

Otto Sternoff Beyer Papers

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Collection Summary

Title: Otto Sternoff Beyer Papers

Span Dates: 1905-1951

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1929-1941)

ID No.: MSS12633

Creator: Beyer, Otto Sternoff, 1886-1948

Extent: 45,000 items ; 129 containers plus 5 oversize ; 53 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: 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 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

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.

Administrative Information

Provenance

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.

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Copyright in the unpublished writings of Otto Sternoff Beyer in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.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

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
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

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-8	<u>General Correspondence, 1929-1947</u> Letters sent and received with attached and related matter. Arranged alphabetically by name of person.
BOX 9-47	<u>Subject File, 1905-1947</u> Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, notes, reports, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
BOX 48-69	<u>General Railroad File, 1915-1948</u> 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.
BOX 70-95	<u>Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948</u> 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.
BOX 96-105	<u>Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 1921-1942</u> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
BOX 106-112	<u>Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1948</u> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Tennessee Valley Authority. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material, with the exception that speeches and articles by others are organized out of sequence at the end of the series.
BOX 113-114	<u>Bonneville Power Administration, 1940-1947</u> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Bonneville Power Administration. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
BOX 115-124	<u>Speech and Article File, 1919-1947</u> Correspondence and texts of speeches and articles by Beyer, including drafts and printed and near print copies. Arranged according to type of material and chronologically therein, with the exception of Beyer's draft history of railroad personnel located at the end of the series. Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
BOX 125	<u>Scrapbooks, 1909-1943</u> Bound volumes of printed matter and miscellaneous material. Arranged chronologically by volume.
BOX 126-129	<u>Addition, 1933-1951</u> Correspondence, reports, notes, articles, memorabilia, and miscellaneous material.

Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

BOX OV 1-OV 5

Oversize, 1923-1943

Certificates and scrapbooks.

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

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-8	General Correspondence, 1929-1947 Letters sent and received with attached and related matter. Arranged alphabetically by name of person.
BOX 1	Alberty, Harry, 1933-1936 "A" miscellaneous, 1937-1941 Bergen, Harold B., 1937 Beyer, Donald, 1935-1947 <i>See also Container 6, Porter, John</i> Beyer, Edward S., 1947 Beyer, Morten, 1940 Beyer, Otto, letters of congratulations, 1935-1939 Beyer, Mrs. Otto, 1947 Beyer, Richard, 1940-1941, 1947 <i>See also Container 6, Porter, John</i> Brissentent, Paul F., 1939-1941 Brown, J. Douglas, 1933-1942 Bruere, Henry, 1937-1941 "B" miscellaneous, 1935-1942
BOX 2	Budd, Ralph C., 1940-1941
BOX 3	Carmody, John M., 1938-1941 Carroll, Tom, 1947 Case, Harry L., 1946-1947 Cooke, Morris L., 1938-1941 Cranmer, Richard H., 1933-1940 Craven, Leslie, 1933-1941 "C" miscellaneous, 1929-1940 Dale, Earnest, 1946-1947 Dimock, Marshall E., 1935-1941 "D" miscellaneous, 1916-1941 Eastman, Joseph B., 1933-1944 Eliel, Paul, 1937-1941 Elderton, A., 1933-1941 Fisher, H.H., 1916 Free, Lloyd A., 1947 Gant, George P., 1942-1944 Gardiener, Emily, 1947 Goodrich, Carter, 1928-1935 Green, Robert F., 1947 "G" miscellaneous, 1916-1941
BOX 4	Hardy, John K., regarding "Protection of Aircraft Against Ice", 1946-1947 Harrison, George M., 1947 Harrison, Wilton, 1931-1939 Hawkins, Everett D., 1938-1941

