

William Walden Rubey Papers
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Washington, D.C.
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Prepared by Kathleen M. Dondanville with the assistance of Sherralyn F. McCoy
Revised by Michael W. Giese

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Collection Summary

Title: William Walden Rubey Papers

Span Dates: 1920-1974

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1951-1971)

ID No.: MSS38471

Creator: Rubey, William Walden, 1989-1974

Extent: 32,250 items

Extent: 95 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 38 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82038471>

Summary: Geologist and educator. Correspondence, memoranda, manuscripts of articles, book reviews, speeches, reports, research notes, press releases, printed materials, maps, illustrations, and other papers pertaining primarily to Rubey's career with the United States Geological Survey, as consultant on geological projects, and as member of professional, scientific, and educational organizations.

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

Aldrich, Henry R. (Henry Ray), 1891- --Correspondence.

Hubbert, M. King (Marion King), 1903-1989--Correspondence.

Longwell, Chester R. (Chester Ray), 1887-1975--Correspondence.

Oriel, Steven S.--Correspondence.

Rubey, William Walden, 1898-1974.

Organizations

Geological Society of America. Committee on the War Effort.

Geological Survey (U.S.)

Geological Survey (U.S.). Strategic Minerals Program.

Lunar Science Institute.

Project Mohole.

Subjects

Biosphere.

Earthquakes--Colorado--Denver Region.

Geological mapping--Middle West.

Geological mapping--West (U.S.)

Geology--Middle West.

Geology--Nomenclature.

Geology--Societies, etc.

Geology--West (U.S.)

Submarine geology.

Thrust faults (Geology)

Vanadium.

World War, 1939-1945--Science.

Places

Earth (Planet)--Crust.

Earth (Planet)--Mantle.

Occupations

Educators.
Geologists.

Provenance

The papers of William Walden Rubey, geologist and educator, were given to the Library in 1974 by Mrs. Susan M. Rubey. A small addition was received by bequest of the Rubey estate in 1976.

Processing History

The papers of William Walden Rubey were arranged and described in 1992. The finding aid was revised in 2004.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Walden Rubey is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1898, Dec. 19	Born, Moberly, Mo.
1919, Nov. 27	Married Susan Elsie Manovill
1920	A.B., University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.
1920-1960	Geologist, United States Geological Survey
1922-1924	Instructor of geology, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1950-1951	Director, American Geological Institute
1953	D.Sc., University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.
1955-1956	Visiting professor of geology at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif., and Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
1960-1969	Professor of geology and geophysics, University of California, Los Angeles, Calif.
1960-1974	Member, National Science Board
1974	Died, Los Angeles, Calif.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Walden Rubey (1898-1974) span the years 1915-1974, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1951-1971. The collection primarily documents Rubey's career with the United States Geological Survey, his consultant work on various geological projects, and his activities as a member of professional, scientific and educational organizations. Also included are materials relating to Rubey's technical speeches and writings in the earth sciences field. The collection is divided into the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), [Subject File](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [General Correspondence](#) series, 1921-1974, primarily contains incoming and outgoing correspondence between Rubey and associates involved in the earth science fields. Much of the earlier correspondence relates to his work as a geologist

for the United States Geological Survey and includes letters written and received while Rubey was performing geological field work in areas of the Midwest, Southwest, the northern Great Plains, and the northern Rocky Mountains. Later correspondence primarily pertains to his involvement with numerous scientific and educational associations and his interest in the research and writings of colleagues.

The [Speeches and Writings](#) series, 1923-1974, is mostly comprised of research notes, drafts, correspondence, final copies, printed versions, and other related materials pertaining to Rubey's articles, book reviews and introductions, speeches, and reports. Research notes in this series are highly technical and often contain complex mathematical and scientific formulations. The series features many of Rubey's ground-breaking articles, along with related correspondence, illustrative materials, and research notes. Included are materials pertaining to such seminal works as "The Geologic History of Sea Water," "The Development of the Hydrosphere and Atmosphere," and the controversial "Role of Fluid Pressure in the Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting." Co-authored with M. King Hubbert, the latter article was the cause of much dissension in the geological field. Letters from colleagues in this file primarily pertain to the validity of Rubey and Hubbert's fluid pressure hypothesis. The authors' replies to published discussions and critiques of their theory are also found in this series.

