

# Barry Commoner Papers

## A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms014018>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm81059774>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Barry Commoner Papers

**Span dates:** 1942-1979

**Bulk dates:** (bulk 1960-1979)

**ID No.:** MSS59774

**Creator:** Patterson, Robert Porter, 1891-1952

**extent:** 165,000 items ; 549 containers plus 4 oversize and 1 vault container ; 220 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**Summary:** Biologist, ecologist, and environmental activist. Diaries, correspondence, speeches and writings, subject files, organizational files, research files, photographs and slides, and miscellaneous material documenting Commoner's career as a scientist and environmental leader.

## 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

Commoner, Barry, 1917-2012.

### Subjects

Biology.

Ecology.

Environmentalism.

Science--Moral and ethical aspects.

### Occupations

Biologists.

Ecologists.

Environmental activists.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The papers of Barry Commoner, biologist, ecologist, and environmental activist, were given to the Library of Congress by Commoner in 1981.

### Processing History

The bulk of the Commoner collection was housed in 1982. Material not previously arranged was processed as an addition in 1990. The finding aid was revised in 2013.

### Transfers

Sound recordings, videocassettes, and filmstrips have been transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

### Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Barry Commoner is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Barry Commoner 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, Barry Commoner Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1917, May 28	Born, Brooklyn, N.Y.
1937	B.A. Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1938	M.A. Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1941	Ph.D., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1942	Entered U.S. Naval Reserve
1946	Married Gloria C. Gordon
1946-1947	Associate editor, <i>Science Illustrated</i>
1947-1953	Associate professor of plant physiology, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
1953-1976	Professor of plant physiology, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.; chairman, Biology Department, 1965-1969
1965-198	Director, Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
1976-1981	Professor of environmental science, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
1980	Married Lisa Feiner Citizens Party candidate for president
1940-1942	Taught biology, Queens College, New York, N.Y.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Barry Commoner (1917-2012 ) span the years 1942-1979, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1960-1979. The collection consists of diaries, correspondence, speeches and writings, subject files, organizational files, research files, photographs and slides, and miscellaneous material documenting Commoner's career as a biologist, ecologist, and environmental activist. The papers are organized into eight series: [Personal File](#), [Speeches and Writings File](#), [Subject File](#), [Organizations File](#), [1990 Addition](#), [Research File](#), [Photographs and Slides](#), and [Miscellany](#).

The collection contains notebooks, data, and production material for many of Commoner's scientific publications, including documentation relating to his pioneering work on the physiochemical basis of biological processes. It also reflects his writings, lectures, and public appearances as a founder of the post-World War II environmental movement calling attention to the ecology and the role of scientists in informing the public of scientific and environmental issues.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- Personal File, 1947-1976
- Speeches and Writings File, 1959-1976
- Subject File, 1966-1975
- Organizations File
- 1990 Addition, 1943-1979
- Research File
- Photographs and Slides
- Miscellany

