



Public Record Office  
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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **SIR DOUGLAS SAVORY PAPERS**

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# Sir Douglas Savory Papers (D3015)

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## Summary

The collection consists of 48 volumes, c.80 folders, c.65 documents and four photographs, c.1900-1969, comprising the papers of Professor Sir Douglas Savory, academic and politician, 1878-1969.



## **Background**

Born at Palgrave Rectory, Suffolk, the son of Rev. E. Lloyd Savory, Douglas Savory was educated at Marlborough College and St John's College, Oxford. He held various lectureships in French and English including a spell at the University of Marburg, Prussia before being appointed Professor of French Language and Romance Philology at Queen's University, Belfast in 1909. With the advent of the First World War, he was attached to the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty, a role that saw him posted as Secretary to the British Minister in neutral Sweden, 1918-1919.



## **Politics**

He retired from his chair at Queen's in 1940, and was elected Unionist MP at Westminster for the Queen's University constituency, describing himself as 'a Professor who had strayed into politics'. In 1950, he was elected MP for South Antrim, which he represented until 1955, acting as Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Party at Westminster during the same period. He was knighted in 1952.



## **Massacre of Polish officers at Katyn Wood**

Outside Northern Ireland, Savory is best known for his assignment as special investigator into the massacre of Polish officers at Katyn Wood in 1941. Indeed, his general sympathy at this time for the aggression against the Polish people, 99 percent of whom were Roman Catholic, rendered him the subject of much abuse from sectors of Unionist opinion in Northern Ireland. His papers relating to Polish affairs were deposited, before his death, in the Polish Institute and Sigorski Museum in London. Other papers, pertaining mainly to the history of the Huguenots in Ireland (Professor Savory was President of the Huguenot Society of London, 1946-1948), are deposited in the library of Queen's University, Belfast.



## **Arrangement of the archive**

Apart from a group of sermons by Rev. E. Lloyd Savory, c.1900, the archive consists largely of correspondence, speeches, newspaper cuttings and notes, etc, and is retained in Professor Savory's original files, which are arranged by topic. The letters are sorted into four broad categories: 'political', 'European affairs', 'education and literary', and 'religious'. Two files of political correspondence relate particularly to Home Rule, 1911-1921, and contain letters from leading political figures such as Sir James Craig, Sir Edward Carson, Thomas Sinclair, Lord Hugh Cecil, E.M. Archdale, J. Milne Barbour and Sir Dawson Bates. The other political correspondence pertains to miscellaneous topics, arranged by file which include: foreign affairs, temperance and income tax 1941-1947; the effects of the German air raids on Belfast, railway services and boundaries of wards in Londonderry, 1941-1957; Eire citizens working in Northern Ireland, the export of Northern Ireland produce to Great Britain, and the 'B' Specials, 1952-1954; the Boundary Commission and relations with the Irish Free State, 1943-1956; the setting up of the Republic of Ireland, 1946-1948, and the Orange Order, 1949-1965.



## **Correspondents**

Savory's correspondents on these and other matters are often from the highest echelons of Government and include Earl Atlee, Sir Anthony Eden, and Sir Winston Churchill. Harold Macmillan and Sir Alec Douglas-Hume. The remaining correspondence deals with Polish affairs, 1945-1968, (although, as stated above, the main bulk of his Polish papers are in London), minority disputes in the South Tyrol and in South Slesvig, 1945-1964, and administrative matters in connection with Queen's University, Belfast, including letters commenting on the Suez crisis of 1956. There are also notes and correspondence reflecting Savory's interest in church history, 1938-1964, such as material on the history of the Moravian Church and the Waldensian Church and correspondence with the Archbishops of Armagh and Canterbury.



## **Reports, speeches and printed material**

Another section of the archive comprises four folders containing extracts from the official reports recording speeches made and questions asked by Savory in the House of Commons, 1941-1955. There is a substantial quantity of pamphlets, drafts and copies of articles, reviews, public addresses and speeches, etc., most of them by Savory, 1922-1967. These cover a wide variety of subjects including twentieth century political events but will be of interest to the historian and antiquarian looking at areas such as the Plantation of Ulster, the French Revolution, the Huguenots and the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. The researcher should also be aware of the value of the volumes and folders of newspaper cuttings, 1901-1965, many of which are conveniently indexed and arranged according to subject. Finally, there are a small number of photographs of Savory, ranging from his days in naval intelligence as Lieutenant Douglas Savory in 1919, to Professor Savory as a politician at Crumlin Orange Hall during the 1950 General Election campaign.