The [Subject File](#), 1915-1974, is comprised of correspondence, memoranda, reports, newspaper clippings, press releases, printed matter, geological maps, research notes, and other materials relating to Rubey's professional activities as a geologist. Although the series contains extensive files pertaining to projects Rubey conducted for the United States Geological Survey, complete documentation of his Survey career as a whole is lacking. Notable files include records documenting his work in standardizing the nomenclature and symbols used for defining carbonaceous and stratigraphic materials, several projects that took place in the western states, and various geological mapping projects. Other significant files relate to Rubey's work with the Survey's Strategic Minerals Program, in which he was charged with supervising surveys for vanadium, an important ore used by steel manufacturers during World War II as a steel hardener.

Also contained in the Subject File are correspondence, memoranda, and reports pertaining to Rubey's work as a member of many professional, educational, and scientific organizations. Included are correspondence, memoranda, and reports documenting his efforts in the Mohole project, a joint effort in the 1960s between the National Science Foundation and the United States government to obtain a complete core record of the layers of the earth's crust and the upper part of the underlying mantle. The project was later discontinued by Congress due to dissension between scientists and government representatives over the administration of the project, congressional charges of political influence and irregularities in the awarding of the engineering contract, and other factors. Correspondence in this file contains Rubey's candid impressions of what he felt were the root causes of the project's failure.

Other significant files pertain to Rubey's role in establishing the Lunar Science Institute, his work as a member of the Geological Society of America's Committee on the War Effort, which made recommendations to the army on the strategic employment of geologists in the battlefield during World War II, and his efforts in conjunction with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to determine the cause of a series of earthquakes plaguing the Denver, Colorado, area.

Frequent correspondents include Henry R. Aldrich, M. King Hubbert, Chester R. Longwell, and Steven S. Oriel.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in four series:

- [General Correspondence, 1920-1974](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1923-1974](#)
- [Subject File, 1915-1974](#)
- [Oversize, 1962-1966](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-12	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1920-1974</u></p> <p>Incoming and outgoing correspondence with attachments between Rubey and friends, colleagues, and organizations.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or organization and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 13-37	<p><u>Speeches and Writings, 1923-1974</u></p> <p>Manuscripts in various stages of preparation, including notes, correspondence, illustrative materials, drafts, final copies, and printed versions of articles, book reviews, book introductions, miscellaneous writings, critiques of manuscripts written by colleagues, reports, and speeches.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 38-95	<p><u>Subject File, 1915-1974</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, reports, notes, press releases, minutes of meetings, newspaper clippings, maps, photographs, and printed matter pertaining to Rubey's activities as a geologist for the United States Geological Survey and as a member of various scientific, professional, and educational organizations.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p><u>Oversize, 1962-1966</u></p> <p>Graphs concerning earthquakes and well-head pressure in Colorado.</p> <p>Organized and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</p>

Container List

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BOX 1-12	General Correspondence, 1920-1974 Incoming and outgoing correspondence with attachments between Rubey and friends, colleagues, and organizations. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or organization and therein chronologically.
BOX 1	Abelson, Philip N., 1953-1962 Altschuler, Z. S., 1959-1962, undated Anderson, Charles A., 1942-1966 Armstrong, Frank, 1945-1965 “A” miscellaneous, 1939-1974, undated (2 folders) Ball, Max W., 1928-1950 Bateman, Alan M., 1925-1957 Behre, Charles H., Jr., 1929-1945, undated Bell, A. H., 1928-1930 Berkner, Lloyd V., 1962-1973 Berry, Edward W., 1925-1944 Billings, Marland P., 1944-1949 Birch, Francis, 1939-1973 Boardman, Leona, 1928-1946 Bradley, Wilmot H., 1924-1973 Bowen, Norman L., 1938-1953 Bramlette, Milton N., 1924-1969, undated Branson, E. B., 1926-1939 Bronk, Detlev W., 1948-1963 Bryan, Kirk, 1926-1949 Bucher, Walter H., 1928-1968 (2 folders) Buddington, A. F., 1949-1960
BOX 2	Byerly, Perry, 1943-1968 “B” miscellaneous, 1926-1974 (8 folders) Cairns, Robert W., 1964 Campbell, Ian, 1951-1969 Cannon, Ralph S., 1949-1968 Chamberlin, Rollin T., 1934-1945 Cloos, Ernst, 1944-1962 Cloud, Preston E., 1951-1973, undated Cobban, William, 1947, 1959 Cornell, S. D., 1954-1956 Cottam, Clarence, 1967 Creagh, Agnes, 1959-1963

