Hawaii War Records Depository

Administrative Files Series

Finding Aid

Archives & Manuscripts Department
University of Hawaii at Manoa Library

December 2009
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Introductory Information

Series Name: Hawaii War Records Depository – Administrative Files

Collection Number: MANUSCRIPT W

Inclusive / Bulk Dates: approximately 1943-1993, bulk 1943-1949

Size of Series: 14 linear feet (6 record center boxes, 1 document case, 7 card files, 1 oversize folder)

Creator: Hawaii War Records Depository

Abstract:

The Hawaii War Records Depository (HWRD) is an extensive collection of archival materials that document life in Hawaii during World War II. This finding aid documents the records created as a result of the day-to-day operation of the depository during its primary years of operation, from 1943 to 1949 (with a small amount of material dating from after this period). The series includes forms, reports, inventories, meeting minutes, mailing lists, photographs, publication drafts, correspondence, newsletters, memos, financial and personnel information, and other miscellaneous administrative records.

In April of 1943, during its first session after the United States' entrance into World War II, the Hawaii Territorial Legislature passed a joint resolution designating the University of Hawaii as the official depository of material related to Hawaii's part in the war. The university’s Board of Regents appointed a committee to take control of the project, and the Hawaii War Records Depository was born. Overseen by an executive committee composed largely of members of the university faculty, the staff of the depository generally included an archivist, a librarian, and a secretary. The material in this series represents the records accumulated by the depository staff as well as a small amount of material from executive committee members and later caretakers of the collection.
Administrative Information

Repository Information: Archives & Manuscripts Department
University of Hawaii at Manoa Library
2550 McCarthy Mall
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Phone: (808) 956-6047
Fax: (808) 956-5968
Email: archives@hawaii.edu
URL: http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/archives/

Processing Archivist: Katie Curler

Completion Date: December 2009

Restrictions: Material with personal information may be redacted by the Archives staff. Some fragile items may need to be handled by the staff only.

Provenance: Materials accumulated during the establishment and operation of the Hawaii War Records Depository from 1943 to the present, with the bulk of the material originating from 1943 to 1949.

Preferred Citation: [Identification of item], Hawaii War Records Depository, Archives & Manuscripts Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library.

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Agency History

The project that would become the Hawaii War Records Depository (HWRD) was conceived in 1943 by members of the faculty of the University of Hawaii. Dr. Ralph S. Kuykendall of the university’s history department, having written an account of Hawaii’s role in the First World War (*Hawaii in the World War*) strongly urged president of the university, Gregg Sinclair, to consider establishing a repository for war information before the conflict was over in order to facilitate the eventual compilation of a history. In a memo to Sinclair, Kuykendall wrote:

> Having directed and in large part performed the work of preparing the history of Hawaii’s part in the first World War, I am in position to testify that the work was greatly handicapped by the delay of more than four years in beginning the collection of documents and other materials needed for it…it is important that steps be taken without further delay to collect the materials relating to Hawaii’s part in the present war.

Sensitive to Kuykendall’s argument, Sinclair appointed a sixteen-member Committee on the Collection of War Documents (later called the “Hawaii War Records Committee”) made up of university faculty, which met for the first time on 1943 April 9. At that first meeting, the committee decided to seek the backing of the territorial legislature for their war records collection project. In that same month, the Hawaii Territorial Legislature held its first session after the United States’ entrance into World War II. Sinclair presented the subject of the war records project to them at that session, prompting the passage of a joint resolution designating the University of Hawaii "the official depository of material, documents, photographs, and other data relating to Hawaii's part in the war between the United States and Germany, Japan, and Italy." $10,000 was appropriated for the project.

In May of 1943, the Committee on the Collection of War Documents formally adopted the name “Hawaii War Records Depository” for the collection and appointed an executive committee to direct it. Space was designated within the library (which was located in what is today George Hall on the University of Hawaii campus) to house the collection. For the first crucial years of the depository’s existence, Kuykendall served as chairman of the Hawaii War Records Committee and its executive committee and played a large role in shaping the depository’s goals and structure. Other original members of the executive committee were
Andrew Lind of the University of Hawaii sociology department and Carl Stroven, university librarian.

