

Oswald Veblen Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

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 ; 43 containers plus 1 overize ; 17 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

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 Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

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.

Administrative Information

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

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
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 Reviews* 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

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

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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

Container

Contents

	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
	“E” miscellaneous

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

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	
	Flexner, William, 1938-1940	
	Flinn, Alfred D., 1924	
	Ford, W. B., 1924-1925	
	Fort, Tomlinson, 1925-1931	
	Fowler, R. H., 1922-1928	
	Franklin, Philip, 1925-1927	
	Fulton, John F., 1926-1954	
	"F" miscellaneous 1921-1948	
	BOX 6	Gilbert, W. M., 1924-1926
		Ginn and Co., 1924-1929
		Givens, Wallace, 1936-1960
		Gleason, Rutherford E., 1926-1928
Godel, Kurt, 1933-1941		
Gottingen Academy, 1929-1947		
Goldstine, H. H., 1956-1960		
Greenbaum, Edward S., 1953-1954		
Griffin, F. L. 1924-1930		
Gronwall, T. H., 1919-1929		
Guggenheim Foundation, 1924-1930		
"G" miscellaneous, 1924-1938		
Hahn, H., 1910-1932		
Hancock, Harris, 1924-1929		
Hardy, Godfrey H., 1924-1947		
Hedrick, E. R., 1924-1932		
Henderson, Archibald, 1924-1939		
Henderson, Robert, 1924		
Hibben, John G., 1925-1932		
Hille, Einar, 1926-1938, 1947		
Hoffman, Banesh, 1929-1938, 1947 (2 folders)		
Hotelling, Harold, 1925-1935		
Howe, Gunter, 1930-1933		
Howe, John P., 1938		
Hoyle, Vinton A., 1930-1931		
Huntington, Edward V., 1923-1933		
Hurwitz, W. A., 1927-1929		
BOX 7	"H" miscellaneous, 1922-1948	
	Ipsen, Ernest L., 1930-1931	
	"I" miscellaneous, 1928-1931	
Jackson, Dunham, 1926-1930		

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

	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
	Knebelman, M. S., 1926-1939
	Kubota, T., 1922-1926
	“K” miscellaneous
	Lefschetz, Solomon, 1923-1932
	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
	Lovett, Edgar O., 1926-1934
	Lund, Wallace, 1924-1928
	“L” miscellaneous
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
	MacMillian, Co., 1925-1928
	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
	Mills, John, 1926
	Mitchell, Howard H., 1925-1931
	Mitchell, S. A., 1934-1935
	Mitchell, Ulysses Grant, 1924-1931
	Monod-Herzen, Edouard, 1924-1927
	Montgomery, Deane, 1946-1954

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

	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
	“M” miscellaneous
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
	“O” miscellaneous
BOX 10	Packard, Roscoe M., 1926-1940
	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
	“Q” miscellaneous, 1931-1938
	Rademacher, Hans, 1936-1941
	Rademaekers, 1936-2950
	Radó, Tibor, 1930-1947
	Rainich, G. Y., 1924-1939
	Rankin, W. W., Jr., 1925-1927
	Rao, B. S. Madhava, 1937-1938
	Reeve, W. D., 1931
	Reidemeister, Kurt, 1929-1946

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

	Reilly, Marion, 1923-1925
	Reynolds, Neva., 1926-1940
	Rice, Edwin W. J., 1924-1928
	Rice Institute, 1935-1941
	Richards, C. R., 1925
	Richardson, Roland George Dwight
	1923-1925
	(4 folders)
BOX 11	1926-1948
	(11 folders)
	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
	Rosinger, Kurt E., 1933
	Ruse, H. S., 1932-1939
	Russell, Bertrand, 1905-1940
	Russian Embassy, 1941- 1951
	“R” miscellaneous, 1924-1959
	(2 folders)
BOX 12	Sadowsky, Michael, 1927-1939
	Sassman, Clarence, 1940
	Schmidt, F. K., 1939-1948
	Schnayerson, 1938
	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
	Shipley School, 1934
	Shohat, J. A., 1925-1942