General Correspondence, 1920-1974

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	Emberson, Frances G., 1945
	Ewing, Maurice, 1946-1974
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	Faul, Henry, 1946-1961
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	Gardner, Louis S., 1938-1949
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General Correspondence, 1920-1974

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	Whipple, Fred L., 1949-1950
	Wilkinson, Cecil J., 1934-1952
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	“Y-Z” miscellaneous, 1923-1956 (2 folders)
BOX 13-37	Speeches and Writings, 1923-1974 Manuscripts in various stages of preparation, including notes, correspondence, illustrative materials, drafts, final copies, and printed versions of articles, book reviews, book introductions, miscellaneous writings, critiques of manuscripts written by colleagues, reports, and speeches. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.

Speeches and Writings, 1923-1974

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1926, "Determination and the Use of Thicknesses of Incompetent Beds in Oil Field Mapping and General Structural Studies," *Economic Geology*

1927, "The Effect of Gravitational Compaction on the Structure of Sedimentary Rocks: A Discussion," *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*

1928, "Gullies in the Great Plains Formed by Sinking of the Ground," *American Journal of Science*

1929, "Origin of the Siliceous Mowry Shale of the Black Hills Region," *Shorter Contributions to General Geology*, United States Geological Survey

1930

"Lithologic Studies of Fine-grained Upper Cretaceous Sedimentary Rocks of the Black Hills Region," *Shorter Contributions to General Geology*, United States Geological Survey

"Shortening of Folded Strata and Scale of Structure Section"

Drafts

Research notes

Computations

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H and B structure

Laboratory model

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Miscellaneous structure

1933

"Equilibrium Conditions in Debris-laden Streams," *Transactions of the American Geophysical Union*

"Settling Velocity of Gravel, Sands, and Silt Particles," *American Journal of Science*

Correspondence and drafts, 1932-1933

Printed version

"The Size Distribution of Heavy Minerals within a Water-laid Sandstone", *Journal of Sedimentary Petrology*

Correspondence and notes, 1932-1933

Drafts

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1938

"The Force Required to Move Particles on a Stream Bed," *Shorter Contributions to General Geology*, United States Geological Survey *For additional material see [Container 34, 1935, Apr. 10](#)*

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	1951, "Geologic History of Sea Water: An Attempt to State the Problem," <i>Bulletin of the Geological Society of America</i>
	Correspondence
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	“The Development of the Hydrosphere and Atmosphere, with Special Reference to Probable Composition of the Early Atmosphere,” <i>Crust of the Earth Symposium, Geological Society of America</i> , special paper <i>See also Container 35, 1954, Oct. 14</i>
	Correspondence, 1953-1955
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	Research notes, 1954-1955
	Atmosphere from cosmic abundance
	Atmosphere from excess volatiles
	Revision notes
	“Early Structural History of the Overthrust Belt of Western Wyoming and Adjacent States,” <i>Wyoming Geological Association Guidebook</i> , 1952-1955
	1959
	“Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting,” co-authored with M. King Hubbert, <i>Bulletin of the Geological Society of America</i> <i>See also Container 37, 1957, Nov. 5</i>
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	Terzaghi, Macey
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	“Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting: A Discussion by D. T. Griggs and C. B. Raleigh,” <i>Bulletin of the Geological Society of America</i>
	“Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting: A Discussion by Walter L. Moore and Lymon C. Reese,” <i>Bulletin of the Geological Society of America</i>
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	“Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting and the Development of Abnormal Fluid Pressure,” co-authored with G. T. Griggs and C. B. Raleigh
	Correspondence, 1959-1960
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	Draft
	“Orogeny,” <i>McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia</i> , 1958-1960
	“Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting: Reply to a Discussion by Hans P. Laubscher,” <i>Bulletin of the Geological Society of America</i>
	Correspondence, 1959-1960
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BOX 24	1961
	“Age of the Evanston Formation, Western Wyoming,” <i>Wyoming Geological Association Guidebook and Short Papers in the Geologic and Hydrologic Sciences</i> , United States Geologic Survey
	“Diamictite Facies of the Wasatch Formation in the Fossil Basin, Southwestern Wyoming,” <i>Short Papers in the Geologic and Hydrologic Sciences</i> , United States Geological Survey