The limited initial budget of the repository allowed the executive committee to hire one full-time stenographer for the project and one part-time archivist. Catherine Field was the first appointed archivist for the project, hired in August of 1943. Field, in addition to actively soliciting donations for the collection from all corners of the territory, assisted Kuykendall in compiling the list of 72 subject headings under which to classify the materials in the repository. That list, while altered to accommodate additional headings, remains in use in the HWRD today.

Once the depository was established, the committee needed to determine what was to be collected. Seven main categories of materials were established in an early planning document:

1. Governmental Records – Rather than seeking the formal records of governmental departments, the depository sought other materials distributed to the public including reports, statements, instructions, circulars, questionnaires, forms, certificates, identification cards, and posters.

2. Records of Non-Governmental Organizations, Institutions, and Establishments – The depository was to collect the same sorts of materials for both permanent organizations and temporary ones established to aid the war effort that it collected from governmental departments.

3. Newspapers and Periodicals – The depository sought to compile a complete collection of local newspapers from all the islands (including military service periodicals) for the entire duration of the war, beginning in 1939.

4. Books, Pamphlets, and Miscellaneous Printed Material – Books in the collection could come from either private individuals or professional publishers.

5. Personal Papers – The HWRD sought letters, diaries, etc. of people in the military, government, or civilian life detailing their experience of the war.

6. Photographs, Motion Pictures, Posters, etc. – The Hawaii War Records Committee wanted to assemble “a complete pictorial record of Hawaii’s participation in the war.”

7. Scripts of Radio Broadcasts – The depository sought scripts from radio programs related to the war effort as well as any propaganda or discussion of local problems or conditions caused by the war.
The Hawaii War Records Depository has remained largely faithful to these collecting categories throughout its existence, and today the bulk of the collection falls into the first two categories: Governmental Records and Records of Non-Governmental Organizations, Institutions, and Establishments. Given the bulk of local newspapers and periodicals produced on the islands, both from military and civilian sources, it was not possible to assemble a complete collection spanning the entire duration of the war. Nonetheless, the collection does contain a large number of periodicals and newspapers from a variety of sources. Later in its collecting history (1945, to be exact), the HWRD expanded its collecting goals for periodicals and newspapers to include materials published outside the territory concerning Hawaii in wartime. Personal papers make up what is perhaps the smallest portion of materials, and internal records from the war period reinforce the point that it was far easier to get official records and publications from organizations or the government than it was to get ordinary citizens to contribute diaries or letters to the depository.

As it was based at the library of the University of Hawaii in Manoa, the work of the Hawaii War Records Committee and its archivist was largely focused on Oahu – more specifically on the city of Honolulu. To correct this imbalance, committees were established on neighbor islands and (later) on rural Oahu. These neighbor island committees were established in late 1943 and headed by Elsie Wilcox on Kauai, Franklyn E. Skinner on Maui, and Ernest de Silva on Hawaii. Chairmen of the neighbor island committees were not paid, but served as liaisons for the depository with members of their local communities, encouraging donations of materials from people and organizations not based in Honolulu.

Collection of materials in the depository went smoothly for a period of eight months, led largely by the collecting efforts of Kuykendall and Field. Due to ill health, however, Catherine Field resigned her position at the end of March 1944. At this time, the executive committee took advantage of the necessary change in personnel to request an additional $9,105 from the governor in order to fund four full-time positions for the depository through the end of fiscal year 1945. This additional sum was granted, and hiring began.

The committee sought to hire (in addition to the stenographer already employed) a director to spearhead the collecting efforts of the depository, a full-time archivist to replace Mrs. Field, and a full-time librarian to take charge of organizing and cataloging the information.
collected. The process was a slow one, however, and the four positions were not all filled until September of 1944.

The first permanent full-time staff of the depository was made up of:

- Janey Suzukawa, Stenographer, appointed in January of 1944
- Retired Major V.M. Culver, Director, appointed in June of 1944
- Kathryn Stidham, Archivist, appointed in September of 1944
- Beth Bonham, Library Assistant, appointed in September of 1944

Major Culver and Kathryn Stidham married in November 1944 (Kathryn Stidham is referred to by both her married and maiden names throughout the collection), and in order to avoid the conflict of having two members of the same family working in the same department, he resigned as director of the depository in December. The position of director was not filled, and the chairman of the Hawaii War Records Committee fulfilled the duties of the director after Major Culver’s departure. In May of 1945, Beth Bonham resigned as librarian. Adele Culver, sister-in-law to Kathryn Culver, was hired as librarian for the collection in May 1946.