General Correspondence, 1929-1947

Container

Contents

	Hay, Charles M., 1937-1942
	Hedges, Marion, 1942-1947
	Heron, Alexander R., 1940
	Hersey, R. B., 1941
	Hobart, James L., 1939
	Hood, J. M., 1937-1941
	Hook, C. R., Jr., 1947
	Hornberger, Ludwig M., 1940-1942
	Husted, A. S., 1916
	"H-I" miscellaneous, 1931-1943
	James, Gorton, 1929
	Jewell, B. M., 1933-1939
	Johnson, Eleanor, 1947
	"J" miscellaneous, 1916-1944
BOX 5	Kaplan, H. Eliot, 1946-1947
	Keezer, Dexter M., 1937-1941
	King, Judson, 1939-1941
	Klemmer, Harvey, 1947
	"K" miscellaneous, 1931-1943
	Lane, Chester T., 1947
	Lang, Ray W., 1934-1935
	Lasting, May, 1947
	Latimer, Murray, 1934-1941
	Leiserson, William M., 1934-1938
	Lubin, Isadore, 1937-1938
	Lum, Merrett, 1936-1940
	Lyman, Carson F., 1947
	"L" miscellaneous, 1931-1944
	McClees, E. J., 1939
	"Mc" miscellaneous, 1933-1941
	Marlett, Loring, 1946-1947
	Mars, Hans, 1932-1933
	Melnikow, H. P., 1936-1940
	Metcalf, Henry C., 1930-1937
	Miller, Frieda, 1941-1942
	Millis, H. A., 1939-1940
	Morley, Felix, 1935-1936
	Murrell, Garland, 1947
BOX 6	"M" miscellaneous, 1934-1943
	Nau, Carlton L., 1947
	Newdick, Edwin, 1932-1934
	"N" miscellaneous, 1933-1943
	Oakey, Margaret C., 1940-1941
	Ogburn, Charlton, 1934-1941
	"O" miscellaneous, 1936-1942
	Pickering, George, 1939-1940

General Correspondence, 1929-1947

Container

Contents

	Porter, John, 1935-1941
	Pusey, Merlo, 1947
	"P" miscellaneous, 1937-1943
BOX 7	"Q" miscellaneous, 1936-1940
	Richberg, Donald R., 1929-1942
	"R" miscellaneous, 1935-1941
	Schmidt, Edward G., 1915-1940
	Sekerak, Emil E., 1939-1942
	Shultz, E. B., 1946-1947
	Soule, George, 1930-1935
	Spero, Sterling D., 1947
	Stark, Louis, 1941
	Starzenski, Victor, 1947
	Stengle, Charles I., 1947
	Stern, Max, 1947
	Stocking, George W., 1937-1940
	Swacker, Frank M., 1936-1940
	"S" miscellaneous, 1930-1946
	Tallon, Robert J., 1933-1940
	"T" miscellaneous, 1932-1942
BOX 8	"U" miscellaneous, 1930-1943
	Van Sant, Robert M., 1936-1942
	Vaughn, L. D., 1936
	"V" miscellaneous, 1929-1942
	Watkins, Ralph J., 1940-1941
	Westbrook, W. Harry, 1935-1939
	Wiley, Henry A., 1934-1936
	Williams, Whiting, 1930-1942
	Williard, Daniel, 1923-1941
	Wilmotte, Raymond, 1933-1936
	Woll, Matthew, 1934-1940
	Wolman, Leo, 1933-1937
	Wood, L. A., 1929-1937
	Woodward, Thomas M., 1938-1939
	Wright, Roy V., 1929-1936
	"W" miscellaneous, 1932-1943
	Young, Robert R., 1947
	"X-Z" miscellaneous, 1939-1941
BOX 9-47	Subject File, 1905-1947
	Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, notes, reports, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material.
	Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
BOX 9	Adjustment boards, circa 1920-1941
	Air transport industry, circa 1937-1939
	Air transportation, "Current Labor Problems in Scheduled Air Transportation," circa 1933

