

Oswald Veblen Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010

Collection Summary

Title: Oswald Veblen Papers

Span Dates: 1881-1960

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1920-1960)

ID No.: MSS44016

Creator: Veblen, Oswald, 1880-1960

Extent: 13,600 items

Extent: 43 containers plus 1 overize

Extent: 17 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm77044016>

Summary: Mathematician. Correspondence, diaries, subject files, articles, book reviews, drafts of books, lecture notebooks, financial papers, and miscellany relating primarily to Veblen's work and research in pure mathematics and mathematical physics and reflecting his association with Princeton University, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., and the American Mathematical Society. Also includes material relating to Veblen's efforts on behalf of displaced German scholars and refugees.

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

Alexander, James W., 1888-1971--Correspondence.

Birkhoff, George David, 1884-1944--Correspondence.

Bohr, Niels, 1885-1962--Correspondence.

Dirac, P. A. M. (Paul Adrien Maurice), 1902-1984--Correspondence.

Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955.

Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959.

Millikan, Robert Andrews, 1868-1953.

Neugebauer, O. (Otto), 1899-1990.

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1904-1967.

Pauling, Linus, 1901-1994.

Richardson, O. W. (Owen Willans), 1879-1959--Correspondence.

Richardson, R. G. D. (Roland George Dwight), 1878-1949--Correspondence.

Russell, Bertrand, 1872-1970--Correspondence.

Stone, Marshall H. (Marshall Harvey), 1903- --Correspondence.

Strauss, Lewis L.--Correspondence.

Struik, Dirk J. (Dirk Jan), 1894-2000--Correspondence.

Veblen, Oswald, 1880-1960.

Von Neumann, John, 1903-1957--Correspondence.

Weyl, Hermann, 1885-1955--Correspondence.

Whitehead, John Henry Constantine, 1904-1960--Correspondence.

Wiener, Norbert, 1894-1964--Correspondence.

Wigner, Eugene Paul, 1902- --Correspondence.

Organizations

American Mathematical Society.

Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, N.J.)

Princeton University.

Subjects

Mathematical physics.

Mathematics--Societies, etc.
Mathematics.
Refugees--United States.
Science--History--20th century.
Universities and colleges--New Jersey.

Titles

Mathematical reviews.

Occupations

Mathematicians.

Provenance

The papers of Oswald Veblen, mathematician, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Elizabeth Veblen, in 1963.

Processing History

The papers of Oswald Veblen were arranged and described between 1963-1964. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1976-1977. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

A partial description of the Veblen Papers appears in *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, May 27, 1963, pp. 1-3.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Oswald Veblen in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Oswald Veblen 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, Oswald Veblen Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1880, June 24	Born, Decorah, Iowa
1898	A.B., University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
1900	A.B., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1903	Ph. D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1903-1905	Associate in mathematics, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

1904	Published <i>A System of Axioms for Geometry</i> . . . Lancaster, Pa.: Press of the New Era Printing Co.
1905-1910	Preceptor in mathematics, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1907	Published with N. J. Lennes <i>Introduction to Infinitesimal Analysis</i> . New York: J. Wiley & Sons
1908	Married Elizabeth M. D. Richardson
1910-1918	Published with John Wesley Young <i>Projective Geometry</i> . Boston: Ginn & Co. 2 vols.
1910-1932	Professor of mathematics, Princeton University, Princeton, N.Y.
1917-1919	Officer in U. S. Army
1923-1924	President, American Mathematical Society
1923-1924	Chairman of the physical sciences, National Research Council
1927	Published <i>Invariants of Quadratic Differential Forms</i> . Cambridge University Press
1932	Published with J. H. C. Whitehead <i>The Foundations of Differential Geometry</i> . Cambridge [Eng.] University Press
1932-1960	Professor, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J. (professor emeritus, 1950-1960)
1950	President, International Congress of Mathematicians
1960	Died, Princeton, N.J.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Oswald Veblen (1880-1960) span the years 1881-1960, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1920-1960. The papers relate to the upsurge of pure mathematics and mathematical physics in America, the careers of many scientists who played roles in this development, and various key institutions in the scientific and academic community at the time. The collection is organized in [Diaries](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#) series.