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-13	<b><u>Personal File, 1947-1976</u></b> Dairies, notebooks, general correspondence, telephone logs, appointment books, and agenda and itineraries. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 14-175	<b><u>Speeches and Writings File, 1959-1976</u></b> Drafts and printed copies of speeches, articles, and books with related correspondence and production material. Arranged by type of writing or material.
BOX 176-326	<b><u>Subject File, 1966-1975</u></b> Correspondence, writings, reports, printed matter, and other topical material. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 327-490	<b><u>Organizations File</u></b> Correspondence, reports, and other organizational material. Arranged by name of organization or type of material.
BOX 491-515	<b><u>1990 Addition, 1943-1979</u></b> General correspondence, writings, and subject files. Arranged by type of material
BOX 515-538	<b><u>Research File</u></b> Charts, graphs, computer printouts, and other research data. Arranged by topic or type of material.
BOX 539-550	<b><u>Photographs and Slides</u></b> Photographs, slides, and transparencies. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 551-554	<b><u>Miscellany</u></b> Awards and certificates, clippings, physiology notes, telephone logs, printed matter, and other miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
<b>BOX 1-13</b>	<b>Personal File, 1947-1976</b> Dairies, notebooks, general correspondence, telephone logs, appointment books, and agenda and itineraries. Arranged by type of material.
<b>BOX 1</b>	Diaries Notebooks General correspondence 1947-1976 1947-1952
<b>BOX 2</b>	1953-1955
<b>BOX 3</b>	1956-1960
<b>BOX 4</b>	1961-1962
<b>BOX 5</b>	1972
<b>BOX 6</b>	1973
<b>BOX 7</b>	1974
<b>BOX 8</b>	1975-1976
<b>BOX 9</b>	Incoming calls 1972
<b>BOX 10</b>	1973-1974
<b>BOX 11</b>	1975-1976
<b>BOX 12</b>	Outgoing calls, 1972-1973
<b>BOX 13</b>	Appointment bok, 1965-1968 Agendas and itineraries, 1973-1976
<b>BOX 14-175</b>	<b>Speeches and Writings File, 1959-1976</b> Drafts and printed copies of speeches, articles, and books with related correspondence and production material. Arranged by type of writing or material.
<b>BOX 14</b>	Speech file 1959-1963
<b>BOX 15</b>	1963-1964
<b>BOX 16</b>	1965
<b>BOX 17</b>	1965
<b>BOX 18-19</b>	1966
<b>BOX 20-23</b>	1967
<b>BOX 24-28</b>	1968
<b>BOX 29-33</b>	1969
<b>BOX 34</b>	1969-1970
<b>BOX 35-38</b>	1970
<b>BOX 39-42</b>	1971

## Speeches and Writings File, 1959-1976

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 43	1971-1972
BOX 44-45	1972
BOX 46-47	1973
BOX 48	1973-1974
BOX 49-60	1974
BOX 51	1974
BOX 52	1975-1976
BOX 53-54	1976
BOX 55-56	Invitations declined 1970
BOX 57	1970-1972
BOX 58	1973
BOX 59	1974
BOX 60	1975
BOX 61	1976
BOX 62	1976-1977
BOX 63	1977 Invitations cancelled 1972
BOX 64	1973-1977
BOX 65-71	Article file Articles
BOX 72-73	Reprints
BOX 74-73	Book file <i>The Closing Circle</i> <i>The Integrity of Science</i> <i>Politics of Energy</i> <i>Poverty of Power</i> <i>Science and Survival</i>
BOX 88-91	
BOX 92-100	
BOX 101-120	
BOX 121-127	
BOX 128	Drafts and correspondence concerning publications 1967-1968
BOX 129	1968
BOX 130-131	1969
BOX 132	1969-1970
BOX 133	1970
BOX 134	1971
BOX 135-138	1972
BOX 139-142	1973
BOX 143-145	1974
BOX 146-147	1975
BOX 148	1975-1976
BOX 149-150	1976
BOX 151	1976-1977
BOX 152-156	1977
BOX 157-158	1978
BOX 159	1979

## Speeches and Writings File, 1959-1976

### *Container*

### *Contents*

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BOX 160	Publishers' catalogues A-B
BOX 161	C
BOX 162	D-F
BOX 163	G-I
BOX 164	J-N
BOX 165	O-Q
BOX 166	R-S
BOX 167	T-U
BOX 168	V-W
BOX 169	Manuscripts reviewed A-B
BOX 170	C-F
BOX 171	F
BOX 172	G-H
BOX 173	I-M
BOX 174	N-R
BOX 175	S-Z
BOX 176-326	<b>Subject File, 1966-1975</b> Correspondence, writings, reports, printed matter, and other topical material. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 176	1966-1967 A-B
BOX 177	B
BOX 178	B-F
BOX 179	F-P
BOX 180	Q-T
BOX 181	V-Z
BOX 182	1966-1975 A-B
BOX 183	B
BOX 184	C-E
BOX 185	F-I
BOX 186	J-S
BOX 187	T-Z
BOX 188	1968 J-M
BOX 189	N
BOX 190	N
BOX 191	O-P
BOX 192	P-R
BOX 193	S-T
BOX 194	T-V
BOX 195-197	1968 W



