

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>
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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
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BOX 4	Courant, Richard, 1923-1948
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	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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Fiske, Thomas S., 1926-1929
Fite, W. Benjamin, 1924-1930
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Flexner, William, 1938-1940
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Ford, W. B., 1924-1925
Fort, Tomlinson, 1925-1931
Fowler, R. H., 1922-1928
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Hancock, Harris, 1924-1929
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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
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Hotelling, Harold, 1925-1935
Howe, Gunter, 1930-1933
Howe, John P., 1938
Hoyle, Vinton A., 1930-1931
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	Johnson, Alvin, 1935-1938
	Johnson, Maro, 1951-1956
	Jones, Gwethalyn, 1931-1959
	Jones, Thomas D., 1926-1930
	“J” miscellaneous, 1923-1945
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	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
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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
	Lovett, Edgar O., 1926-1934
	Lund, Wallace, 1924-1928
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	McAlphin, David H., 1955-1959
	McClenahan, Howard, 1924-1928
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	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
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	Moore, C. N., 1925-1938
	Moore, E. H., 1902-1930
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	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)
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	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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	Park, Marion, 1938-1939
	Pauling, Linus, 1957-1958
	Paerl, Raymond, 1925-1928
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	Phillips, H. B., 1935-1940
	Polya, George, 1932-1948
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	Reilly, Marion, 1923-1925
	Reynolds, Neva., 1926-1940
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	Richards, C. R., 1925
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	Rietz, H. L., 1923-1933
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	Roberts, S. C., 1927
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	Roever, William H., 1924-1944
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	Ross, Charles F., 1928-1933
	Roosevelt, George E., 1924
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	Rosenbach, A. S. W., 1933
	Rosenblatt, Alfred, 1925-1950
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	Schoenberg, I. J., 1933-1948
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	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
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	Shipley School, 1934
	Shohat, J. A., 1925-1942

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	Simon, Leslie E., 1942-1948
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	Snyder, Virgil, 1923-1944
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	Tamarkin, J. D., 1928-1942
	Tate, John T., 1930-1931
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	Taylor, James H., 1924-1941
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	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
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	Wannamaker, W. H., 1930
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	Webber, G. Cuthbert, 1935-1936
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	Weil, André, 1939-1958
	Wells, Volney H., 1926-1930
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BOX 18-34

Subject File, 1918-1960

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Arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

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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
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Endowment fund campaign, 1924
Form letters, 1924
Gibbs lectures (committee on), 1932
Incorporation, correspondence, 1923
 (2 folders)

BOX 19

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Subject File, 1918-1960

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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
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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
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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
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Hobbs concentration camp bill, 1950
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BOX 23

Subject File, 1918-1960

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	Group for Academic Freedom, University of California, 1951
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	Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1951
	Institution for the Advancement of Science
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	Provisional Committee for National Emergency Conference, 1939
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	Struik, Dirk Jan, 1942-1952
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	Bushnell (D. P.) and Co., 1958
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	1910, "Letter to the editor of the Jahresbericht"
	1913, Decomposition of an N-Space by a Polyhedron"
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	"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
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- Lecture notebooks
- “Foundations of Geometry,” E. H. Moore, 1901
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 - “Differential Geometry I,” H. Maschke, 1902
 - “Theory of Functions,” O. Bolza, 1902
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 - “Theory of Numbers,” L. E. Dickson, undated
 - Untitled and undated notebooks
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 - Renault automobile, 1956-1957
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 - 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

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“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)