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

	Airline Mechanics Association, circa 1934-1941
	Airline Pilots' Association, circa 1938-1945
	Airline pilots' standards, international, circa 1945
	Airlines, circa 1942; 1946-1947
BOX 10	Alaska labor policy statement, distribution of, circa 1947
	Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, circa 1925-1938
	American Airlines, Inc., circa 1937-1941
	American Association for Labor Legislation, circa 1938-1941
	American Engineering Council, circa 1931-1940
	American Federation of Labor, circa 1925-1940
	Committee on Education
	Monthly survey of business
	circa 1929-1935
	circa 1936-1939
	American Public Power Association, circa 1947
	American University, Washington, D.C.
	General, 1940-1941
	Proposed air transport courses, circa 1941-1942
	Anthracite coal wage case, circa 1933
BOX 11	Applications for employment, circa 1932-1947
	Apprentice training, circa 1929-1942
	Arsenals, circa 1917-1920
	Atomic information and Atomic Energy Commission, circa 1946-1947
	Attorney General's Committee on Administrative Procedure, report, circa 1941
	Baltimore Typographical Union, circa 1932-1933
	Bibliography, Beyer
BOX 12	British industrial relations
	Building trades, circa 1928-1947
	Bus transportation, circa 1946
	Business chart, business booms, and depressions, circa 1946-1947
	Cafeteria strike, circa 1947
	Canadian civil service, circa 1945-1947
	Central Statistical Board, circa 1934-1939
	Certification List, 1937
	"Changes in Spirit, Management", circa 1924-1930
	Chicago Association of Commerce, Chicago, Ill., circa 1947
	Chimney construction, circa 1925-1927
	Civil Aeronautics Authority, circa 1938-1939
	Civil liberties, circa 1937-1939
	Civil service assembly
	circa 1947-1948
BOX 13	Committee on Employee Relations, circa 1936-1940
	Civil Service Committee, Conference of Employee Relations and Hearings of Grievances, circa 1940
	Civil service mediation, circa 1939
	Coal, circa 1946-1947

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

	Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y., 1945
	Collective bargaining, circa 1937-1947
	Columbia Power Authority, circa 1941
	Congress of Industrial Organizations, circa 1939
	Cooperation of trade unions with employers, 1928
	Cooperative businesses, circa 1937-1938
BOX 14	Cooperative Committee in Action,, circa 1927
	Cooperative Committee of the Democratic Party, circa 1937-1940
	Cooperative survey, background
	circa 1912-1920
	circa 1921-1924
	circa 1924-1930
BOX 15	circa 1924-1930
	circa 1924-1931
	Cosmos Club, Washington, D. C. circa 1946-1947
	Democratic National Committee, circa 1937-1941
	Dismissal compensation data
	circa 1933-1936
BOX 16	circa 1935-1936
	District of Columbia Society of Civil Engineers, circa 1940
	Economic trends, circa 1937-1939
	Electrical Guild of North America, circa 1931
	Employee Relations Committee
	Council of Personnel
	Administration, circa 1945-1946
	Employee relations
	Including relations with labor unions, circa 1947
	Officer duties
	Program federal service, circa 1946-1947
	Employer opinions, circa 1941-1946
	Engineer in society, status of, circa 1920-1921
BOX 17	Fair labor standards, Black-Connery Bill, circa 1937-1938
	Federal coordinator of transportation
	Rules survey, circa 1934
	Statements, circa 1934
	Federal labor relations policy in industry, circa 1941-1945
BOX 18	Foreign Economic Administration, Transportation and Communications Division, circa 1945
	Full Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers of America, circa 1931
	Garment workers, circa 1947
	George Washington University, Washington, D.C., circa 1945
	Great Valley Anthracite Corp., circa 1931-1933
	Group Health Association, Inc., circa 1937-1938
	Group insurance, circa 1934
	Hart, Schaffner and Marx, labor relations, circa 1916-1926
	Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
	circa 1930-1942

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

BOX 19	circa 1945 Bushelman's arbitration case, circa 1941 Library, circa 1934 Highlander Folk School, circa 1947 Howard Smith Paper Mills, Cornwall, Ontario, circa 1946 <i>Human Events</i> , weekly analysis, circa 1945-1947 Incentives in industry, circa 1918-1920 Industrial democracy, circa 1920 Industrial relations, George Cusick article, 1932 Industrial safety, circa 1931 Inland Waterways Cooperation circa 1938 circa 1947 Institute of Management Policy meeting, 11 June 1940 International Association of Machinists, circa 1924-1940 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, circa 1929-1938
BOX 20	International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, etc., circa 1938 International Management Institute, 1927, 1938 Interstate Commerce Commission, transportation statistics, circa 1947 Kaiser Co. <i>Kiplinger Letter</i> , circa 1941-1945 Konsum, Inc., circa 1938-1946 Labor and the war, circa 1943-1944 Labor Bureau, Inc., circa 1929-1940 Labor Disputes Act, circa 1934-1935 Labor, miscellaneous circa 1932-1948
BOX 21	circa 1932-1948 Labor, Vinson Bill, 1941 Labor Laws, European countries, circa 1937-1938 Labor Management Conference, White House Proceedings, 1942 Public Hearings Committee, 1945 Legislation, circa 1940; 1946-1947
BOX 22	Miscellaneous, circa 1944-1947 Publications, circa 1946-1947 Labor relations
BOX 23	Courses in universities, circa 1941-1945 Great Britain, circa 1938 Legislation Federal, circa 1947 State, circa 1937 Miscellaneous circa 1914-1928 circa 1926-1944
BOX 24	circa 1945-1948

