

W. Edwards Deming Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1995

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm94083010>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms997017>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, 1997
Revised 2023 February

Collection Summary

Title: W. Edwards Deming Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1795-1994

Bulk Dates: 1930-1993

ID No.: MSS83010

Creator: Deming, W. Edwards (William Edwards), 1900-1993

Extent: 58,000 items

Extent: 164 containers plus 2 oversize and 1 classified

Extent: 70 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm94083010>

Summary: Statistician and educator. Correspondence, memoranda, reports, articles, speeches, lectures, interviews, reviews, books, writings, musical scores, photographs, and other papers documenting Deming's government service at the United States Bureau of the Budget and Bureau of the Census; his academic positions at George Washington University, New York University, and the United States Department of Agriculture Graduate School; and his career as a consultant in statistical studies and management in the United States and abroad in which he advocated the application of statistical quality control in industry.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Aitken, A. C. (Alexander Craig), 1895-1967--Correspondence.
Barnard, George A. (George Alfred)--Correspondence.
Birge, Raymond T. (Raymond Thayer), 1887- --Correspondence.
Deming, W. Edwards (William Edwards), 1900-1993.
Dodge, Harold French, 1893- --Correspondence.
Drucker, Peter F. (Peter Ferdinand), 1909-2005--Correspondence.
Eisenhart, Churchill--Correspondence.
Fisher, Ronald Aylmer, Sir, 1890-1962--Correspondence.
Gingrich, Newt--Correspondence.
Iacocca, Lee A.--Correspondence.
Ishikawa, Ichirō--Correspondence.
Juran, J. M. (Joseph M.), 1904-2008--Correspondence.
Kendall, Maurice G. (Maurice George), 1907-1983--Correspondence.
Koyanagi, Ken'ichi--Correspondence.
Lidstone, Gregory--Correspondence.
Mahalanobis, P. C. (Prasanta Chandra), 1893-1972--Correspondence.
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 1889-1964--Correspondence.
Neyman, Jerzy, 1894-1981--Correspondence.
Pearson, E. S. (Egon Sharpe), 1895-1980--Correspondence.
Pearson, Karl, 1857-1936--Correspondence.
Perot, Ross, 1930-2019--Correspondence.
Quayle, Dan, 1947- --Correspondence.
Reagan, Ronald--Correspondence.
Reich, Robert B.--Correspondence.
Shewhart, Walter A. (Walter Andrew), 1891-1967--Correspondence.
Sukhatme, Pandurang Vasudeo, 1911- --Correspondence.
Tippett, L. H. C. (Leonard Henry Caleb), 1902-1985--Correspondence.
Tukey, John Wilder, 1915- --Correspondence.

Wallis, W. Allen (Wilson Allen), 1912-1998--Correspondence.
Wishart, John, 1898-1956--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Statistical Association.
Bell Telephone Laboratories.
George Washington University--Faculty.
Graduate School, USDA--Faculty.
New York University--Faculty.
Nikkagiren.
United States. Bureau of the Budget.
United States. Bureau of the Census.

Subjects

Elections--Greece--1946.
Freight and freightage--Quality control.
Management.
Music.
Quality control.
Railroads--Quality control.
Statistics.
Telephone companies--Quality control.

Places

Great Britain--Economic conditions--1945-1964.
India--Economic conditions--1945-
Japan--Economic conditions--1945-
Turkey--Economic conditions--1945-

Occupations

Educators.
Statisticians.

Acquisition Information

The papers of W. Edwards Deming, statistician and educator, were deposited in the Library of Congress in 1994 by the W. Edwards Deming Institute, Washington, D.C., with additional material deposited in 1995. The entire collection was converted to a gift in 1995.

Processing History

The papers of W. Edwards Deming were arranged and described by Michael Spangler and Joseph D. Sullivan with the assistance of Paul Colton, Patrick Kerwin, Lisa Madison, and Sherralyn McCoy in 1995.

