Collection Summary

Title: Henry Putney Beers Papers
Span Dates: 1910-1992
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1930-1970)
ID No.: MSS59477
Creator: Beers, Henry Putney, 1907-
Extent: 7,500 items
Extent: 18 containers
Extent: 7 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81059477

Summary: Historian, bibliographer, and archivist with the National Archives and Records Service. Correspondence, memoranda, writings, book reviews, reports, and other papers relating primarily to Beers's work as a bibliographer in American history.

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
Beers, Henry Putney, 1907-1996.
Sioussat, St. George L. (St. George Leakin), 1878-1960.

Organizations
United States. National Archives and Records Service.
United States. Works Progress Administration.

Subjects
Archival surveys.
Depressions--1929--United States.
Public records.
World War, 1939-1945.

Places
United States--History--Bibliography.
United States--Social life and customs--1918-1945.

Occupations
Archivists.
Bibliographers.
Historians.

Provenance

The papers of Henry Putney Beers, archivist, historian, and bibliographer, were given to the Library of Congress in two installments by Beers in 1980 and 1992.
Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Henry Putney Beers in these papers is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Henry Putney Beers 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, Henry Putney Beers Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date | Event
--- | ---
1907, May 7 | Born, Scranton, Pa.
1930 | B.S., Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.
1936-1937 | Research assistant and editor, Survey of Federal Archives, Works Progress Administration, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
1938-1944 | Assistant archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
1944-1946 | Seaman and specialist third class, United States Navy, serving from Jan. 1945 to Jan. 1946 as a historian in the Bureau of Naval Personnel
1946 | Archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
1946-1950 | Historian, Foreign Relations, Diplomatic Papers of the United States (Latin America), State Department, Washington, D.C.
1950-1958 | Historian (assistant editor), The Territorial Papers of the United States (project was transferred from State Department to National Archives in May 1950)
1958-1968 | Archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Henry Putney Beers (1907-1996) span the years 1910-1992, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period between 1930 and 1970. The collection focuses on Beers's professional activity as a bibliographer in American history. It consists of three series: Correspondence, Bibliographies, and Miscellany. Included in the papers are correspondence, reports and memoranda, employment records, office files, academic records, and other material pertaining to Beers's life and career.

The Correspondence series in the collection documents Beers's private and professional life from his college days through 1992. Topics of interest include hardships during the Great Depression and Beers's concern for and assistance to his aging parents, efforts to find a job after receiving his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1935; his persistence and eventual success in getting a position at the National Archives; his personal and professional relationship with his doctoral advisor, St. George L. Sioussat, who later became head of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress; the courtship
of his future wife and their early married life; and his detailed accounts of life in the navy during World War II. The series also provides a chronicle of the development of Beers's thirty-year career as an archivist, bibliographer, and historian.

The **Bibliographies** series reflects Beers's activity as a compiler of historical publications. It consists primarily of correspondence with archival repositories and publishers, reports and memoranda, and book reviews. While a student at the University of Pennsylvania, Beers compiled bibliographies on the American Indian, frontier history, and the trans-Mississippi West, subjects pertinent to his doctoral dissertation. Around this time he also compiled bibliographies on the states of New York and Pennsylvania. Beers's major work, *Bibliographies in American History*, first published in 1938, was followed by numerous updated editions over the next fifty years. Foreign archival records relevant to American history were compiled in *The French and British in the Old Northwest, French and Spanish Records of Louisiana, The French in North America*, and *Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest*. During the centennial of the Civil War, Beers published guides to archival holdings of both the federal and Confederate governments. He also published several works on the United States Navy.

The **Miscellany** series consists of material relating to Beers's education, employment, and finances. The professional office file chronicles his surveys of federal records while with the Works Progress Administration and the National Archives as well as his stint as project editor with *The Territorial Papers of the United States*. The series also contains a small section of writings by Beers comprised mostly of book reviews, papers, and material relating to the published version of his doctoral dissertation.