From 1932 until his death in 1960 Veblen was a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. The paper reflect in detail that long association and reveal much about the founding and early years of the institute. There is also some early correspondence covering his years of graduate study, then with his colleagues at Princeton University, and later many letters and other material concerning the American Mathematical Society and the founding of *Mathematical Review* to replace a German journal reflecting Nazi views.

His exchange of letters and ideas with mathematicians and other scientists in both the United States and Europe represents a prominent part of the collection. Among his correspondents are Nobel Prize recipients Niels Bohr, P. A. M. Dirac, Albert Einstein, Robert Andrews Millikan, Linus Pauling, Owen Willans Richardson, and Bertrand Russell. Other major correspondents include James W. Alexander, George David Birkoff, Abraham Flexner, O. Neugebauer, Roland George Dwight Richardson, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Marshall H. Stone, Lewis L. Strauss, Dirk Jan Struik, John Von Neumann, Herman Weyl, John Henry Constantine Whitehead, Norbert Wiener, and Eugene Paul Wigner.

There is considerable material in the papers on Veblen's efforts to aid displaced German scholars and other refugees, including many distinguished scientist. There is also material on his interest in raising the standards of the American scientific community and in stimulating support for research not wedded to specific applied ends. Of particular interest is correspondence detailing the efforts of Veblen and his fellow scientist to raise money between World War I and World War II. The letters include frank comment on the attitudes of business and government toward supporting pure research.

The collection also includes diaries, manuscripts of some of Veblen's speeches and publications, and miscellaneous financial and personal material.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Diaries, 1917-1958](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1902-1960](#)
- [Subject File, 1918-1960](#)
- [Writings File, 1905-1919](#)

- [Miscellany, 1881-1959](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1	<p><u>Diaries, 1917-1958</u></p> <p>Pocket diaries containing appointments and other brief notations. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 2-17	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1902-1960</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically within each correspondent's file.</p>
BOX 18-34	<p><u>Subject File, 1918-1960</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, recommendations, printed matter, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.</p>
BOX 35-38	<p><u>Writings File, 1905-1919</u></p> <p>Articles, bibliography, book manuscripts and notes, and book reviews. Arranged by type of writing, with articles organized chronologically.</p>
BOX 38-43	<p><u>Miscellany, 1881-1959</u></p> <p>Lecture notebooks and writings of others, biographical data, income tax and insurance data, memorabilia, pocket notebooks, photographs, printed matter, awards, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p><u>Oversize</u></p> <p>Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas. Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which it was removed.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Diaries, 1917-1958 Pocket diaries containing appointments and other brief notations. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1917-1921 1930-1955 (9 vols.) 1956 (2 vols.) 1958 (2 vols.)
BOX 2-17	General Correspondence, 1902-1960 Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically within each correspondent's file.
BOX 2	Albert, A. Adrian, 1931-1933 Alexander, James W., 1919-1959 Alexander, Mrs. James W., 1929-1956 Alexandroff, Paul, 1927-1938 Alger, Philip L., 1924-1937 American Philosophical Society Committee on Policy, 1932-1938 Publication Committee, 1936-1938 Ames, Joseph S., 1927 Archibald, R. C., 1926 "A" miscellaneous, 1925-1944 Baker, Thomas S., 1924-1927 Barbour, W. Warren, 1940-1943 Barrows, Albert L., 1924 Bell, E. T., 1926-1935 Bell Telephone Laboratories, 1927-1928 Berwald, I., 1935-1936 Betz, William, 1924 Birkhoff, Garrett, 1945 Birkhoff, George D., 1912-1947 (2 folders) Blakeslee, Albert F., 1931-1933 Blaschke, W., 1929-1947 Blichfeldt, H. F., 1924-1931
BOX 3	Bliss, G. A., 1923-1940 Bloomfield, Leonard, 1924-1939 Blumberg, Henry, 1924-1938