## Subject File, 1966-1975

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 198	1970 A-B
BOX 199	C-F
BOX 200	G-K
BOX 201	L-P
BOX 202	Q-T
BOX 203	U-W
BOX 204	1971 A-C
BOX 205	C-F
BOX 206	G-I
BOX 207	I-L
BOX 208	M-Q
BOX 209	R-T
BOX 210	W-Z
BOX 211	1972 A-C
BOX 212	D-M
BOX 213	M-N
BOX 214	N-P
BOX 215	P-T
BOX 216	T-U
BOX 217	U-Z
BOX 218	1973 A-F
BOX 219	G-M
BOX 220	M-S
BOX 221	S-Z
BOX 222	1974 A-C
BOX 223	D-M
BOX 224	M-Z
BOX 225	1975 A-C
BOX 226	C-E
BOX 227	F-M
BOX 228	M-Q
BOX 229	R-Z
BOX 230	I. Arms Control and Disarmament II. Civil Defense
BOX 231-233	III. Environment
BOX 234	III. Environment IV. Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy
BOX 235	IV. Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy
BOX 236	V. Testing
BOX 237	VI. War

## Subject File, 1966-1975

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 238-239	VII. Miscellaneous
BOX 240	VIII. Space IX. Population X. Foreign Policy
BOX 241	XI. Civil Rights XII. Higher Education
BOX 242-260	A-Z
BOX 261-274	Drafts
BOX 275-285	A-Z
BOX 286-326	Pre-1970 miscellaneous
BOX 327-490	<b>Organizations File</b> Correspondence, reports, and other organizational material. Arranged by name of organization or type of material.
BOX 327-393	American Association for the Advancement of Science
BOX 394	American Cancer Society
BOX 395-424	Center for the Biology of Natural Systems
BOX 425-426	Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, substance file, 1974-1977
BOX 427-430	Committee for Environmental Information
BOX 431-432	Committee for Nuclear Information
BOX 433-436	National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis
BOX 437	Office of Naval Research
BOX 438-445	Scientists' Institute for Public Information/Committee for Environmental Information
BOX 446-460	Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
BOX 461-472	Projects file
BOX 473-488	Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactors
BOX 489	Scrapbook
BOX 490	Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., Senate Council
BOX 491-515	<b>1990 Addition, 1943-1979</b> General correspondence, writings, and subject files. Arranged by type of material
BOX 491	General correspondence 1956-1970 (7 folders)
BOX 492	1970-1979, undated (5 folders) Speeches and writings file Programs and advertisements 1957-1969 (2 folders)
BOX 493	1970-1976 Speeches, 1956-1978, undated (5 folders)
BOX 494	Writings

	By Commoner
	Correspondence
	General, 1954-1975
	(2 folders)
	<i>Technology of Profit</i> , Russian translation, 1975-1977
	Articles and papers
	1943-1963
	(6 folders)
BOX 495	1964-1971
	(6 folders)
BOX 496	1972-1973
	(5 folders)
BOX 497	1973-1979, undated
	(7 folders)
BOX 498	Books
	Foreign translations
	(2 folders)
BOX 499	(2 folders)
BOX 500	<i>Science and Survival</i> , summary by population census, 1967
	Untitled manuscript
	(5 folders)
BOX 501	(2 folders)
	Reviews of articles and reports, 1950, 1965
	By others, 1979, undated
	Unidentified, 1957, undated
	Subject File
	American Association for the Advancement of Science
	Committee on Science, integrity of science, 1962-1964
	(2 folders)
BOX 502	General, 1963-1973
	Symposium, 1971
	Youth Council, 1971
	American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1966-1967
	Auto emission standards, 1972-1973
	(2 folders)
BOX 503	(3 folders)
	Bibliography, 1974, undated
	Botany
	Botany Department, 1968-1969
BOX 504	Course no. 104, 1969
	Seminar, 1960
	Center for the Biology of Natural Systems
	Botany building, 1967
	(3 folders)
	Environmental library, 1974-1976
BOX 505	Comité de Cooperación Cumunal Humanitaria, 1964-1967
	"C" miscellany, 1968-1970

