

Henry Putney Beers Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1994

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81059477>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms001008>

Prepared by T. Michael Womack

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2001
Revised 2010 April

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. Navy--Military life.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Henry Putney Beers in these papers is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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.
1931	M.A., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
1933-1934	Surveyor, supervisor, and bibliographer, Historical Records Survey of Pennsylvania, Civil Works Administration, Philadelphia, Pa.
1935	Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 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, <i>Foreign Relations, Diplomatic Papers of the United States</i> (Latin America), State Department, Washington, D.C.
1950-1958	Historian (assistant editor), <i>The Territorial Papers of the United States</i> (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

Container	Series
BOX 1-5	<p><u>Correspondence, 1926-1992</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received with enclosed and related matter. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 6-10	<p><u>Bibliographies, 1929-1992</u></p> <p>Correspondence, book reviews, reports, memoranda, and drafts. Arranged alphabetically by title or subject.</p>
BOX 11-18	<p><u>Miscellany, 1910-1992</u></p> <p>Academic records, biographical material, employment records, financial records, professional office file, and writings. Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of organization.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
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	<i>Bibliographies in American History</i> 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	<i>The French and British in the Old Northwest</i> Correspondence with archival repositories, 1946-1992, undated (3 folders) Reviews, 1964-1966, undated <i>French and Spanish Records of Louisiana</i> Correspondence with publisher, 1987-1992 Reviews, 1988-1991 <i>The French in North America</i> Correspondence With archival repositories 1929-1930, 1945-1954 (2 folders)
BOX 8	1955-1958, undated With publisher, 1953-1976, undated (2 folders)

Bibliographies, 1929-1992

Container

Contents

	Reviews, 1957-1960, undated
	<i>Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War</i> , reviews, 1963
	<i>Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America</i>
	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
	<i>Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest</i>
	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)
	With publisher, 1960-1963, 1971-1992, undated
	(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

Miscellany, 1910-1992

Container

Contents

	Miscellaneous, 1933-1968, undated
	National Archives, 1934-1979
	Navy, 1944-1946
	State Department, 1946-1954, undated
BOX 15	Financial records, 1927-1986 (4 folders)
	Professional office file
	Civil Works Administration, reports and instructions, 1933-1934
	National Archives
	Archives technician training course, 1965
BOX 16	Reports and memoranda, 1937-1947 (2 folders)
	<i>The Territorial Papers of the United States</i> (editorial project)
	Grant and fellowship applications, 1940-1969
	Miscellany, 1949-1955
	Works Progress Administration, survey of federal archives
	Letters sent
	1936-1938 (2 folders)
BOX 17	Reports and memoranda
	Indexed, 1936-1937 (4 folders)
	Not indexed, 1936-1938, undated (2 folders)
	Reports on archives of United States territorial acquisitions, 1936-1942
	Writings
	Bibliographies of publications by Beers, 1948-1983, undated
	Book reviews, 1935-1973, undated
BOX 18	Conference papers and lectures, 1943-1962
	Distribution of publications by Beers, 1938-1948, undated
	<i>The Western Military Frontier</i> (published version of dissertation)
	Correspondence with publisher, 1933-1936, 1967, undated
	Reviews, 1936-1937, undated