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

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	Bohr, Harold, 1922-1951
	Bohr, Niels, 1928-1947
	Borolotti, Enea, 1930-1931
	Bowman, John G. 1924
	Brierley, W. W., 1924
	Brockett, Paul, 1926-1931
	Brouwer, L. E J., 1930-1934
	Buchanan, H. E., 1927-1932
	Bullitt, William M., 1926-1952
	Bush, Vannevar, 1939
	"B" miscellaneous
	Campbell, Alan D., 1924-1932
	Carmichael, R. D., 1924-1931
	Cartan, Elie, 1926-1945
	Carty, John J., 1924-1930
	Carver, Walter B., 1930-1932
	Cauer, Wilhelm, 1931
	Church, Alonzo, 1926-1935
	Coble, Arthur B., 1924-1939
	Condon, Edward U., 1930
	Coolidge, Julian L., 1923-1933
	(3 folders)
BOX 4	Courant, Richard, 1923-1948
	(2 folders)
	Cramlet, C. M., 1927-1930
	Curry, Haskell B., 1929-1931
	"C" miscellaneous, 1923-1954
	Dederick, L. S., 1924-1926
	Dickson, L. E., 1910-1933
	Dirac, P. A. M., 1929-1948
	Dodds, Harold W., 1957-1959
	Dorfman, Joseph, 1925-1939
	Douglas, Jesse, 1926-1939
	Dresden, Arnold, 1923-1930
	Dunn, Gano, 1926-1929
	"D" miscellaneous, 1923-1951
	Eagles, Theophilus R., 1925
	Earle, Edward M., 1929-1942
	Eglin, W. C. L., 1924-1925
	Ehrenfest, Paul, 1929-1930
	Einstein, Albert, 1922-1929
	Eisenhart, L. P., 1912-1933
	<i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> , 1929
	Errera, Alfred, 1926-1928
	Evans, Griffith C., 1924-1934
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General Correspondence, 1902-1960

