


State Department Decimal Files – Guide for HEIU 402A

1910 to 1963 -Decimal File

All correspondence and memos filed by subject according to a predetermined decimal file classification scheme. The records are divided into seven file segments. One filing manual is for file segments 1910-29, 1930-39, 1940-44, and 1945-49. A revised filing manual is for file segments 1950-54, 1955-59, and 1960-63.

Finding Aids

The filing manuals and the footnotes in the volumes published by the State Department, Foreign Relations of the United States, help to identify relevant Decimal File numbers (the numbers and words before the slash (/) mark) or an individual document (both the file number and the number after the slash (/) mark).

1. Purport Lists and Cards. A list of every document in every file, arranged the same as the records, showing the file and document number, date, from and to, and the gist or "purport" of the document. Lists and cards are available for each segment, 1910-49. [M-973](#)  has the lists for 1910-29 (rolls 1-223), 1930-39 (rolls 224-431), 1940-June 1944 (rolls 432-602), and cards for July-December 1944 (rolls 603-654). Purport cards for the 1945-49 segment are not on microfilm but are available for research.
2. Source Cards. For each segment 1910-1949 there are cards arranged by the source of the communication (country or city, there under to or from, there under by date), or by the State Department office originating a memorandum.
3. Name Cards. For each segment 1910-59 there are cards which serve as a finding aid for communications from or about private persons or organizations. Name cards help to find the right Decimal File number, but the name card coverage is limited; name cards do not exist for every name mentioned in the records, or there may be only one name card showing a file that may contain many documents.

Decimal File Subjects

Before 1950 the filing manual includes

- 0 - general and miscellaneous
- 100 - administration of the U.S. Government
- 200 - extradition
- 300 - protection of interests
- 400 - claims
- 500 - international congresses and conferences
- 600 - commerce
- 700 - political relations of states
- 800 - and internal affairs of states

From 1950 to 1963 the main categories are

- 0 - miscellaneous
- 100 - administration of the U.S. Government
- 200 - protection of interests
- 300 - international conferences, congresses, meetings, and organizations
- 400 - international commerce
- 500 - information, education and cultural affairs
- 600 - political relations of states
- 700 - internal political and national defense matters
- 800 - internal economic, industrial, and social affairs
- 900 - and other internal affairs

Each country was assigned a two-digit number (like 11 for the United States), or a combination of numbers and letters (like 90f, 1910-49, and 86a, 1950-63, for Saudi Arabia). The largest and most important files for each country are in class 8 (1910-49) and class 7 (1950-63).

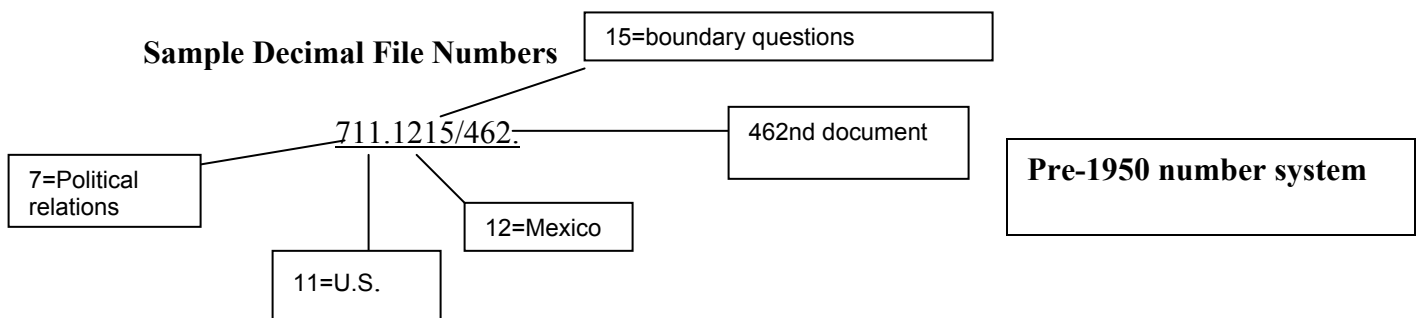
East Germany – 62 (62b seems to be East Germany, 62 is Germany)

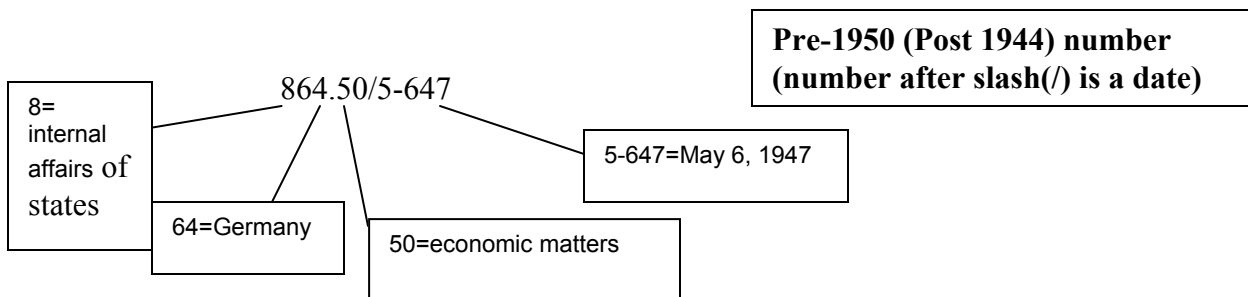
Poland – 60c

Hungary – 64

Czechoslovakia – 60f

Sample Decimal File Numbers





851.00/11-2049. Documents filed after July 1944 are filed by date, the number after the slash (/) mark (November 20, 1949), in each subject file, such as internal (8) political affairs (00) of France (51).

Use of the CRL collections in Alderman

The following collections are on the South Wall of the Alderman Periodicals Room:

- Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949 (MF-6275)
- Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954 (MF-6276)
- East Germany, 1950-1954 (MF-9522)
- Hungary, 1930-1944 (MF-6285)
- Hungary, 1945-1949 (MF-6286)
- Hungary, 1950-1954 (MF-6287)
- Poland , 1916-1944 (MF-6270)
- Poland, 1950-1954 (MF-6284)

These reels are primarily the Decimal Class 8 documents for these countries. From 1910-1950 Class 8 is internal affairs of states, and from 1950 to 1963 Class 8 is internal economic, industrial, and social affairs.

Decimal Guides

The Decimal Guides from Reel 1 of each collection have been reproduced. Please keep these guides with the collection. Also reproduced are any available reel lists for these collections.

Use the Decimal Guides to identify a general subject area you are interested in. For instance, in East Germany, 1950-1954 (MF-9522) guide you'll see:

8**.	Economic matters, Conditions (general)
.00A	Economic adviser
.001	Statistics (general)
.002	Conservation of natural resources.

So if you were interested in “conservation of natural resources” in post WWII East Germany you would look on the reels containing numbers 862.002 subjects.

Purport Cards

At the beginning of each reel (except Poland) there are “purport cards” for that reel. The purport cards are reproduced in the *same order* as the documents themselves, which follow the cards. The purport cards summarize or give the “purport” of the document with the same Decimal number. Unfortunately, these purport cards are very fuzzy and may not be very much help.

Example:

XXXXXX	May 6, 1947	864.50/5-647
XXXX	Tel. 741	secret
Describing demand of Soviets for settlement of Hungarian debts.		
EUR	XR 864.51	
E/18		

You could then go on the reel to document 864.50/5-647 and find a telegram describing the Soviet demand for the settlement of Hungarian debt dated May 6, 1947.