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

	Shuster, George N., 1940
	Sieg, L. P., 1935-1938
	Siegel, Carl L., 1935-1960 (2 folders)
	Silverman, L. L., 1930-1933
	Simmons, H. A., 1932-1933
	Simon, Leslie E., 1942-1948
	Sims, Allen R., 1940-1951
	Sims, Ralph W., 1950-1951
	Singer, James, 1934-1937
	Skinker, C. F., 1931-1936
	Slade, William A., 1941
	Slaught, H. E., 1923-1930
BOX 13	Smith, Barry C., 1940
	Smith, David Eugene, 1927-1939
	Smith, H. Alexander, 1924-1958
	Smith, Paul A., 1930-1944
	Smith, Percy F., 1926-1929
	Smith, Theobald, 1930-1931
	Snyder, Virgil, 1923-1944
	Somers, Richard H., 1942-1945
	Springer, Verlay Julius, 1924-1939
	Stechert and Co., 1924-1934
	Steck, Max, 1932-1933
	Stone, Marshall H., 1931-1949 (2 folders)
	Strauss, Lewis L., 1940-1960
	Struik, Dirk Jan, 1925-1942
	Swann, W. F. G., 1923-1948
	Synge, John L., 1922-1949
	Szego, Gabor, 1934-1948
	"S" miscellaneous, 1920-1950 (3 folders)
BOX 14	Takasu, T., 1927-1950
	Tamarkin, J. D., 1928-1942
	Tate, John T., 1930-1931
	Taub, A. H., 1936-1959 (3 folders)
	Taussky, Olga, 1928-1947
	Taylor, James H., 1924-1941
	Thomas, Joseph M., 1924-1947
	Thomas, Tracy Y., 1923-1950 (2 folders)
	Thomas, Wilbur K., 1931-1940
	Tisdale, W. E., 1923-1933 (2 folders)
	Tonelli, L., 1929-1935

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

	Townsend, E. J., 1924-1926
	Trowbridge, Augustus, 1923-1931
	Tyler, H. W., 1923-1930
	"T" miscellaneous, 1922-1955 (2 folders)
BOX 15	Ursell, H. D., 1930-1934
	"U" miscellaneous, 1929-1947
	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
	Von Neumann, John, 1929-1956
	"V" miscellaneous, 1905-1959
	Walsh, Joseph L., 1924-1940
	Wannamaker, W. H., 1930
BOX 16	Waverly Press, 1934-1939
	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
	White, Henry S., 1915-1942
BOX 17	Whitehead, J. H. C., 1930-1951, undated (2 folders)
	Whitney, Hasslar, 1932
	Whittaker, E. T., 1930-1938
	Whittemore, James K., 1923-1935
	Whyburn, G. T., 1937-1946
	Wick, B. L., 1929-1947
	Wiener, Norbert, 1924-1940
	Wigner, Eugene Paul, 1929-1946

General Correspondence, 1902-1960

Container

Contents

Wilder, Raymond L., 1935-1949
Wiley (John) & Sons, 1924-1944
Williams, K. P., 1924-1940
Wilson, Arlo, 1924-1938
Wilson, Edwin B., 1904-1949
 (2 folders)
Winger, R. M., 1936-1949
Wintringer, George C., 1929
“W” miscellaneous, 1923-1940
Yano, Kentaro, 1936-1950
Yerkes, Robert M., 1923-1924
Young, J. W., 1923-1931
“Y” miscellaneous, 1924-1945
Zanstra, Herman, 1924-1926
Zippin, Leo, 1925-1939
“Z” miscellaneous

BOX 18-34

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
 Oct. 1939-Apr. 1940
 (7 folders)

BOX 20

May 1940-Apr. 1942
 (15 folders)

BOX 21

May 1942-Jan. 1948
 (6 folders)
Disbursements, 1939-1941
Minutes, 1938-1940

Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

Contents

BOX 22

Richardson, Roland George Dwight (secretary), correspondence, 1923-1933 *See also*
[Container 10, Richardson, Roland George Dwight](#)
(4 folders)
Seely, Caroline, correspondence relating to Colloquium Series, 1929-1931 *See also* [Container 12, Seely, C.](#)
Trustee's business, 1928-1931
Miscellaneous correspondence, 1923-1925
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 *See also* [Container 29, Optics](#)
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)
Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace, 1949-1952
Scientists' Committee on Loyalty Problems
Volpe, Joseph, Jr., correspondence, 1953-1954