As it was for Field, the title of archivist was somewhat of a misnomer for Stidham, as she acted more as a records collector, pursuing leads and cultivating relationships to find new and important papers for the depository. Under Stidham’s direction, the HWRD actively campaigned for materials, placing placards on public buses as well as smaller posters in public buildings throughout the state urging people to “Tell us your story – for the history of Hawaii in World War II.” Newspapers printed ads soliciting donations and radio stations donated time for announcements. A large portion of the collection was donated by government departments, the armed forces, civilian war agencies, and large corporations rather than by individual citizens. In some cases, departments and agencies wrote reports of their wartime activities specifically to send to the Hawaii War Records Depository, and such reports can be found at various points throughout the collection.

It fell to the librarian to do the work of keeping an accession list for materials; classifying incoming materials according to subject; choosing and clipping newspaper articles from the Honolulu Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin relevant to Hawaii and the war; maintaining the growing casualty files and photograph collections; supervising the microfilming of material that needed to be returned to its source; and maintaining the alphabetical card file that provided access to the entire collection. In this, the librarian was assisted at any given time by several
student assistants and the secretary or stenographer (who was also responsible for transcribing interviews).

In the spring of 1946, Kuykendall went on sabbatical on the mainland, and (although he remained involved in the work of the HWRD) he was replaced as chairman of the Hawaii War Records Committee by Thomas D. Murphy, a newcomer to the University of Hawaii history department and former head of the War Records Department at the University of Connecticut.

The budget approved by the legislature for the financial period 1945-1947 was $30,000, a significant increase from the $19,105 granted for the first two years of the depository’s existence. Nevertheless, Murphy and the rest of the War Records Committee maintained that additional time and funding was required to fulfill the task that they felt was implicit in the legislature’s establishment of the depository: to write and publish a history of Hawaii’s role in the war. On the recommendation of the executive committee, the University of Hawaii Board of Regents approved a plan to produce several volumes using the materials in the HWRD. Once again, the territorial government backed the university’s plan. On 1947 May 16, Governor Stainback signed Senate Bill 157 (Act 136), which stated:

The Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii shall have prepared and published in separate volumes…

a) A history of the Territory of Hawaii’s part in the war just concluded between the United States of America, and Germany, Japan and Italy.

b) A memorial containing the names, pictures and biographical accounts of persons born or domiciled in the Territory of Hawaii who died in the service of the United States during the war.

c) A series of monographic studies of such aspects of Hawaii’s part in the war as are believed by the Board of Regents to be important enough to warrant their being undertaken.

A sum of $10,000 was given to this second phase of the project.

Formal collecting efforts of the HWRD ended in June of 1947. The collecting staff of the depository (including Kathryn Stidham and Adele Culver) was let go, and only the secretary, Kasumi Murakami remained to catalog any last-minute additions to the collection. (It appears that Murakami left the position only in 1949.) Later in the summer of 1947, Murphy spearheaded the hiring of two new researchers for the depository. One, Lloyd Lee, would research and compile the memorial volume, eventually titled In Freedom’s Cause and published by the University of Hawaii Press in 1949. The other, Gwenfread Allen, would research and write the history of Hawaii’s part in the war, later titled Hawaii’s War Years and published (also
by the University of Hawaii Press) in 1950. The records of the HWRD do not hint that further monographs were produced as the bill suggests.

While Stidham and her colleagues had begun the work of collecting information of Hawaii’s war casualties during their time at the HWRD, a significant task awaited the researcher Lloyd Lee in his compilation of the memorial volume. Formal questionnaires and letters signed by Murphy were sent to the families of deceased soldiers in order to obtain the necessary biographical information and photographs that were eventually included in the finished volume. Material used in the compilation of this volume remains a part of the Hawaii War Records Depository. Gwenfread Allen, too, was tasked with doing any supplemental collection of materials deemed essential to her project. While the HWRD no longer employed an archivist as a records collector, the collection continued to grow.

