

**Otto Sterhoff Beyer Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2013**

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2013  
Revised 2023 December

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Otto Sternoff Beyer Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1905-1951

**Bulk Dates:** 1929-1941

**ID No.:** MSS12633

**Creator:** Beyer, Otto Sternoff, 1886-1948

**Extent:** 45,000 items

**Extent:** 129 containers plus 5 oversize

**Extent:** 53 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78012633>

**Summary:** Engineer, economist, and labor consultant. Correspondence, speech and article file, subject files, scrapbooks, and other papers relating to Beyer's career as an engineer and economist in industry and government.

## 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

Beyer, Clara M. (Clara Mortenson). Clara M. Beyer papers.

Beyer, Otto Sternoff, 1886-1948.

Green, William, 1870-1952--Correspondence.

Lilienthal, David Eli, 1899-1981--Correspondence.

Perkins, Frances, 1880-1965--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945--Correspondence.

Tobin, James, 1918-2002--Correspondence.

Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

Canadian National Railways.

Tennessee Valley Authority.

United States. Bonneville Power Administration.

United States. Department of Labor.

United States. National Mediation Board.

### Subjects

Electric utilities--Northwest, Pacific.

Electric utilities--Tennessee River Valley.

Industrial relations.

Labor unions.

Railroads--Canada.

Railroads--Employees--Labor unions.

Railroads--United States.

Strikes and lockouts.

Unemployment.

Wages.

### Occupations

Economists.

Engineers.

Labor consultants.

## Acquisition Information

The papers of Otto Sternoff Beyer, economist, engineer and labor consultant, were given to the Library of Congress by Clara M. Beyer in 1955 and 1965. Additional material was transferred from the Department of Labor in 1962 and 1988.

## Processing History

The collection was processed in 1955. The finding aid was revised in 2013. The finding aid was updated in 2022 by Rachel Telford as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

## Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Otto Sternoff Beyer 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 Beyer Papers of 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, Otto Sternoff Beyer Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
1886, 18 Sept.	Born, Woodbridge, N.J.
1907	Graduate in mechanical engineering, Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, N.J.
1907-1908	Estimator and assistant to superintendent of rolling mill, Midvale Steel Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
1907-1910	Graduate work, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
1908-1911	Special apprentice, Motive Power and Car Departments, Erie Railroad Co., New York
1911-1912	Inspector of materials, Shop and Motive Power, Erie Railroad Co.
1912-1913	Engineer of Motive Power and Operation, Office of Assistant Vice President, Rock Island Lines, Chicago, Ill.
1913-1916	General foreman, Second District Shops, Rock Island Lines, Horton, Kans.
1916-1917	Research engineer, Engineering Experiment Station, Department of Railway Engineering, and instructor in Railway mechanical engineering
1917-1920	Captain, United States Army, served in organization of United States Army School of Aeronautics, Urbana, Ill. Director, Arsenal Orders Section, Army Ordnance Department
1920	Married Clara Mortenson
1920-1933	Consulting engineer with several railway systems and industrial companies in developing labor-management cooperative programs, among them the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co. and Canadian National Railways
1933-1935	Director, Section of Labor Relations, Federal Coordinator of Transportation

1935-1948	Labor relations consultant, Tennessee Valley Authority
1936-1942	Member, National Mediation Board, chairman in 1937 and 1940
1942-1944	Director, Division of Transport Personnel, Office of Defense Transportation
1943-1944	Member, War Manpower Commission
1944	Consultant, Bonneville Power Administration, United States Maritime Commission, Alaska Railroad, and Department of Interior
	Special lecturer, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
1948, 8 Dec.	Died

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Otto Sternoff Beyer (1886-1948) consist of personal and professional correspondence, memoranda, reports, speeches and articles, charts, and other papers, as well as scrapbooks of clippings relating mainly to his professional career. The papers span the years 1905-1951, but bulk largest from 1929 to 1941. The collection is organized into eleven series: [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [General Railroad File](#), [Canadian National Railways](#), [Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company](#), [Tennessee Valley Authority](#), [Bonneville Power Administration](#), [Speech and Article File](#), [Scrapbooks](#), [Addition](#), and [Oversize](#).