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BOX 5	Fine, Henry B., 1905-1928	
	Fiske, Thomas S., 1926-1929	
	Fite, W. Benjamin, 1924-1930	
	Flexner, Abraham, 1924-1940 (4 folders)	
	Flexner, Simon, 1926-1928	
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	Flinn, Alfred D., 1924	
	Ford, W. B., 1924-1925	
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	Fowler, R. H., 1922-1928	
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		Givens, Wallace, 1936-1960
		Gleason, Rutherford E., 1926-1928
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Gottingen Academy, 1929-1947		
Goldstine, H. H., 1956-1960		
Greenbaum, Edward S., 1953-1954		
Griffin, F. L. 1924-1930		
Gronwall, T. H., 1919-1929		
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"G" miscellaneous, 1924-1938		
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Hibben, John G., 1925-1932		
Hille, Einar, 1926-1938, 1947		
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Hotelling, Harold, 1925-1935		
Howe, Gunter, 1930-1933		
Howe, John P., 1938		
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	Jewett, Frank B., 1924-1930
	Johnson, Alvin, 1935-1938
	Johnson, Maro, 1951-1956
	Jones, Gwethalyn, 1931-1959
	Jones, Thomas D., 1926-1930
	“J” miscellaneous, 1923-1945
	Kasner, Edward, 1924-1926
	Kellogg, O. D., 1924-1931
	Kellogg, Vernon, 1924-1928
	Keppel, Frederick P., 1924-1938
	Kerékjártó, Béla, 1922-1927
	Klauder, Charles Z., 1929-1930
	Kline, J. R., 1924-1928
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	Kubota, T., 1922-1926
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	Lehmer, D. H., 1924-1926
	Lennes, N. J., 1926-1934
	Levi-Civita, T., 1922-1938
	Lindsay, A. D., 1930
	Little, Emma F., 1923-1924
	Littlewood, J. E., 1930-1948
	Longley, W. R., 1925-1928
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	Lund, Wallace, 1924-1928
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BOX 8	Maass, Herbert H., 1936-1939
	McAlphin, David H., 1955-1959
	McClenahan, Howard, 1924-1928
	MacDuffee, C. C., 1927-1939
	MacMillian, E. A., 1929-1930
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	Magie, W. F., 1926-1927
	Maria, Alfred J., 1925-1938
	Mayer, Walther, 1932
	Menger, Karl, 1930-1939
	Merriam, John, 1925-1931
	Miller, Dayton C., 1927-1930
	Millikan, R. A., 1922-1926
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	Mitchell, Howard H., 1925-1931
	Mitchell, S. A., 1934-1935
	Mitchell, Ulysses Grant, 1924-1931
	Monod-Herzen, Edouard, 1924-1927
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	Moore, C. N., 1925-1938
	Moore, E. H., 1902-1930
	Moore, R. L., 1905-1935
	Morley, Frank, 1924-1932
	Morse, Marston, 1928-1939
	Mukhopadhyaya, S., 1926-1931
	Murnaghan, Francis D., 1924-1930
	Murray, Forrest H., 1926-1931
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BOX 9	National Academy of Sciences, 1933-1949
	National Economic Council, 1938
	Neugebauer, O., 1932-1948 (2 folders)
	Newkirk, B. L., 1925-1926
	Newman, M. H. A., 1928-1930
	Nielsen, Jakob, 1931-1946
	Noether, Emmy
	Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland, 1938-1939
	“N” miscellaneous, 1924-1949
	Office of Scientific Research, 1944
	Olds, George D., 1925-1927
	Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1936-1960
	Orleans, Joseph B., 1938-1939
	Osgood, William F., 1924-1932
	Oslo, University of, Oslo, Norway, 1929-1949
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	Panofsky, E., 1936-1954
	Park, Marion, 1938-1939
	Pauling, Linus, 1957-1958
	Paerl, Raymond, 1925-1928
	Pfeiffer G. A., 1920-1925
	Phillips, H. B., 1935-1940
	Polya, George, 1932-1948
	Poole, E. G. C., 1928-1930
	Porter, Milton B., 1922-1946
	“P” miscellaneous, 1905-1950
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	Rademacher, Hans, 1936-1941
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	Radó, Tibor, 1930-1947
	Rainich, G. Y., 1924-1939
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	Rao, B. S. Madhava, 1937-1938
	Reeve, W. D., 1931
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	Reilly, Marion, 1923-1925
	Reynolds, Neva., 1926-1940
	Rice, Edwin W. J., 1924-1928
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	Richards, C. R., 1925
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	Rictmyer, F. K., 1931-1937
	Rietz, H. L., 1923-1933
	Rignano, Eugenio, 1925-1926
	Roberts, S. C., 1927
	Robertson, H. P., 1925-1936
	Roever, William H., 1924-1944
	Room, T. G., 1948-1949
	Ross, Charles F., 1928-1933
	Roosevelt, George E., 1924
	Rose, Wickliffe, 1924-1929
	Rosenbach, A. S. W., 1933
	Rosenblatt, Alfred, 1925-1950
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	Schoenberg, I. J., 1933-1948
	Schouten, J. A., 1929-1950
	Schwartz, Abraham, 1941-1948
	Schwartz, Philip, 1924-1947
	Schweitzer, Arthur R., 1932-1939
	Science Press, 1924-1936
	Seely, Caroline, 1923-1933
	Segal, Irving E., 1944-1948
	Shapley, Harlow, 1933-1942
	Sharpe, Benjamin, B., 1932-1934
	Sheppard, S. E., 1924
	Sherwood, Maude, 1930-1934
	Shields, Margaret C., 1935-1948
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	Shohat, J. A., 1925-1942