**Organization of the Papers**

The collection is arranged in three series:

- **Correspondence, 1926-1992.**
- **Bibliographies, 1929-1992**
- **Miscellany, 1910-1992**
Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 1-5</td>
<td><strong>Correspondence, 1926-1992</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters sent and received with enclosed and related matter.</td>
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<td>Arranged chronologically.</td>
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<td>BOX 6-10</td>
<td><strong>Bibliographies, 1929-1992</strong></td>
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<td>Correspondence, book reviews, reports, memoranda, and drafts.</td>
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<td>BOX 11-18</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1910-1992</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Academic records, biographical material, employment records, financial records, professional office file, and writings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of organization.</td>
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<td>Contents</td>
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| BOX 1-5   | **Correspondence, 1926-1992**  
Letters sent and received with enclosed and related matter.  
Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 1     | 1926-1935  
(10 folders) |
| BOX 2     | 1936-1939  
(7 folders) |
| BOX 3     | 1940-1958  
(7 folders) |
| BOX 4     | 1959-1972  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 5     | 1973-1992  
(8 folders) |
| BOX 6-10  | **Bibliographies, 1929-1992**  
Correspondence, book reviews, reports, memoranda, and drafts.  
Arranged alphabetically by title or subject. |
| BOX 6     | **Bibliographies in American History**  
Correspondence  
Re compilation, 1958-1980  
With publishers, 1936-1992, undated  
(4 folders)  
Reviews, 1938-1983  
"Bibliographies of the American Indian," 1934  
"Bibliographies of the Trans-Mississippi West," undated  
"Bibliography Frontier History, 1922," 1933 |
| BOX 7     | **The French and British in the Old Northwest**  
Correspondence with archival repositories, 1946-1992, undated  
(3 folders)  
Reviews, 1964-1966, undated  
**French and Spanish Records of Louisiana**  
Correspondence with publisher, 1987-1992  
Reviews, 1988-1991  
**The French in North America**  
Correspondence  
With archival repositories  
1929-1930, 1945-1954  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 8     | 1955-1958, undated  
With publisher, 1953-1976, undated  
(2 folders) |
Reviews, 1957-1960, undated

*Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War*, reviews, 1963

*Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America*

Correspondence with archival repositories, 1962-1963

National Archives, internal memoranda, 1959-1967

Naval records

Reports and memoranda

Indexed, 1939-1942

(3 folders)

BOX 9

Not indexed, 1937-1958, undated

(3 folders)

"New York Bibliographies," 1935

*Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest*

Correspondence

With archival repositories

Arizona, 1939-1977, undated

California

1939-1970

BOX 10

1971-1977

New Mexico, 1939-1975

Texas, 1939-1977, undated

(2 folders)


(3 folders)

Reviews, 1979-1984

BOX 11-18

Miscellany, 1910-1992

Academic records, biographical material, employment records, financial records, professional office file, and writings.

Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of organization.

BOX 11

Academic records

Lafayette College, Easton, Pa., 1926-1930

(5 folders)

BOX 12

Thomas Jefferson School, Scranton, Pa., 1914-1922

Technical High School, Scranton, Pa., 1922-1926

(4 folders)

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa., 1930-1935

(3 folders)

BOX 13

(3 folders)

BOX 14

Awards, 1956-1990

Biographical material, 1923-1992, undated

Birth records, 1910, 1944-1950, undated

Books given to libraries, 1980, 1989

Boy Scouts of America, 1920-1929, undated

Diaries, 1925-1928

Employment records
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<td>Navy, 1944-1946</td>
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<td>BOX 15</td>
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<td>Professional office file</td>
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<td>Reports on archives of United States territorial acquisitions, 1936-1942</td>
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<td>Writings</td>
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<td>Bibliographies of publications by Beers, 1948-1983, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 18</td>
<td>Conference papers and lectures, 1943-1962</td>
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<td>Distribution of publications by Beers, 1938-1948, undated</td>
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<td><em>The Western Military Frontier</em> (published version of dissertation)</td>
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