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

	Sweden, circa 1938-1939
	Labor unions
	circa 1923-1947
	circa 1946-1947
	Statisticians Conference, 1934
	Legal opinions, circa 1944
	Lithographers' unions publications
	Logan Bill, 1939
	Louden Machinery Co., circa 1937-1938
	Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast, circa 1936
	Maritime Labor, proposed legislation, circa 1934-1937
BOX 25	Masters, Mates and Pilots of America, circa 1923-1938
	Mine workers, circa 1945-1947
	Minimum Wage Board, Manufacturing and Wholesale Merchandising, circa 1942-1948
	Miscellaneous
	Missouri River Basin, circa 1944-1945
	Missouri Valley Development, Trades and Labor Council, circa 1947
	Motor carrier data, circa 1935
BOX 26	National Association of Die Casting Workers
	National Defense Management Conference for Industry and Government, circa 1940
	National Economic and Social Planning Association, circa 1934-1939
	National income, circa 1929-1932
	National Industrial Conference Board, circa 1938-1940
	National Labor Relations Board, congressional investigation, circa 1939-1940
	National Labor Relations Board
	Decisions, circa 1939-1940
	Miscellaneous, circa 1934-1942
	Speeches by others, circa 1937-1939
BOX 27	National Mediation Board
	Airlines, circa 1946
	Annual leave, circa 1936-1938
	Case assignments, circa 1936-1939
	Cases, miscellaneous, circa 1932-1942
	Cases, monthly statements, circa 1936-1942
	Determination of craft or class, circa 1938-1942
	Miscellaneous, circa 1933-1940; 1947
BOX 28	Referees, circa 1933-1941
	Reports, circa 1936-1941
	Reports, annual, circa 1935-1939
	Statement of activities, circa 1940
	National Policy Committee, circa 1940-1942
	National Recovery Administration, circa 1933-1934
	National Research Council, circa 1941
BOX 29	National Sugar Manufacturing Co., circa 1940
	Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co.
	circa 1928-1930

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

- circa 1931-1932
- New York printing trades, journeyman requirements, circa 1928
- New York, N.Y., subway, circa 1946
- Nicholson Thermic Syphons Co., circa 1931-1934
- Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act, circa 1932
- Office of Defense Transportation
 - Division of Personnel
 - circa 1943
 - Orientation
 - Course, circa 1943
- BOX 30**
 - Beyer resignation from, Apr.-May 1944
 - Office of Stabilization Administrator, circa 1946
 - Pan-American Airways, circa 1947
 - Pension legislation and plans, circa 1932-1933
 - Personnel administration, circa 1944-1948
 - Policy Holders' Service Bureau, circa 1923
 - Postwar planning activities
 - circa 1933-1946
 - circa 1944-1945
- BOX 31**
 - circa 1944-1945
 - Power projects, circa 1938-1944
 - Princeton University, Industrial Relations Section, Princeton, N.J., circa 1930
 - Productivity in industry, circa 1935; 1947-1948
 - Progressive conference, 1931
 - Public health, circa 1927-1938
 - Public utilities, circa 1946
 - Public works, circa 1946
 - Radio material, circa 1936-1937
 - Reconstruction Finance Corp., circa 1933-1935
 - Remington Rand, circa 1930-1931
 - "Robots or Men," by H. Dubreuil
- BOX 32**
 - Rock Island Arsenal, Rock, Ill., circa 1919-1920; 1943
 - Rocky Mountain Fuel Co., circa 1930-1933
 - Roosevelt, Franklin D., speeches, circa 1938
 - Round table discussion exploring factors involved in reemployment of labor and capital, circa 1940
 - St. Lawrence River Project
 - Scientific management, circa 1922-1937
 - Seagoing personnel, circa 1942-1945
 - Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee, circa 1945
- BOX 33**
 - Shorter work day, circa 1924-1937
 - Shorter work week, and vacation with pay
 - General correspondence, circa 1930-1932
 - General data, circa 1921-1930
- BOX 34**
 - Shorter work week, outline prepared for establishment
 - Siemund Wenzel Electric Welding Co., circa 1911-1913