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	Simon, Leslie E., 1942-1948
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	Smith, H. Alexander, 1924-1958
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	Smith, Theobald, 1930-1931
	Snyder, Virgil, 1923-1944
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	Strauss, Lewis L., 1940-1960
	Struik, Dirk Jan, 1925-1942
	Swann, W. F. G., 1923-1948
	Synge, John L., 1922-1949
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	Tamarkin, J. D., 1928-1942
	Tate, John T., 1930-1931
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	Taylor, James H., 1924-1941
	Thomas, Joseph M., 1924-1947
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	Tyler, H. W., 1923-1930
	"T" miscellaneous, 1922-1955 (2 folders)
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	Valiron, G., 1932-1939
	Van Stockum, W. J., 1938-1943
	Van Vleck, E. B. and J. H., 1925-1941
	Vanderslice, John L., 1930-1950
	Vandiver, H. S., 1924-1946
	Veblen, Agnes, 1933-1934
	Veblen, Alfred, 1905-1951
	Veblen, Andrew
	Veblen, Gertrude, 1930-1960
	Veblen, Harold, 1923-1942
	Veblen, Hilda, 1911-1939
	Veblen, John, 1937-1958
	Veblen, Mary, 1938, undated
	Veblen, Signy, 1932-1958
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	Wannamaker, W. H., 1930
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	Weaver, Warren, 1935-1947
	Webb, H. E., 1924-1925
	Webber, G. Cuthbert, 1935-1936
	Wedderburn, J. H. M., 1905-1931
	Weil, André, 1939-1958
	Wells, Volney H., 1926-1930
	West, Andrew F., 1924-1926
	Weyl, Hermann, 1924-1956 (2 folders)
	Wheeler, Anna Pell, 1926-1942
	White, David 1924-1926
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	Whitney, Hasslar, 1932
	Whittaker, E. T., 1930-1938
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	Whyburn, G. T., 1937-1946
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	Wiener, Norbert, 1924-1940
	Wigner, Eugene Paul, 1929-1946

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"W" miscellaneous, 1923-1940
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Yerkes, Robert M., 1923-1924
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Subject File, 1918-1960

Correspondence, memoranda, recommendations, printed matter, and other material.
Arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

BOX 18

American Association for the Advancement of Science, Committee on Grants, 1929-1930
(2 folders)
American Association of Scientific Workers, 1939-1943
American Association of University Professors, 1920-1924
American Civil Liberties Union, 1935-1953
American Friends of Spanish Democracy, 1939
American Mathematical Society Colloquium lectures, 1928
Committee to Consider Establishing a Mathematical Abstract Journal in America, 1938-1939
(3 folders)
Endowment fund campaign, 1924
Form letters, 1924
Gibbs lectures (committee on), 1932
Incorporation, correspondence, 1923
(2 folders)

BOX 19

Mathematical Reviews

Correspondence

General

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(7 folders)

BOX 20

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BOX 21

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Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

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	Seely, Caroline, correspondence relating to Colloquium Series, 1929-1931 <i>See also</i> <u>Container 12, Seely, C.</u>
	Trustee's business, 1928-1931
	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1923-1925
BOX 22	American Rescue Ship Mission, 1941
	Americans for Intellectual Freedom, Sidney Hook
	Ballistic Research Laboratory, Aberdeen, Md., Proving Ground Classified material receipts, 1945 Segal and Clippinger, 1945 Survey in Europe, 1944 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1918-1919, 1946-1947 (2 folders)
	Blindness Library of Congress talking book, 1957-1960 New Jersey Commission for the Blind Clark, Vera P., 1959-1960 Earnest, Ethel P., 1959-1960 General correspondence, 1958-1959 Recording for the blind, Princeton, N.J., 1959 <i>See also</i> <u>Container 29, Optics</u>
	Boas, Franz, 1940
	Cambridge University Press, correspondence, 1932-1960
	Canterbury, Dean of (Hewlett Johnson), 1948
	Citizens for Victory, 1941
	Civil Rights Congress, 1948
	Committee on Mathematics of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council, 1942-1945
	Communist charges against Veblen American Committee for Protection of the Foreign Born, 1949-1953 American Council on Soviet Relations, 1941 Communist affiliation, 1953 Department of State General correspondence, 1952-1953 Summary of defense, 1952-1953 Halperin, Israel, 1946-1948 Hobbs concentration camp bill, 1950 House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1949 National Committee to Repeal the McCarran Acts, 1950-1955 (2 folders) National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, 1950 Reno, Franklin Victor, 1948-1950 (3 folders)
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Subject File, 1918-1960

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	Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, 1933-1935 (3 folders)
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	Group for Academic Freedom, University of California, 1951
	Guggenheim fellowship recommendations, 1929-1930
	Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1951
	Institution for the Advancement of Science
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	Committee on Policy, 1944
	Trustees correspondence, 1945-1960
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BOX OV 1

Oversize

Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas.

Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which it was removed.

BOX OV 1

Miscellany

Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas (Container 42)