In June of 1949, the staff of the Hawaii War Records Depository officially disbanded, and the remaining work to be done for the publication of Hawaii’s War Years was left to the university’s Office of Publication and Information. While the Hawaii War Records Depository is still an open collection and continues to accept sporadic donations in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes, the university no longer employs a full staff to actively manage the collection, and there is no longer an official Hawaii War Records Committee at the university.
Figure 1. Organizational chart of the HWRD as of 1945 December 1. The role of director remained unfilled for the majority of the active live of the HWRD, with the exception of the period from June to December of 1944.
Scope & Content Note

The series includes 6 record center boxes, 1 document case, 7 card files, and 1 oversize folder of materials related to administrative activities of the Hawaii War Records Depository, the bulk of which were created between 1943 and 1949. This series is one of nine series within the Hawaii War Records Depository. A separate finding aid has been created for the UNCATEGORIZED SUBJECT FILES series and can be found here. Future finding aids for additional series within the collection will be posted as processing is completed. Researchers interested in other series within the collection should contact archives@hawaii.edu for more information.

The papers within this series have been organized into twelve subseries: General, Collecting Materials, Correspondence, Depository Staff and Leadership Files, Financials, Hawaii's War Years, In Freedom’s Cause, Newsletters, Other War Records Projects, Personnel, Publicity, and Requests. The subseries Depository Staff and Leadership Files has been subdivided into six sub-subseries representing individual staff members at the depository. (For a more detailed explanation of the content of individual subseries, see the descriptions later in this document and the series’ folder list, available upon request). The arrangement of the series largely conforms to its arrangement as it was housed in several file drawers with in the Archives & Manuscripts Department of the University of Hawaii. While it is unknown whether this arrangement is truly the series’ original arrangement as established and used by the HWRD staff in the 1940s, the storage of files in relatively distinct groupings suggests that the files have been little used or tampered with since their time of creation and that their current arrangement closely reflects their arrangement during their active life. Small amounts of administrative information was also found while processing other portions of the collection, so occasionally individual files within a subseries can be found among multiple boxes, but for the most part, this series represents a discrete set of papers, stored and accumulated entirely separately from the other series within the collection.

The materials in this series focus primarily on the Hawaii War Records Depository’s period of active record collection and research, roughly from 1943 to 1949. While some materials within the series date from after this time period, very little documentation exists charting the administration or care of the collection after the HWRD ceased to be actively staffed and the collection became part of the University of Hawaii’s archives. Additionally, there is
very little documentation regarding the formation of the depository. While it is known that Ralph S. Kuykendall, professor of history at the University of Hawaii, was very active in the formation of the depository and later served as chairman of its executive committee, the files found within the Kuykendall Files sub-subseries do not dwell on this period in the depository’s history.

The material was largely in good condition. Paper clips, staples, and rubber bands that had caused minor damage were removed, but staples and paper clips are still scattered within the series. Similarly, not all newspaper clippings present in this series were photocopied for retention. Where possible, the presence of newsprint has been noted in the series’ folder list. Several folders and the papers within them exhibited extensive insect damage. Where the damage rendered documents completely unstable, photocopies were made and the originals discarded. Where the insect damage was small, notation of the fragility of the documents was made on the outside of new acid-free folders. All documents formerly stored in metal filing cabinets were given new acid-free folders. Photographs within the series are stored in separate boxes from the rest of the documents in the series and the small amount of oversize material was moved to a drawer to allow flat storage.

Select published materials remain in the series within the In Freedom’s Cause subseries: finished copies of the memorial volume In Freedom’s Cause and two additional memorial volumes from other states that were used as examples for the HWRD staff in preparing In Freedom’s Cause.

The majority of duplicate materials within the series were removed when discovered, but there are still select duplicates within the series. For example, there are several lists of subject headings used in cataloging the ORIGINAL SUBJECT FILES series, the portion of the collection that was cataloged at the item level in the 1940s. These different subject lists have been retained because they show the evolution of the subject list to include all 73 subject categories currently used in the collection and because they occasionally contain notes made by staff members. Large numbers of duplicate form letters and blank forms were discarded.

Since the materials in this series were created by an organization working within the library, no formal deeds of gift were signed or individual donors singled out. The series was processed in 2009.