BOX 23

Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

Contents

	Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, 1954
	Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, 1933-1935 (3 folders)
	Federation of American Scientists, 1948-1949
	Group for Academic Freedom, University of California, 1951
	Guggenheim fellowship recommendations, 1929-1930
	Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1951
	Institution for the Advancement of Science
	Academic Committee, 1949
	Buildings and grounds
	General correspondence
	1936-1945 (2 folders)
BOX 24	1946-1956 (3 folders)
	Fuld Hall correspondence, 1937-1939
	Committee on Policy, 1944
	Trustees correspondence, 1945-1960
	Miscellany, 1930-1959
	International Congress of Mathematicians, 1939-1940
	International Mathematical Union, 1934
BOX 25	Loyalty cases
	Provisional Committee for National Emergency Conference, 1939
	Scientists' Committee on Loyalty Problems, 1947-1949
	Struik, Dirk Jan, 1942-1952
	Vranceanu, Gheorghe C., 1937-1948
	Printed matter
	Loyalty problem and academic freedom, 1949
	National Academy of Sciences
	Brockett, Paul, assistant secretary, 1929-1930
	Committee on Funds for Publication of Research
	Correspondence
	1928-1930 (3 folders)
BOX 26	1931-1934
	Executive Committee, 1928-1929, 1939 (3 folders)
	Mathematical Section officers, 1922-1925
	National Research Fund, 1928, 1934 and undated (3 folders)
	Special Committee to Assist in the Selection of a National Science Foundation Panel, 1947
	National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, 1953
	National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, 1948-1949 (2 folders)
BOX 27	National Research Council
	Administrative Committee, 1935-1936
	Committee reports on expenditures, 1922-1928

Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

Contents

	Fellowships in physics, chemistry, and mathematics
	Agenda, 1931-1935
	(3 folders)
BOX 28	Analysis
	Board meetings, correspondence, 1929-1937
	(6 folders)
BOX 29	General correspondence, 1923-1947
	(3 folders)
	Reynolds, Neva E., correspondence, 1929-1959 <i>See also Container 10, Reynolds, Neva Tistale</i>
	National University for Advanced Study, 1958-1959
	New Jersey Civil Liberties Union, 1940-1941
	Office of Scientific Research and Development, 1945-1946
	(2 folders)
	Optics
	American Foundation for the Blind, 1958-1960
	(2 folders)
	Boeder, Paul, correspondence, 1959-1960
	Bushnell (D. P.) and Co., 1958
	Chinard, Gilbert, 1959
	Compass Instrument and Optical Co., 1959
	Eastman Kodak Co.
	Edmund Scientific Co., 1958-1959
	Edroy Products Co., 1958-1959
	Feinbloom, William 1958
	Herzberger, Max J., 1958-1959
	Institute for Advanced Study account, 1958-1960
	Job Lot Trading Co., 1958-1959
	Lafayette Radio, 1960
BOX 30	Lighthouse, 1960
	McCutchen, Brunson S., 1959
	Monk, George S., 1960
	Peerless Photo Products, 1958
	Rogers, Eric M., 1959
	Sloan, Louise L., 1957-1959
	Woods, Alan C., 1953-1960
	Zeiss-Alfoldi, 1958
	Instruments, 1958-1960 <i>See also Container 22, Blindness</i>
	Ordnance Department, 1945
	Polish-American Congress, 1946
	Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.
	Association of Scientists, 1948-1949
	Committee, 1930-1931
	Institute of Advanced Studies, 1945
	Institute of Mathematical Research, 1924-1925
	Mathematics building
	Acoustics, 1930

Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

Contents

	Decorating, 1930-1931
	Miscellaneous, 1930-1931
	Mathematics department meetings, 1929
	Transfer of funds from General Education Board, 1925-1930
	Miscellaneous, 1919-1959
	Progressive Citizens of America, 1947
	Refugees
	General, 1935-1941
	(2 folders)
	Abrahamson, Ernest L.
	Ascoli, Guido
BOX 31	Basch, Alfred, 1941-1944
	Baule, Bernard, 1934-1947
	Beer, Ferdinand Pierre, 1942
	Bemporad, Giulio, 1939
	Bergman, Stefan, 1941-1946
	Bergman, Gustav, 1939
	Bernays, Paul I., 1939
	Bernstein, Felix, 1943
	Bers, Lipman, 1941
	Berwald, Ludwig, 1939-1942
	Blum, Richard, 1950-1952
	Blumenthal, Otto, 1938-1940
	Bohm, Franz,
	Born, Max, 1940
	Brauer, Alfred T., 1938-1943
	Bruns, Walter J., 1939-1940
	Castelnuovo, Gina, 1930-1945
	Dehn, Max, 1938-1945
	Dember, Harry, 1941
	Dienes, Paul, 1939
	Duschek, Adalbert, 1938-1939
	Ehrenhaft, Flex, 1939-1941
	Fenchel, Werner
	Frank, Philipp, 1939
	Freudenthal, Hans, 1940
	Fried, Hans, 1940-1941
	Froehlich, Walter, 1939-1942
	Frucht, Robert, 1938-1947
	Funk, Paul, 1939
	Furth, R., 1940
BOX 32	Geiringer, Hilda, 1939-1944
	Goldstein, Louis, 1939
	Goldstein, Moritz and Thomas, 1939
	Golomb, Michael, 1938-1942
	Gross, Wilhelm, 1939

Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

Contents

BOX 33

Guenther, Gotthard, 1938-1940
Gumbel, Emil J., 1936-1944
Hadamard, Jacques, 1936-1942
Halm, Hans, 1937
Hamburger, Hans, 1938-1943
Hausdorff, Felix, 1939
Heilbronn, Hans, 1940
Hellinger, Ernst, 1938-1941
Helly, Elizabeth, 1944
Helmer, Olaf, 1937
Houtermans, Charlotte R., 1939
Houtermans, Fritz Georg, 1939
Jacchia, Luigi, 1939
Jacobsthal, Ernst Erich, 1938-1944
Jaffe, George, 1939
Jehle, Herbert, 1938-1941
John, Fritz
Jolles, Stanislaus,
Jordan, Henri, 1945
Kogbetliantz, Ervand, 1940-1941
Kottler, Friedrich, 1938-1940
Kuhn, Paul, 1939-1944
Langevin, Paul, 1941-1942
Levi, Friedrich W., 1935-1941
Lewin, Gerhard
Loewig, Henry, 1939-1947
Loewner, Charles
Lubelski, S., 1938
Lukacs, Eugene, 1938-1942
Mahler, Kurt, 1940
Mann, Henry, 1938-1944
Marx, Erich, 1939-1944
Mayer, Anton, E., 1938-1942
Mosztowski, Andrzej, 1941
Nachoo, Hans, 1939
Neumann, Bernard, 1939
Noether, Fritz, 1940-1946
Noether, Herman, 1943-1946
Noether, Herman and Gottfried, 1938-1942
(2 folders)
Pietrkowski, Stefan
Pinl, Max, 1938-1939
Pollaczek, Felix, 1938-1940
Polya, George, 1940-1941
Prager, Willy, 1938-1939
Pringsheim, Peter, 1940

Subject File, 1918-1960

Container

Contents

	Reiche, Fritz, 1939-1941
	Reiss, Max, 1935
	Remak, Robert Erich, 1938-1940
	Rogosinski, Werner, 1940
	Rosenthal, Arthur, 1938-1942
	Rothe, Erich, 1934-1944
	Salomon, Albert
	Scherk, Peter, 1939-1941
	Schoenflies, Albert, 1938-1939
	Schwarz, Stefan, 1939
	Schwerdtfeger, Hans, 1935-1940
	Segre, Beniamino, 1938-1941
BOX 34	Sternberg, Wolfgang, 1939-1949 (2 folders)
	Tarski, Alfred, 1939-1940
	Terracini, Alessandro, 1938-1943
	Theilheimer, Feodor, 1942
	Thirring, Hans, 1938-1939
	Varsonyi, Andrew, 1940
	Volettra, Edoardo, 1940
	Volettra, Enrico, 1939
	Wason, Wolfgang, 1938-1942
	Weinstein, Alexander, 1939-1946
	Winternitz, Artur, 1938-1940
	Wolf, Franktisek, 1940
	Wundtheiler, Alexander, 1940-1941
	Zilsel, Edgar
	Research Board for National Security
	General correspondence, 1945-1946 (2 folders)
	Proposed formation of panels, 1945
	Applied mathematics
	Computing devices
	Fluid mechanics
	Shock waves theory
	Spanish intellectual aid, 1939
	Stony Brook-Millstone watersheds Association, 1954-1955
	<i>Tass</i> , 1941
	University Federation for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom, 1938
	Veblen, Thorstein B., correspondence relating to, 1933-1957
	World War I service, 1918-1919
BOX 35-38	Writings File, 1905-1919
	Articles, bibliography, book manuscripts and notes, and book reviews. Arranged by type of writing, with articles organized chronologically.
BOX 35	Articles