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

	Slichter, Sumner, articles, circa 1942
	Social Science Research Council, survey of research in field of industrial relations, circa 1928
	Social survey, Labor Management Committee, circa 1946
	Society for Personnel Administration, circa 1946-1947
	Society for the Advancement of Management, circa 1932-1941
	Statistical Bureau, organization, circa 1930
	Steel Workers Organizing Committee, circa 1939-1941
	Stevens Economic Conference, 1939
BOX 35	Stevens Institute, Hoboken, N.J. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Analysis of coalDesign notebookElectrical engineering notesElectrical laboratory notes, circa 1905-1907Laboratory physics
BOX 36	Lecture notes
	Physics notebook
BOX 37	"Stretchout," circa 1934
	Strikes, circa 1934-1947 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Steel, circa 1947Teachers, circa 1946-1947Telephone, circa 1947Western Union co., circa 1947
	Supervisory employees <ul style="list-style-type: none">circa 1947Labor standards in., circa 1937-1938
	Unemployment <ul style="list-style-type: none">circa 1930-1933circa 1933-1937
BOX 38	Union-management cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none">circa 1919-1924circa 1919-1929Articles, reports, etc., circa 1925-1929BibliographyGeneral statements, a. 1924-1931In America, circa 1928Publications
BOX 39	Unions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Changes in spiritPrinting press assistants localTrade union policies and technological change, circa 1939Trade union responsibility, circa 1931-1937
	United States <ul style="list-style-type: none">Employment service<ul style="list-style-type: none">circa 1933-1937
BOX 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">circa 1933-1936circa 1936-1939

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

	circa 1933-1937
BOX 41	Government
	Grievance procedures
	circa 1945-1946
	circa 1946
	Labor policy, circa 1946-1947
	Reorganization, circa 1937
	Training programs, circa 1945-1947
	Union problems, circa 1935
	Interior Department
	Labor relations policy, circa 1945
	Personnel organization charts, circa 1947
	Proposed labor-management policy
	1946-1948
BOX 42	1946-1948
	Labor Department, circa 1933-1941
	Maritime Commission
	Account, circa 1945-1946
BOX 43	Increased Rates from, to, and within Alaska, circa 1945
	(2 folders)
	Navy Department, policy, circa 1944-1946
	War Department, employment policy, circa 1944
	University of Michigan, Bureau of Industrial Relations, Ann Arbor, Mich., circa 1938
	Upholstery Weavers and Workers Union, circa 1931-1932
BOX 44	Veterans' Administration policy, circa 1946
	Vocational guidance, circa 1935
	Wage adjustment, circa 1921-1946
	Wage payment plans, etc., circa 1930-1932
	Wage statistics
	Handbook, circa 1932-1937
	Inquiries, circa 1921
BOX 45	Interstate Commerce Commission, circa 1929-1932
	Wages, automobile industry, circa 1945-1947
	Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act, circa 1939-1941
	Washington Social Survey Report, circa 1940-1947
	Western Electric Co., employee training program
	Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co., circa 1934-1935
	Weyerhaeuser Timber Co., circa 1918; 1940-1942
	Wood Newspaper Machinery Corp., circa 1931
	Workers Educational Bureau, circa 1927-1933
BOX 46	Works Progress Administration, circa 1938-1939
	Yeomans Brothers Co.
	Correspondence, circa 1932-1941
	Getting new business, circa 1927-1932
	Minutes of cooperative meetings, circa 1930-1939
	Protection measurement system, circa 1931

