

Leonard Porter Ayres Papers

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Prepared by Mike Hughes

Collection Summary

Title: Leonard Porter Ayres Papers

Span Dates: 1902-1946

ID No.: MSS11445

Creator: Ayres, Leonard Porter, 1879-1946

Extent: 2,200 items ; 25 containers plus 2 oversize ; 10 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Statistician, economist, educator, and army officer. Family and general correspondence, journals, notes, reports, subject files, statistical tables and graphs, printed material, and clippings relating primarily to Ayres's work during World War I as chief statistical officer for the War Department, his service to the Allied Powers Reparation Commission as economic adviser on the Dawes Commission, and his work during World War II as statistical coordinator for the War Department and as consultant to the War Manpower Commission.

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

Ayres family--Correspondence.

Ayres, Leonard Porter, 1879-1946.

Goldsmith, Alan Gustavus, 1892-1961--Correspondence.

Herter, Christian Archibald, 1895-1966--Correspondence.

Young, Agnes Brooks, 1898-1974. Agnes Brooks Young journal. 1940-1945.

Organizations

Allied Powers (1919-). Reparation Commission.

Cleveland Foundation. Survey Committee.

Cleveland Trust Company.

Russell Sage Foundation.

United States. War Department.

United States. War Manpower Commission.

Subjects

Education--Ohio--Cleveland.

Education--Puerto Rico.

Education.

World War, 1914-1918--Reparations.

World War, 1914-1918--Statistics.

World War, 1939-1945--Statistics.

Places

Europe--Description and travel.

Puerto Rico--History--20th century.

Puerto Rico--Social life and customs.

Occupations

Army officers.

Economists.

Educators.

Statisticians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Leonard Porter Ayres, statistician, economist, educator, and army officer, were given to the Library of Congress by his brother-in-law, W. Randolph Burgess between 1956 and 1958. Additional material was given by Agnes Brooks Young in 1966.

Processing History

The collection was processed in 1978. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Transfers

Photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Leonard Porter Ayres 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 Leonard Porter Ayres 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, Leonard Porter Ayres Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1879, Sept. 15	Born, Niantic, Conn.
1902	Ph.B., Boston University, Boston, Mass.
1902	Teacher, Puerto Rico
1903-1904	Superintendent of schools, District of Caguas, P.R.
1904-1906	Superintendent of schools, San Juan, P.R.
1906-1908	General superintendent of schools, P.R., and chief of its Division of Statistics
1907-1909	Attended Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1908-1920	Director, Departments of Education and Statistics, Russell Sage Foundation
1909	A.M. Boston University, Boston, Mass.
1910	Ph.D., Boston University, Boston, Mass.
1917-1918	Director, Division of Statistics, War Industries Board

1918-1919	Colonel, General Staff, United States Army; chief statistical officer of the War Department, the American Expeditionary Forces, and the American Commission to Negotiate Peace
1920	Appointed colonel, Officers' Reserve Corps
1920-1946	Vice president for economics and statistics, Cleveland Trust Co.
1924	Economic adviser to Allied Powers Reparations Commission
1940	Returned to active duty; coordinator of statistics, Office of the Undersecretary of War
1941	Promoted to brigadier general
1942	Assigned to headquarters, Services of Supply Retired from military service
1943-1945	Consultant, War Manpower Commission
1946, Oct. 30	Died, Cleveland, Ohio

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Leonard P. Ayres (1879-1946) cover the period 1902-1946. The collection consists of journals, correspondence, memoranda, monographs, statistical reports, printed matter, and clippings, and it deals primarily with Ayres's professional life as an educator, statistician, military officer, economist, and businessman. The collection is organized into seven series: [Journals](#), [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

Among his [Journals](#), which Ayres maintained intermittently, the most interesting concern his service as a technical adviser to the Allied Powers Reparation Commission as part of the Dawes Commission, 1924, his trips to Europe, 1927 and 1929, and his service as a consultant to the War Manpower Commission, 1943-1945. The collection also includes a journal kept by Agnes Brooks Young as Ayres's secretary at the War Department and at the War Manpower Commission. In addition to Young's entries, the journal consists of portions dictated by Ayres. In some instances the portions dictated by Ayres duplicate the entries in his journal for the same period.