All of the papers are open for research.
For other research related to Hawaii’s role in World War II and the war’s effect on the territory, please consult the University of Hawaii Library’s online catalog. See also the cataloged portion of the Hawaii War Records Depository, accessible via card catalog in the Moir Reading Room.
Series Descriptions for ADMINISTRATIVE FILES Series

ADMINISTRATIVE FILES, approximately 1943-1993, bulk 1943-1949 – 14 linear feet (6 record center boxes, 1 document case, 7 card files, 1 oversize folder)

General – 6 folders, 4 card files
Subseries contains general information about the Hawaii War Records Depository, including a bookcase inventory; a list of file categories for the depository’s materials; interview reports from interviews conducted between 1944 and 1946; an inventory of the supplies used by the depository between 1946 and 1947; minutes of executive committee meetings; 2 card files containing the organization’s mailing list (one marked inactive); one card file listing the periodicals to be found in the collection; and one card file listing civilian casualties from 1941 December 7 and publications in the Hawaiian Collection related to HWRD.

Collecting Materials – 9 folders
This subseries contains materials used in the collection efforts of the HWRD including leaflets from 1943 soliciting donations for the collection; copies of a cover letter introducing the memorial volume project to relatives of deceased service members; blank forms and transcription sheets associated with the memorial volume and efforts to count war casualties from Hawaii; blank questionnaires distributed to churches and schools regarding wartime experiences; and two ledgers created to document returned soldiers of Hawaii and members of the Gold Star Register of deceased soldiers of Hawaii (both ledgers contain very few entries and are obviously incomplete).

Correspondence – 90 folders
By far the largest subseries in the series, the correspondence subseries contains alphabetically organized files of correspondence between the staff of the HWRD (primarily Kathryn Stidham/Culver) and potential or actual donors of materials to the collection. The files also occasionally contain letters requesting materials from certain organizations when no response was received. Also included are files of correspondence between Stidham/Culver and other depository staff members or leaders, including Executive Committee Chairman Kuykendall and Murphy as well as neighbor island depository representatives Elsie Wilcox, Franklyn E. Skinner, and Ernest de Silva. Single files were maintained for individual letters of the alphabet and alphabetical organization was not maintained within files. There are guide pages within many folders listing the names of the people or organizations with correspondence in that folder. When there was a significant amount of correspondence with a specific organization or person, separate files were created for this person or group.

Depository Staff and Leadership Files – 43 folders, 1 card file
This subseries is further divided into six sub-subseries that represent the staff members or depository leaders that created or housed the materials.

Adele Culver Files (23 folders) represents the largest percentage of material in the series and includes newsletters; lists of HWRD subject headings; an accession list for the collection; a record of materials loaned for microfilming; the title sheets used in microfilming materials; general descriptions of the collection; position descriptions for
the librarian and archivist at the HWRD; notes on the format for the memorial volume (later published as In Freedom’s Cause); miscellaneous blank forms and form letters; a record of questionnaires returned for the memorial volume; and other miscellaneous administrative material. This material was collected, created, or maintained by Adele Culver in her capacity as librarian for the Hawaii War Records Depository, a position that she held from 1946 to 1947.

Bell Files, 1962-1965 (1 folder) is comprised of a single folder with a small number of notes and correspondence regarding war-related materials Janet Bell, former librarian in charge of the Hawaiian and Pacific Collection at the University of Hawaii, attempted to collect or locate from 1962 to 1965. Bell was a member of the Hawaii War Records Committee, but her specific role pertaining to the HWRD is not documented in the administrative files. She was already an established presence at the university when the depository was created, having been hired in 1923, and mentions of “Miss Bell” in the files of Adele Culver suggest that she was somehow involved in the work of the HWRD during the 1940s.