Subject File, 1905-1947

Container

Contents

	Publicity, circa 1930-1932
BOX 47	YMCA Commission on Responsible Citizenship, circa 1932-1941
BOX 48-69	General Railroad File, 1915-1948 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.
BOX 48	Advisory Committee on Railroad Employment Correspondence, circa 1933-1934 Data from Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, 1932-1933 Memoranda Paper by J. Douglas Brown, 1933 Preliminary reports Report of the committee Statement by J. B. Eastman Work papers, 1933-1934 Alaska Railroad, appointment of Beyer, 1948 Aptitude tests for railway workers, circa 1938 Association of American Railroads circa 1929-1940 Printed releases, circa 1932-1941
BOX 49	Association of Western Railways, circa 1936-1939 Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, circa 1938-1942 Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America, circa 1925-1935 Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees, circa 1924; 1930-1941 Brotherhood of Railroad Shopcrafts of America, circa 1937 Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, circa 1932-1942 Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, circa 1934-1939 Carriers agreement, Feb. 1937 Central Railroad of New Jersey, circa 1930
BOX 50	Central Vermont Railway circa 1928-1933 St. Albans Division, cooperative Committee minutes, circa 1936-1937 St. Albans Division, Mechanical Department minutes circa 1931-1940 Maintenance of way, circa 1931-1932 System Committee meetings, circa 1931-1934
BOX 51	Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, circa 1924-1931 Chicago and Alton Railway, circa 1931-1935 Chicago and Northwestern Railway, cooperative minutes July-Sept. 1925 Sept.-Oct. 1925 Nov.-Dec. 1925 circa 1926-1930

General Railroad File, 1915-1948

Container

Contents

BOX 52	circa 1931 General file, circa 1921-1931 Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Co., circa 1934-1940 Chicago Great Western Railroad Co., circa 1930-1938 Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railroad Co., circa 1930 Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Co., circa 1926-1940 Chicago wage agreement, circa 1932 Committee on Public Relations, data, circa 1931-1934
BOX 53	Company union reports, circa 1933
BOX 54	Company unions in railroads, circa 1930 Competition, circa 1931-1932 Consolidations, circa 1930-1932 Cooperative policy accomplishments and benefits, Railway Employees Department, circa 1928 Court decisions, circa 1929-1937 Disputes, circa 1941-1943 Economic condition and reorganization plans, circa 1938-1939
BOX 55	Employees accidents, costs, circa 1932 Employees Department American Federation of Labor circa 1931-1933 circa 1931-1936 Memorandum of Proposed survey of accomplishments and benefits of cooperative policy, circa 1928 Employees convention Employment trends in the railroad industry, 1934
BOX 56	Erie Railroad Co. Cooperative efficiency test of Westinghouse, Cardwell and Triple Spring draft gears Report of rest of friction draft gear Specifications Erie Railway System, circa 1927-1933 Express strike, Detroit, Mich., circa 1941 Finances, circa 1931
BOX 57	Grand Trunk Western Railway Chicago Division, circa 1929-1933 Detroit Division, circa 1931-1934 Blueprints re mileage and force employed, circa 1922-1926 Grand Trunk Western Division, circa 1930-1937 Illinois Central System, circa 1932-1942 Increase in efficiency, circa 1919 Inefficiencies and wastes of American railway operation, circa 1921 Integral reorganization of the railroads, circa 1933 Interstate Commerce Commission, rulings on Railway Labor Act, circa 1938
BOX 58	Labor circa 1931 circa 1932 circa 1930-1943

