister, Honolulu
   Box: 2

Barack Obama, 2007 March 21
   Description: Senator Barack Obama, Har Senate Office Building
   Box: 2

Karl Rove, 2006 August 23
   Description: Toledo, OH
   Box: 2

Ken Mehlman, 2006 August 29
   Box: 2

Karl Rove, 2006 September 2
   Description: Washington, DC residence, Weaver Terrace
   Box: 2

[Ilegible], undated
   Box: 2

Karl Rove Friday Group, 2000
   Description: "Friday Group" Los Angeles reporters' roundtable, Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel
   Box: 2

Bill Clinton N. Carolina, 2008
   Description: Campaign appearance in Zebulon, NC
   Box: 2

Bill Clinton, 2008 February 3
   Description: Campaign appearance in MD
   Box: 2

Obama, Michelle, 2011

accessionnumber: ML.2014.015
Description: These materials pertain to Purdum's unpublished piece on Michelle Obama, including Purdum's working manuscript of the article; his interviews with Obama's associates, such as Sam Kass, Angela Acree, and Valerie Jarrett; and five notebooks, two specifically on the First Lady's travels in South Africa.

- Interviews, 2011 Box: 3
- Manuscript, 2011 Box: 3
- Drafts, 2011 Box: 3
- Notebooks, 2011 Box: 3