A small amount of [Family Correspondence](#) and an occasional journal entry about his family and friends provide a glimpse of his private life. Ayres, a bachelor, wrote letters to his parents and his siblings May, Ida, Lucy, and Milan. The bulk of the Family Correspondence documents his years as a teacher and superintendent of schools in Puerto Rico (1902-1908). His letters describe life in Puerto Rico and the character of American colonial administration. The [General Correspondence](#) relates to Ayres's responsibilities in Puerto Rico, at the Russell Sage Foundation (1908-1920), the Cleveland Trust Company (1920-1946), and as a consultant to the War Department between the wars.

Matters relating to business and education constitute the principal themes in Ayres's [Speeches and Writings](#). The collection includes the lectures he delivered at New York University on educational statistics as well as a number of monographs Ayres wrote for the Russell Sage Foundation on such topics as the teaching of spelling in elementary schools, psychological testing in vocational guidance, and the relation of physical defects to school progress. In 1915-1916 Ayres served as director of the Cleveland Foundation Survey Committee, which sought new ways to improve the educational system in Ohio's largest city. Of the twenty-five reports issued by the survey, Ayres was the author or coauthor of five, and his contributions are included in the Speeches and Writings. The remaining reports are included as part of printed matter under miscellany. The Speeches and Writings file also consists of a small number of articles, speeches, and charts and tables on such subjects as the educational system in Puerto Rico and business activities in the 1920s and during the Great Depression.

The major portion of the collection reflects Ayres's participation in the First World War as the War Department's chief statistical officer, his service to the Allied Reparations Commission as a technical adviser, and his participation in the Second World War as the War Department's coordinator of statistics and a consultant to the War Manpower Commission. The bulk of the [Subject File](#) from his wartime service consists of statistical reports prepared under Ayres's supervision for the Army's General Staff. Although there are reports on a variety of topics, the majority are weekly summaries describing the military situation by use of charts, tables, and graphs. The weekly statistical reports for World War II are incomplete, but precede United States entry into the war and cover the period September 29, 1939-November 22, 1941. The Subject File also contains correspondence, memoranda, narrative reports, and printed matter on both war efforts.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the collection concerns the work of the Dawes Commission, which was established in 1924 to examine the problems of postwar reparations and German finance. The committee met in Paris and Berlin to make recommendations to improve economic conditions in postwar Europe. Ayres was appointed one of the technical advisers to the United States delegation, and his contributions are documented in the correspondence, memoranda, and reports that are included in the Subject File. The material also reveals the roles taken by other technical advisers from the United States, France, Great Britain, and Italy as well as the attitude of the Germans toward the extensive investigation of its finances made by the Allies. In addition, the Subject File includes minutes of committee meetings, copies of questionnaires sent to the German government and its responses, copies of the Committee's final reports, and newspaper clippings from the *New York World*, *New York Times* and *New York Evening Post*. Of special interest is the correspondence between Alan Goldsmith, who was an adviser to the United States delegation, and Christian Herter, who was an assistant to Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. Goldsmith kept Herter informed of developments within the committee. The correspondence covers the period January 20-March 31, 1924.

There is a large amount of printed matter in the [Miscellany](#). This series also includes biographical information, travel vouchers for the period 1940-1945, acknowledgments of receipt of *The War with Germany*, a War Department publication written by Ayres in 1919, a scrapbook describing some of Ayres's college years, Army regulations and orders, and passports and commissions.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Journals, 1902-1945](#)
- [Family Correspondence, 1902-1930](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1902-1942](#)
- [Subject File, 1917-1946](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1905-1946](#)
- [Miscellany, 1902-1946](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

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