Transfers

Sound and video recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where they are identified as part of the W. Edwards Deming Papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of W. Edwards Deming in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is controlled by the W. Edwards Deming Institute.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of W. Edwards Deming are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, W. Edwards Deming Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1900, Oct. 14	Born, Sioux City, Iowa
1921	B.S., electrical engineering, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyo.
1922-1924	Assistant professor of physics, Colorado School of Mines, Golden, Colo.
1922	Married Agnes Bell (died 1930)
1924	M.S., mathematics and mathematical physics, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.
1924-1925	Assistant professor of physics, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.
1925-1927	Instructor in physics, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1927-1939	Mathematical physicist, Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, Agriculture Department
1928	Ph.D., mathematics and mathematical physics, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1930-1944	Special lecturer, National Bureau of Standards
1932	Married Lola Shupe (died 1986)
1935-1953	Head, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Graduate School, Agriculture Department
1936	Studied under Sir Ronald Aylmer Fisher and Jerzy Neyman at University College, London, England
1938	Published Some Notes on Least Squares (Washington, D.C.: Graduate School, Department of Agriculture. 181 pp.)
1939-1945	Head mathematician and advisor in sampling, Bureau of the Census
1940-1950	Consultant to secretary of war and secretary of defense
1942-1944	Taught statistical quality control courses to defense supply industries
1942-1953	Advisor for sampling, Bureau of the Budget
1943	Published Statistical Adjustment of Data (New York: John Wiley and Sons. 261 pp.)
1946-1993	Professor of statistics, Graduate School of Business Administration, New York University, New York, N.Y. Consultant in statistical studies for industry
1947	Advisor for sampling techniques, Supreme Command of the Allied Powers, Tokyo, Japan
1947-1952	Member, United Nations Subcommittee on Statistical Sampling
1950	Lecturer, Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers Creation of the Deming Prize in Japan Published Some Theory of Sampling (New York: John Wiley and Sons. 602 pp.)
1955	Awarded Shewhart Medal, American Society for Quality Control
1960	Decorated, Second Order of the Sacred Treasure, Japan Published Sample Design in Business Research (New York: John Wiley and Sons. 517 pp.)
1980	Television broadcast of National Broadcasting Co. (NBC) documentary "If Japan Can, Why Can't We?" featuring Deming
1980-1993	Lectured on management principles to corporate and management personnel
1982	Published Quality, Productivity, and Competitive Position (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study. 373 pp.)

1986	Published <i>Out of the Crisis</i> (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study. 505 pp.)
1987	Awarded National Medal of Technology by President Ronald Reagan
1993	Published <i>The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education</i> (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study. 240 pp.)
1993, Dec. 20	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Edwards Deming (1900-1993) span the years 1795-1994 with the bulk of the items concentrated between 1930 and 1993. The collection reflects the breadth of Deming's career, including government service, academic positions, and activities as a consultant in statistical studies and management in the United States and abroad. The papers contain the following series: [Personal File](#), [General Correspondence](#), [International File](#), [Client File](#), [Subject File](#), [Writings](#), [Academic File](#), [Reference File](#), and [Miscellany](#).

The [Personal File](#) contains correspondence and other papers relating to Deming's family, engagement calendars, and a 1795 French military leave pass for Captain Jean Baptiste Fraube. Other files relate to Deming's study of music and include copies of his sacred music compositions and music he wrote for the "Star Spangled Banner."

The [General Correspondence](#) series consists primarily of letters exchanged with professional colleagues in academia and industry. One file relates to Walter A. Shewhart of Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York, a statistician who had a seminal influence on Deming's understanding and study of statistical analysis of quality control for industrial production. Also included is important correspondence with such statisticians as A. C. Aitken, Raymond T. Birge, Harold French Dodge, Churchill Eisenhart, J. M. Juran, Gregory Lidstone, Jerzy Neyman, John Wilder Tukey, and W. Allen Wallis. Other significant or frequent correspondents include Peter Ferdinand Drucker, Newt Gingrich, Lee A. Iacocca, Ichirō Ishikawa, Ken'ichi Koyanagi, H. Ross Perot, Dan Quayle, Ronald Reagan, and Robert B. Reich.

The [International File](#) features material pertaining to Deming's work with foreign corporations and governments, his collaborations with professional colleagues abroad, and personal matters. Among the principal files are those relating to Japan. In 1947, Deming visited Japan as a statistical advisor to the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers. On a return trip in 1950, the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers invited Deming to lecture on the application of statistical quality control to industry. The penetrating effect of his ideas and lectures on Japanese industrial leaders and managers resulted in a long association, and many cite Deming as a major influence in Japan's ascent as a world economic power after World War II. Correspondence and related material also reflect his relations with Japan's academic community. Files pertaining to Great Britain contain correspondence with A. C. Aitken, George Bernard, Sir Ronald Aylmer Fisher, Maurice G. Kendall, E. S. Pearson, Karl Pearson, L. H. C. Tippett, and John Wishart. The file for India includes correspondence with P. C. Mahalanobis, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Pandurang Vasudeo Sukhatme. Other files document Deming's trips to Greece in 1946 to observe elections and his consultant work for the government of Turkey.