## 1990 Addition, 1943-1979

### Container

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	DNA, 1968-1971, undated
	Edison Foundation Institute, 1960-1961
	Environmental Agenda Development Committee and Advisory, 1976
	Fossil fuels. 1971-1973
	(2 folders)
BOX 506	Foreign policy, 1965-1972, undated
	(6 folders)
BOX 507	Fortune 500 letter drive, 1972
	Fund for Peace, 1972-1978
	(3 folders)
	Geological prospecting process and apparatus, patent application Canada, 1957-1963
	(2 folders)
BOX 508	Grants
	Applications, 1948-1958
	(2 folders)
	General, 1973-1974, undated
	(2 folders)
	Hapgood, Charles, 1955-1958
	(2 folders)
	Human health, undated
	"In the Public Interest," 1973-1974
	Lefrak, Samuel, suit, 1974, undated
	<i>Medical Tribune</i> , 1971
BOX 509	Molecular biology
	Committee
	General, 1956-1965
	(3 folders)
	Minutes, 1959-1965
	Forms, undated
	Qualifying exams, 1960-1963
	Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Biology Department, 1969
	National Academy of Sciences, 1963-1966
	National Council for the Environment, undated
	Nitrate
	Correspondence
	1967-1969
BOX 510	1968-1969
	(3 folders)
BOX 511	General, 1969-1970
	(3 folders)
	Nitrogen, 1969-1971, undated
	(2 folders)
	"N" miscellany, 1959, 1965-1966, undated
	(2 folders)
	"O" miscellany, 1965-1966
	Patents, 1955-1959

**1990 Addition, 1943-1979****Container****Contents**

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	Poland paper, 1973 (2 folders)
BOX 512	(1 folder) Publishers, 1964-1966 "P" miscellany, 1964-1966 "Q" miscellany, 1965-1966 Research program, 1963 "R" miscellany, 1965-1966 Scientists Institute for Public Information, 1972 Sigma XI, 1956-1966 Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1964-1966 Social Science Institute, 1965 Sutton, William B., 1957-1958 Synthetic fuel industry, 1971-1974 (1 folders)
BOX 513	(2 folders) Szent-Gyorgyi, Albert, 1961-1965 "S" miscellany, 1965-1966, 1971 Technology, 1970-1974 (2 folders)
BOX 514	(1 folder) Transportation, railroads, 1971-1974 (3 folders) Trips France, 1971 Italy, 1970 New York, 1970-1972 (3 folders)
BOX 515	Washington, D.C., 1971 "T" miscellany, 1965-1966 Urban rat control, 1968-1970 "U" miscellany, 1964-1966 Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., 1965-1966 Weapons, 1974 Working environment, 1972-1974
BOX 515-538	<b>Research File</b> Charts, graphs, computer printouts, and other research data. Arranged by topic or type of material.
BOX 515	Auxin
BOX 516-519	Charts and graphs
BOX OV 520-OV 522	Computer printouts
BOX OV 523-525	Demography
BOX OV 526	Demography
BOX 527	Demography

## Research File

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 528	Diet (2 folders)
BOX 529-530	DNA
BOX 531-535	Electron spin resonance
BOX 536	Free radicals
BOX 537	Free radicals Tobacco mosaic virus
BOX 538	Tobacco mosaic virus
BOX 539-550	<b>Photographs and Slides</b> Photographs, slides, and transparencies. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 539	Photographs (2 folders) Slides (photocopies of broken glass slides in container 550)
BOX 540-549	Transparencies
BOX VA 550	Broken glass slides ( <b>Fragile: Do not serve</b> ) <i>See Container 539</i>
BOX 551-554	<b>Miscellany</b> Awards and certificates, clippings, physiology notes, telephone logs, printed matter, and other miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 551	Awards and certificates Clippings
BOX 552	Clippings
BOX 553	Clippings Physiology, notes Telephone logs and lists World War II service material, 1942
BOX 554	Clippings and printed matter (5 folders)