	1905, "Lechala's General Geometry"
	1906, "The Square Root and the Relations of Order"
	1908, "On the Well-Ordered Subsets of the Continuum"
	1910, "Letter to the editor of the Jahresbericht"
	1913, Decomposition of an N-Space by a Polyhedron"
	1917, "On the Deformation of an N-Cell"
	1924
	"Extensions on Relative Tensors"
	"Invariance of the Poincaré Numbers of a Discrete Group"
	"Projective Invariants of Affine Geometry of Paths"
	1927, "Invariants of Quadratic Differential Forms," correspondence relating to
	1928, "Conformal Tensors and Connection"
	1929, "Henry Burchard Fine- in Memoriam"
	1932, "Quadratic Differential Forms," Cambridge Tract No. 24, correspondence relating to
	1933, "Spinors in Projective Relativity"
	1934, "The Dirac Equation in Projective Relativity," with A. H. Taub and John Von Neumann
	1935-1936, "Introduction to Infinitesimal Analysis," correspondence relating to
	1937 [?], "Geometry of Complex Domains," with John Von Neumann, 1937[?], bound volume of 1955 reprint
	1950, "Opening Address" of International Congress of Mathematicians
	Undated, "Projective Relativity"
	Bibliography
BOX 36	Book notes and chapters (14 folders)
BOX 37	Book notes and chapters (22 folders)
BOX 38	Book notes and chapters (16 folders) Book reviews, 1932-1933
BOX 38-43	Miscellany, 1881-1959 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.
BOX 38	Austin Motor Co., 1951-1955 (4 folders)
BOX 39	Bibliographical material on others Clothes washing machine, 1949 Eastman Kodak Co., 1955-1956 European trips, 1951-1952, 1954, 1956 (3 folders) Forest conservation, 1950-1952 General miscellany Glasses prescriptions, 1944 Income taxes, 1957-1959 Insurance

	Pickfords Ltd., 1953
	Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association, 1950-1951
	Lecture notebooks
	"Foundations of Geometry," E. H. Moore, 1901
	(2 folders)
	"Differential Geometry I," H. Maschke, 1902
	"Theory of Functions," O. Bolza, 1902
	(2 vols.)
BOX 40	"Linear Substitution Groups," H. Maschke, undated
	"Theory of Numbers," L. E. Dickson, undated
	Untitled and undated notebooks
	Medical expenses, 1957-1958
	(2 folders)
	Memorabilia
	Mercer County, N.J., Recreation Advisory Council, 1959
	Notebooks (pocket), circa 1938, circa 1944, 1945-1946
	(3 vols.)
BOX 41	Passport, 1955
	Photographs
	Photography, 1926-1953
	Printed matter
	Lattimore, Owen J., case, 1953
	Oppenheimer, J. Robert, security case, 1954
	(2 folders)
	Miscellaneous
	(3 folders)
BOX 42	(7 folders)
BOX 43	(3 folders)
	Property owned by Veblen
	Maine, Brooklin (Hancock County), 1947-1958
	Princeton, N.J.
	Battle Road, 1959
	Herrontown Road, 1941-1951
	Morningside Avenue, 1910-1944
	General correspondence, 1935-1951
	Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas <i>See Oversize</i>
	Renault automobile, 1956-1957
	Spanish refugee aid, 1953
	Touring Club of France, 1958
	Water softener, 1959
	Writings of others
	"An Explicit Expression for the Detrimant of the Matrix . . .," J. S. DeWet
	"Introduction à la Théorie des Structures
	Infinitésimales et des Pseudogroupes de Lie," C. Ehresmann
	"Tensor Coordinates of Linear Spaces," W. Givens
	"On Five-Dimensional Relativity Theory," O. Klein

Miscellany, 1881-1959

Container

Contents

“A Remark on the Coupling of Gravitation and Electron,” Hermann Weyl

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)