The [Client File](#) constitutes the largest portion of the Deming collection. It records Deming's activities as a private consultant to American industry from the late 1940s to the 1990s and includes correspondence, memoranda, reports, testimony, seminars, charts, and other related items. The bulk of the material pertains to Deming's work with motor freight, railroad, and telephone companies. As an advisor to these industries, he used sampling and statistical analysis to evaluate and set service rates and to address other industry concerns. He designed a "continuous traffic study" for the self-regulation of the motor freight industry and participated in government hearings in 1979-1980 regarding deregulation of the industry. He also provided statistical studies for setting rates for transcontinental railroads and often testified before the Interstate Commerce Commission in disputes among the railroads. Other clients featured in the papers include automobile companies, medical researchers, marketing research companies, and government agencies. Deming's management seminars are also represented in notebooks created for individual engagements, material related to statistical sample techniques, such as his red bead and funnel tests, a typescript account of a four-day seminar, notes, and itineraries.

The [Subject File](#) highlights Deming's association with professional organizations and government service, including the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of the Budget. Deming was employed by the Census Bureau from 1939 to 1945, and his proposed sampling methods were successfully implemented in the 1940 census. He served simultaneously as an instructor for the Budget Bureau and taught statistical quality control courses to the defense supply industry. Other files in

the series relate to the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers, the Deming Prize, the American Statistical Association, and the National Broadcasting Company's television documentary in 1980 on Deming and Japan.

The [Writings File](#) contains articles, papers, speeches, lectures, books, forewords, interviews, and reviews spanning Deming's entire career. Deming was a frequent contributor to scholarly journals. Set I in the Writings File is composed of published copies of articles and papers arranged in rough chronological order according to a numerical system devised by Deming and his staff. Set II includes additional articles and papers, book production files, speeches and lectures, interviews, reviews, and other writings. Among the interviews is a transcript of an interview with Deming and Robert B. Reich in 1986.

The [Academic File](#) focuses on Deming's student work and his teaching positions. His meticulous notes and papers as a student are early evidence of a disciplined mind. Included are copies of his master's thesis at the University of Colorado and his doctoral dissertation at Yale. As head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in the Graduate School of the Department of Agriculture from 1935 to 1953, Deming contributed to the statistical education of government employees and arranged for a notable series of lectures on statistical theory and methodology. Material from this phase of his career as well as from his association with New York and George Washington universities is also located in the [Academic File](#). A separate [Reference File](#) contains notes and printed matter related to mathematical and statistical topics and includes notes and printed matter regarding individual mathematicians. [Miscellany](#) in the Deming collection contains books with marginalia, certificates and awards, biographical printed matter, programs from speaking engagements, photographs, and a few writings by others. Among the photographs are portraits, scenes from family and professional gatherings, and photographs taken by Deming during his travels abroad.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in nine series:

- [Personal File, 1795-1994](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1924-1994](#)
- [International File, 1930-1992](#)
- [Client File, 1940-1994](#)
- [Subject File, 1927-1994](#)
- [Writings, 1928-1993](#)
- [Academic File, 1917-1992](#)
- [Reference File, 1921-1993](#)
- [Miscellany, 1922-1994](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-4	<p><u>Personal File, 1795-1994</u></p> <p>Correspondence, notes, music compositions, engagement calendars, and papers pertaining to family members.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 5-21	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1924-1994</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent with attached and related material.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or organization and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 21-30	<p><u>International File, 1930-1992</u></p> <p>Correspondence, reports, notes, printed matter, and other background material.</p> <p>Organized alphabetically by country, by topic or type of material therein, and chronologically within these categories.</p>
BOX 31-106	<p><u>Client File, 1940-1994</u></p> <p>Reports, testimony, correspondence, memoranda, notes, data sheets, notebooks, financial papers, and printed matter.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of client, thereunder by client's name or subject, and chronologically therein.</p>
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