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- “Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting: Reply to Discussion by Francis Birch,” co-authored with M. King Hubbert, *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*
- “Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting: Reply to Discussion by Walter L. Moore,” co-authored with M. King Hubbert, *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*
- 1965, “Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting: Reply to Discussion by Gregory A. Davis,” co-authored with M. King Hubbert, *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*
 - (3 folders)
- 1966
 - “Orogeny,” *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia*, 1966-1967
 - “Tectonic Implications of Gypsum Dehydration,” co-authored with Hugh C. Heard, *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*
 - Correspondence, 1963-1965
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 - 1968, “The Denver Earthquakes,” *Science* [*For additional material see Containers 45-47, Denver earthquakes*](#)
 - Award, Intersociety Committee for Rock Mechanics
 - Correspondence, 1967-1969
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 - Research notes
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 - General
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Speeches and Writings, 1923-1974

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	Volcanic gas calculations
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	Revisions
BOX 27	1969, "Role of Cohesive Strength in the Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting and of Landsliding: Discussion," <i>Bulletin of the Geological Society of America</i>
	1971, "Orogeny," <i>McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia</i>
	1973, "New Cretaceous Formations in the Western Wyoming Thrust Belt," <i>Geological Survey Bulletin</i> , United States Geological Survey
	Correspondence and distribution list
	Printed version
	Biographical memoirs of colleagues
	1957, Charles K. Leith
	1970, Harry H. Hess
	Book introductions
	1963, <i>The Earth</i> , Life Nature Library series
	1968, <i>The Earth</i> , Life Nature Library series
	1974, "Fifty Years of the Earth Sciences; A Renaissance," introductory chapter to <i>Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences</i>
	Correspondence, 1972-1974
	Drafts
	Notes
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	Book reviews
	1934, <i>The Deformation of the Earth's Crust</i> , by Walter H. Bucher
	1941, <i>Strength and Structure of the Earth</i> , by Reginald A. Daly
	1966, <i>Advances in Earth Sciences</i> , ed. by P. M. Hurley
	1968, <i>Government in Science: The U.S. Geological Survey</i> , by Thomas G. Manning
	Manuscripts critiqued by Rubey
	1926, "Oil Possibilities of the Black Hills Region," by E. G. Sinclair
	1927, "The Effect of Gravitational Compaction on the Structure of Sedimentary Rocks," by H. D. Hedberg
	1928, "The Compressibility of Sand-mica Mixtures," by Glennon Gilby
	1935, "Sedimentary Size Frequency Curves," by William C. Krumbein