Cartwright Files (1 folder) contains a single file documenting an aborted project by James Cartwright, university archivist from 1988 to the present, to verify dates and captions of the photographs in the HWRD from the Honolulu Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Stidham/Culver Files, 1944-1946 (3 folders; 1 card file) includes one folder of reports from interviews conducted by Stidham/Culver between 1944 and 1946 regarding individuals’ wartime experiences; one folder of copies of letters written by Culver to a variety of individuals providing general information about the repository or soliciting materials (it is not known why the letters were kept separately from the main correspondence files for the series); and one folder of general memos and reports sent to or from Stidham/Culver regarding the HWRD. This sub-subseries also includes one card file with research notes about agencies or individuals contacted by Stidham/Culver for contributions to the HWRD. The cards are arranged alphabetically from Q-Z, and while it can be assumed that additional cards were kept for the earlier part of the alphabet, additional cards were not found within the collection. While these are the only files directly attributed to Stidham/Culver in the series, the majority of the ADMINISTRATIVE FILES series was created during Stidham/Culver’s time as archivist for the depository, and her correspondence makes up the bulk of the Correspondence subseries.

Kuykendall Files, 1943-1946 (12 folders) contains primarily correspondence and memoranda to and from Kuykendall regarding the HWRD. Sub-subseries also includes a folder of reports by the original archivist for the depository, Catherine Field, dated 1943 August-1944 March.

Murphy Files, 1943-1950 (3 folders) includes correspondence to and from Murphy dated 1949 to 1950 as well as memoranda distributed by Murphy from 1946 to 1949. Sub-subseries also includes a file of miscellaneous minutes, reports, newsletters and policy statements retained by Murphy regarding the HWRD.

Financials – 6 folders
Subseries contains representative information regarding the day-to-day financial operations of the HWRD. Included are financial reports from 1943 to 1949 as well as a variety of
meticulously cataloged requisitions, purchase orders, delivery slips and receipts dating from 1943 to 1949.

Hawaii’s War Years – 39 folders
The bulk of this subseries consists of drafts of chapters and book sections with accompanying notes. Some of the drafts (labeled “original notes” correspond to specific chapters in the book) while others represent earlier drafts of sections not necessarily included in the eventual text or of full sections of the book not divided into chapters. One folder contains suggestions for the author, Gwenfread Allen, from various parties – both at the university and in the wider community – who had read early drafts of the text. Another concerns the use of the finished book’s text by the War Claims Commission and is dated 1953 May 18. One folder contains correspondence to and from Thomas Murphy regarding his decision to hire Gwenfread Allen to write Hawaii’s War Years.

In Freedom’s Cause – 19 folders, 2 card files, 1 oversize folder
Subseries contains three copies of the finished book; form letters encouraging the families and next of kin of deceased soldiers to fill out questionnaires and provide photographs for the memorial volume; one card file containing the finished book’s structural layout and notes; two books produced from similar projects in other states and used for reference in the production of In Freedom’s Cause (Gold Star Honor Roll of Virginians in the Second World War and Georgia in World War II); an oversize folder layout spreads for photographs used in the book; a card file of photographs used in the book; and several files of newspaper clippings about soldiers wounded in action or awarded medals posthumously.

Newsletters, 1945-1947 – 5 folders
Includes the newsletters produced by the depository and distributed to committee members and other stakeholders. The newsletters were created from June 1945 to June 1947 and signed by the then-archivist for the depository, Kathryn Stidham/Culver.

Other War Records Projects, 1942-1949 – 15 folders
Contains files of research and correspondence regarding projects similar to the Hawaii War Records Depository undertaken in other states. Correspondence ranges in date from 1942-1949 and is organized alphabetically by state. Subseries also includes newsletters from the American Association for State and Local History (based in Columbus, Ohio) describing the war records collecting efforts undertaken in states across the country from 1944 to 1947.

Personnel, 1943-1947 – 6 files
Subseries contains materials related to the depository’s staff including student timesheets from 1945 and 1946; reports by the depository’s first archivist, Catherine Field, from 1943 and 1944; applications for leaves of absence for staff members from 1944 to 1947; and a file documenting general personnel matters from 1943 to 1947.

Publicity – 3 files
Subseries includes three files of publicity materials from the depository, including articles and ads from the Honolulu Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin as well as undated placards
soliciting donations for the depository, encouraging citizens to “Tell us your story – for the History of Hawaii in World War II.”

Requests, 1944-1945 – 4 files
This subseries contains four files of letters written by Kathryn Stidham/Culver between 1944 and 1945 to a variety of individuals and organizations requesting materials for the Hawaii War Records Depository. It is not known why these files were kept separately from the main Correspondence subseries.

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