During Beyer's military service in World War I, he developed a program of union-management cooperation in army arsenals. Thereafter, he served as consulting engineer to unions and management in various industrial concerns and in railway systems such as the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company and the Canadian National Railways, acquiring a reputation as a leader in the improvement of labor-management relations. From 1933 to 1948, Beyer held a number of posts in the federal government. His papers document his widespread activities in considerable detail, including labor-management cooperation in the field of railway transportation, his connection with federal agencies, and work in the area of labor relations, unions, wages, strikes, and unemployment.

An [Addition](#) series contains biographical material and letters of condolence from Harry S. Truman, James Tobin, and others government officials. The article file in the Addition contains Beyer's notes on a projected history of railroad personnel, in which he was encouraged by Professor Sumner Slichter of Harvard. The subject file contains background material on his various positions with railroads, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the National Mediation Board during World War II. There is also material pertaining to Clara M. Beyer consisting of family correspondence and photographs, White House invitations, and material pertaining to her own position in the Labor Department.

Correspondents in the Addition include Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, David E. Lilienthal, Frances Perkins and William Green of the American Federation of Labor.

## Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in eleven series:

- [General Correspondence, 1929-1947](#)
- [Subject File, 1905-1947](#)
- [General Railroad File, 1915-1948](#)
- [Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948](#)
- [Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 1921-1942](#)
- [Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1948](#)
- [Bonneville Power Administration, 1940-1947](#)
- [Speech and Article File, 1919-1947](#)
- [Scrapbooks, 1909-1943](#)
- [Addition, 1933-1951](#)
- [Oversize, 1923-1943](#)

## Description of Series

<b>Container</b>	<b>Series</b>
BOX 1-8	<p><b><u>General Correspondence, 1929-1947</u></b></p> <p>Letters sent and received with attached and related matter. Arranged alphabetically by name of person.</p>
BOX 9-47	<p><b><u>Subject File, 1905-1947</u></b></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, notes, reports, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.</p>
BOX 48-69	<p><b><u>General Railroad File, 1915-1948</u></b></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter and miscellaneous material relating to Beyer's work regarding railroads. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.</p>
BOX 70-95	<p><b><u>Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948</u></b></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Canadian National Railways. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.</p>
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Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

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**Oversize, 1923-1943**

Certificates and scrapbooks.

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.

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	Bound volumes of printed matter and miscellaneous material.
	Arranged chronologically by volume.
BOX 125	1909
	1923-1930 <i>See Oversize</i>
	1926-1936 <i>See Oversize</i>
	1933-1934
	1938-1939
	1942-1943 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 126-129	<b>Addition, 1933-1951</b>
	Correspondence, reports, notes, articles, memorabilia, and miscellaneous material.
	Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.
BOX 126	Biographical
	Printed biographies
	Bibliography
	Correspondence
	Very important
	General
	Letters of condolence
	Appointments to government positions <i>See also Oversize</i>
	Obituaries
	Article file
	History of railroad personnel

## Addition, 1933-1951

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	Labor-management speeches Labor-management study Railroad articles United Textile Workers Utilities
<b>BOX 127</b>	Subject file Adjustment boards Alaskan railroads Anglo-American Joint Council Canadian railroads Cost-of-living (newspaper clippings) Eight-hour day Emergency Transport Act of 1933 European railroads National Mediation Board Railroad associations Railroad Pension Bill, 1934
<b>BOX 128</b>	Tennessee Valley Authority Thirty-hour week Transport personnel
<b>BOX 129</b>	Clara Beyer miscellany Correspondence Business, 1938-1951 Personal, 1942-1945 Social Perkins, Frances White House Memorabilia Notebook of labor legislation, 1939-1945
<b>BOX OV 1-OV 5</b>	<b>Oversize, 1923-1943</b> Certificates and scrapbooks. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
<b>BOX OV 1</b>	General Railroad File Rail Transport Conference, Geneva, Switzerland 1939 Certificate (Container 60)
<b>BOX OV 2</b>	Scrapbooks (Container 125) 1923-1930
<b>BOX OV 3</b>	1926-1936
<b>BOX OV 4</b>	1942-1943
<b>BOX OV 5</b>	Addition Biographical Appointments to government positions, 1935-1936 (Container 126)