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- 1941, "Some Experiments on the Transportation of Suspended Load," by V. A. Vononi and "Rational Equation of River-bed Profile," by S. A. Shulits
- 1942, "Phosphorite Deposits on the Sea Floor off Southern California," by R. S. Dietz, O. Emery, and F. P. Shepard, 1941-1942
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- BOX 28** 1950, "Water in Primordial and Derivative Magma and its Relations to the Pre-forming Fluid," by John D. Ridge
- 1952, "Hypsometric Analysis of Erosional Topography," by Arthur N. Strahler
- 1954, "Role of Water in Metamorphism," by Hatten S. Yoder, Jr.
- 1960, "Evolution of Ocean Basins," by Harry H. Hess
- 1962, "The Sodium Cycle and the Age of the Ocean," by D. A. Livingstone
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- 1963, "Rate of Growth of Continents," by Frank A. Menard
- 1968, "Geometric and Physical Sealing of River Dimensions on the Earth and Moon," by J. J. Gilvarry
- BOX 29** 1973, "The Amsden Formation (Mississippian and Pennsylvanian) of Wyoming," by William J. Sando, MacKenzie Gordon, Jr., and J. T. Dutro
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- "Mineralogy, Petrography, and Petrology of the Carbonate and Phosphate Rocks of the Phosphatic Shale Member of the Phosphoria Formation at Coal Canyon, Wyoming," by R. A. Gulbrandsen
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 - 1926, Jan. 13, "Stream Piracy in North-eastern Wyoming," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - 1927, Feb. 9, "The Origin of the Mowry Shale," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - 1928, Jan. 11, "Possible Varves in Marine Cretaceous Shale in Wyoming," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - 1931
 - Feb. 25, "The Illinois River, a Problem in Channel Equilibrium," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - "A Need for Closer Cooperation among Students of Stream Work," American Geophysical Union, Washington, D.C.
 - 1932, May 11, "Alluvial Islands: Their Origin and Effect upon Stream Regimen," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - 1933, "Equilibrium Conditions in Debris-laden Streams," American Geophysical Union, Washington, D.C.
 - 1935, Apr. 10, "The Force Required to Move Particles on a Stream Bed," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - 1940, Feb. 28, "Chemical Evidence Bearing on Origin of a Group of Hot Springs," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - 1943, "Vanadiferous Shale in the Phosphoria Formation, Wyoming and Idaho," American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, New York, N.Y.
 - 1948, Dec., "The Problem of Changes in Composition of Sea Water and Atmosphere during the Geologic Past," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C. *For additional material see Containers 15-18, 1951, "Geologic History of Sea Water"*
 - 1949
 - Apr. 8, "Formation of the Earth's Atmosphere," Historical Geophysics Seminar, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - Apr. 13, "Possible Mechanism for Continuous Supply of Volatiles at the Earth's Surface," Geological Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.
 - Dec. 13, "Sea-water and Atmosphere through the Past: A Problem in General Geology," Geological Conference, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
 - 1950
 - Jan., "Lines of Evidence for Estimating Volume of Primitive Ocean," Unidentified group, Santa Fe, N. Mex.
 - Mar. 28, "The Problem of Origin of the Atmosphere and Ocean," classroom lecture
 - Oct. 12, "Geologic Evidence regarding the Science of the Earth's Hydrosphere and Atmosphere," National Academy of Sciences, Schenectady, N.Y.
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 - Nov. 16, "Geologic History of Sea Water," Geologic Society of America, Washington, D.C.

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- July 15, "Partial Fusion of the Deep Interior as a Continuing Source of the Earth's Atmospheric Hydrosphere and Crust," Shell Laboratories, Houston, Tex.
- Nov. 5, "Role of Fluid Pressure in Mechanics of Overthrust Faulting," co-authored and presented with M. King Hubbert, Geological Society of America, Atlantic City, N.J. *See also Containers 19-22, 1959, same title*
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- 1962, Dec. 4, "Geochemistry of Sediments," University of California, Los Angeles, Calif.
- 1963, Nov. 20, "Possible Tectonic Significance of Transformation of Gypsum to Anhydride plus Water," Geological Society of America
- 1965
- Apr. 19, "Mountain Building," University of California, Los Angeles, Calif.
- May 15, "Geology, Where, Wither?" University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.
- Correspondence and printed materials
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- 1967
- Jan. 16, re overthrust tectonics, Colorado Scientific Society, Denver, Colo.
- Apr. 3, "Waste Disposal and Earthquakes in the Denver area," Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.
- Oct. 19-20, "The Geologic History of the Hydrosphere and Atmosphere," Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich.
- Oct. 28-29, "The Geologic History of the Hydrosphere and Atmosphere," University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc. *For additional material see same container, 1967, Oct. 19-20*
- 1968
- May 13, re Denver earthquakes, Scripps Oceanographic Institute, San Diego, Calif.
- Aug. 7, re Denver earthquakes, Lockheed Propulsion Company Branch, Scientific Research Co. of America, Redlands, Calif.
- Oct. 7, "Primitive Oceans and the Atmosphere," Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
- 1971, May 21, lecture on the history of science during the twentieth century
- 1972, Aug. 25, "Mountain-making in Western Wyoming," International Geologic Congress, Montreal, Canada
- Undated, "Stream Piracy in Northeastern Wyoming,"
- Television appearances, "The Rains Came," episode of "Our World in Space," 1956

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