

Ray Eber Brown Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2011

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81014100>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011023>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2011
Revised 2023 February

Collection Summary

Title: Ray Eber Brown Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1915-1962

Bulk Dates: 1923-1962

ID No.: MSS14100

Creator: Brown, Ray Eber, 1892-1962

Extent: 23,000 items

Extent: 77 containers plus 5 oversize

Extent: 36 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81014100>

Summary: Naval architect and engineer. Correspondence, memoranda, diaries, notebooks, subject files, reports, articles, blueprints, charts, graphs, specification sheets, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other printed material pertaining primarily to Brown's career as a naval architect and marine engineer.

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

Brown, Ray Eber, 1892-1962.

Fulton, Garland, 1890-1974--Correspondence.

Rosendahl, Charles E. (Charles Emery), 1892-1977--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Department of the Navy. Bureau of Aeronautics.

United States. Navy Department. Bureau of Aeronautics.

Subjects

Aeronautics, Military--United States.

Airships.

Helium.

Low temperature engineering.

Marine engineering.

Naval architecture.

Occupations

Engineers.

Naval architects.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Ray Eber Brown, naval architect and engineer, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Florence Ann Eyre Brown, in 1962-1963.

Processing History

The papers of Ray Eber Brown were arranged and described in 1964. The finding aid was revised by Joseph K. Brooks in 2011. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Ray Eber Brown has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Ray Eber Brown 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, Ray Eber Brown papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1892, Jan. 19	Born, Allendale, Mich.
1917	B. S., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.
1917-1918	Ship draftsmen, Bureau of Construction and Repair, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.
1918-1919	Commissioned lieutenant in the navy and served as a naval constructor
1919-1923	Ship draftsman, New York Shipbuilding Corp., Camden, N. J.
1923-1927	Naval architect, Gibbs Brothers, New York, N. Y.
1927-1942	Senior engineer and naval architect, Navy bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C.
1942-1945	Senior petroleum engineer, head of Helium Branch, Navy Bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C.
1945-1962	Principal natural gas engineer, head of Helium Branch, Navy Bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C.
1962	Retired from government service and worked as a consultant in liquid helium for the General Electric Co.
1962, Sept. 26	Died, Schenectady, N. Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Ray Eber Brown (1892-1962), a key figure in the navy's development of helium gas for lighter than air craft, span the years 1916-1962 with the bulk of the material between 1923 and 1962. The papers are arranged into [Diaries](#), [Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#) series and include diaries, correspondence, notebooks, personal papers, reports, articles, memoranda, blueprints, charts, graphs, specification sheets, photographs, and newspaper clippings. The papers document the study of airships, cryogenics, and the uses of helium.

The [diaries](#) are technical and not personal. Most of the letters in the [Correspondence](#) series are routine; much of the substantial professional correspondence in the papers is part of the personal file of the [Subject File](#), which includes correspondence with naval officers and proponents of lighter-than-air craft such as Garland Fulton and Charles E. Rosendahl. The bulk of the [Subject File](#) reflects Brown's career as a naval architect and engineer, particularly his role in the navy's dirigible program and the development of cryogenic methods for storing and transporting helium in liquid form.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- Diaries, 1953-1962
- Correspondence, 1916-1962
- Subject File, 1915-1962
- Miscellany
- Oversize

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1	<p><u>Diaries, 1953-1962</u></p> <p>Diaries of brief entries relating to technical matters. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 1-2	<p><u>Correspondence, 1916-1962</u></p> <p>Business letters sent and received and official correspondence. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 3-65	<p><u>Subject File, 1915-1962</u></p> <p>Topical files, blueprints, personal papers, correspondence, card indexes, and photographs. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.</p>
BOX 66-77	<p><u>Miscellany</u></p> <p>Notes, notebooks, calculations, printed matter, graphs, and drawings. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX OV 1-OV 5	<p><u>Oversize</u></p> <p>Blueprints, charts, and graphs Arranged as received.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Diaries, 1953-1962 Diaries of brief entries relating to technical matters. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	Diaries, 1953-1962 (3 vols.)
BOX 1-2	Correspondence, 1916-1962 Business letters sent and received and official correspondence. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	General
BOX 1	1916-1962 (32 folders)
BOX 2	1949-1962 (6 folders)
BOX 2	Official, 1937, undated
BOX 3-65	Subject File, 1915-1962 Topical files, blueprints, personal papers, correspondence, card indexes, and photographs. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.
BOX 3-5	Airships, 1915-1943
BOX 6-11	Blueprints, 1923-1961
BOX 12-15	Cylinders and valves, 1932-1957
BOX 16-40	Helium, 1940-1962
BOX 41	<i>Leviathan</i> , passenger ocean liner, blueprints
BOX 42-46	Memoranda, 1923-1941
BOX 47	Montgomery County Civic Federation, Montgomery County, Md., 1951-1953 (2 folders)
BOX 48-52	Personal file, 1920-1962
BOX 53-57	Tank cars, 1929-1960
BOX 58	Tractor trailers, 1942-1952
BOX 58	Writings, 1923-1954
BOX 59-64	Card indexes
BOX 65	Photographs, 1920-1942 (4 folders)
BOX 66-77	Miscellany Notes, notebooks, calculations, printed matter, graphs, and drawings.

Miscellany

Container	Contents
	Arranged by type of material.
BOX OV 1-OV 5	Oversize Blueprints, charts, and graphs Arranged as received.
BOX OV 1-OV 5	Blueprints, charts, and graphs