General Railroad File, 1915-1948

Container

Contents

	<i>Labor</i> , circa 1930-1931
	Labor and reconstruction, circa 1943-1945
	Labor disputes adjustment, circa 1942-1945
	Labor organizations, research, circa 1931
	London, Midland and Scottish Railway Co., circa 1938-1939
BOX 59	Louisiana and Arkansas Railroad circa 1933-1938 Strike data, circa 1932-1936 Mediation, circa 1942 Miscellaneous, circa 1926; 1946 Missouri Pacific Railroad Co., circa 1941 Mobile and Ohio Railroad Co., circa 1933-1934 Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad, circa 1935 National Railroad Adjustment Board, circa 1936-1941; 1947 New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Co., circa 1941 New York Central System, a. 1942 New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co., circa 1938 New York Railroad Club, circa 1937-1938 Occupational change, circa 1933 Order of Railway Conductors, circa 1939-1940 Order of Railroad Telegraphers, circa 1924; 1927-1933 Pennsylvania Railroad Co., circa 1936-1940
BOX 60	Pere Marquette Railway, circa 1930 Preparatory technical conference on the reduction of hours of work in rail transport, circa 1939 Pullman Co., circa 1937-1940 Rail and River Coal Co., circa 1932 Rail Transport Conference, Geneva, Switzerland circa 1939 <i>See also Oversize</i> Hours of work, 1939 Railroad retirement, circa 1938-1939 Railway competition, bus and truck, circa 1931-1932 Railway Education Bureau, circa 1929-1938 Railway Labor Act
BOX 61	Amendments, circa 1930-1939 Copies of act, circa 1926-1936 Data, circa 1946-1947 Drafts of proposed act, circa 1934-1935 Emergency Board circa 1937-1939 circa 1937-1941 circa 1941 Complete set of reports, circa 1937-1941 Complete set of reports, circa 1937-1941
BOX 62	Hearings, circa 1934 Referees file, circa 1939-1941 Conference, circa 1929

General Railroad File, 1915-1948

Container

Contents

	Executives Association, circa 1930-1939
	Railway labor relations today, circa 1923-1938
	Railway Labor Research Foundation
	circa 1929-1934
	circa 1931
BOX 63	Railway labor survey
	circa 1933
	Social Science Research Council, circa 1933
	<i>Railway News and Statistics Bulletin</i> , circa 1931-1934
	Railway wage levels, 1933
	Refrigerator Car Lines, labor conditions, circa 1935
	Reorganization, circa 1933-1935
	Reports, agreements received, circa 1938-1939
	Research Service, circa 1938-1939
	Retirement, circa 1931-1938
	Royal Commission of Canada, appraisal on behalf of railways, of the commission's report, circa 1932
BOX 64	Rutland Railroad, circa 1939-1942
	Rutland Railroad Co.
	Minutes, circa 1940-1942
	Operating results, circa 1940-1943
	St. Louis Terminal Railway, circa 1931
	Scientific management, circa 1919
	Seaboard Air Line Railway, circa 1931-1937
	Southern Pacific Railroad, circa 1928-1942
	Stabilization of employment, circa 1925-1933
	Statistics, circa 1928
BOX 65	Steam locomotives
	Illinois Central Railway, circa 1916-1917
	Methods of effecting improvements, circa 1915-1917
	Tests
	circa 1913-1916
BOX 66	circa 1917-1919; 1932
	Survey of the effects of the Depression on railway workers, Advisory Committee, circa 1933
	Appendix C
	Appointment of agents, circa 1932-1934
	General, circa 1933
BOX 67	Individuals selected as guides for field investigators, circa 1933
	Instructions to agents, circa 1933
	Miscellaneous data, circa 1932
	Personnel for field investigators, circa 1933
	Questionnaires, circa 1933
	Survey by G. M. Price, circa 1933
	Financial statements of agents, circa 1932-1934
	Conclusion, circa 1934
	Tennessee Railroad Co., circa 1939

General Railroad File, 1915-1948

Container

Contents

	Texas and Pacific injunction, case R-735, circa 1942
	Union-management cooperation in the railway industry, circa 1919-1931
BOX 68	Union Pacific Railroad Co., circa 1937-1942
	United States Railroad Administration
	circa 1919-1920
	circa 1920-1926
	United States railroad
	Labor Board exhibit on inefficient railroad management, circa 1920
	Utah-Idaho Central Railroad case, circa 1945-1946
	Victimization, circa 1934
	Virginia Railway Co., circa 1936
	Wage deduction case, circa 1938
BOX 69	Wage situation, circa 1920-1946
	Wages and freight rate increase, circa 1931-1934
	Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Co., circa 1937-1938
	Work in railroad shops, circa 1933-1938
BOX 70-95	Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948
	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.
BOX 70	Correspondence
	1923-1924
	1925
	1926
	1927
	1928
BOX 71	1929
	1930
	1930
	1931
	1931
BOX 72	1931
	1932
	1932
	circa 1933-1940
	circa 1941-1948
	Accident records, circa 1932-1943
	Amalgamation controversy, circa 1931-1938
	Annual reports, circa 1925-1936; 1942
BOX 73	Apprentice training employee education, circa 1927-1939
	Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, circa 1928-1930
	Commercial Telegraphers' Union, circa 1926-1930
	Car shop performance, comparative statements, circa 1942-1944
	Cooperative committees
	Cooperative plan

Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948

Container

Contents

	1931
	Development, 1923-1928
	Employee attitude, 1930
	Five best features, 1931-1932
BOX 74	Machinery, 1931-1932
	Devices for enlisting
	Duff Commission
	Labor's statement to, 1925-1932
	Report, 1932
	Equipment, development of, 1926-1943
	Gains from cooperation, 1926-1927
	Grievances, 1925
	History, circa 1931
	Insurance for sick benefits, 1928-1930
	Joint cooperative plan, Mechanical Department, constitution governing action and procedure
	Maintenance of equipment, cooperative program, circa 1929-1936
	Maintenance of way
	Annual meetings and reports, MP-CE Section, circa 1943-1947
	Annual reports, circa 1934-1935
BOX 75	Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees
	Brother hood of Maintenance of Way Cooperative
	Meetings, minutes
	Allendale Division, circa 1930-1943
	Atlantic Region
	General
	circa 1925-1926
	circa 1927-1928
BOX 76	circa 1929-1944
	Car Department
	circa 1925-1926
	circa 1927-1929
	circa 1930-1932
BOX 77	circa 1933-1936
	circa 1937-1941
	Motive Power Department
	circa 1931-1933
	circa 1934-1941
	Brandon Division, circa 1930-1933
BOX 78	Calgary Division
	circa 1930-1933
	circa 1934-1944
	Campbellton Division, circa 1935-1943
BOX 79	Capreol Division, circa 1930-1944
	Central Region, circa 1926-1940
	Charlottetown Division, circa 1930-1939
	Cochrane Division

Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948

Container

Contents

	circa 1930-1941
BOX 80	Accident prevention reports, circa 1932-1941 Dauphin Division, circa 1930-1943 Duluth, Winnipeg, and Pacific Division, circa 1930-1938 Edmonton Division
	circa 1929-1933
BOX 81	circa 1931-1940 circa 1934-1943 Edson Division, circa 1930-1933 Halifax Division, circa 1930-1940
BOX 82	Hornepayne Division, circa 1930-1943 Kamloops Division, circa 1931-1941 Laurentain Division, circa 1930-1940
BOX 83	Levis Division
	circa 1930-1935 circa 1936-1940
	London Division
	circa 1925-1935 circa 1936-1940
BOX 84	Miscellaneous, circa 1941-1944
BOX 85	Moncton Division
	circa 1929-1932 circa 1933-1936 circa 1937-1942 circa 1937-1942
	Montreal Division
	St. Jerome and St. Lawrence Division Montreal Terminals, circa 1943-1948
BOX 86	St. Lawrence Division, Montreal terminals, Montreal Terminals, circa 1930-1943 (5 folders) New Glasgow Division, circa 1932-1941 Ottawa Division, circa 1930-1936
BOX 87	Port Arthur-Lakehead Division, circa 1930-1938 Portage Division
	circa 1929-1931 circa 1931-1933
	Portage-Brandon Division, circa 1933-1944 Portland Division, circa 1930-1931
BOX 88	Prince Albert Division, circa 1930-1942 Saguenay Division, circa 1930-1932 St. Thomas Division, circa 1930-1943
	Saskatoon Division, circa 1930-1940
BOX 89	Smithers Division, circa 1930-1937 Stellarton (Nova Scotia) Division, circa 1937-1939 Toronto Terminals Division, circa 1930-1933 Western Region
	circa 1930-1933

Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948

Container

Contents

	circa 1934-1943
BOX 90	Winnipeg Terminal Division, circa 1929-1940 System Cooperative Committee circa 1928-1938 circa 1932-1934 circa 1939-1947
BOX 91	Mechanical Section, circa 1934-1940 MP-CE Section, circa 1942-1947 Cooperative program, circa 1930-1933 Data circa 1926 Undated
BOX 92	Undated Department, circa 1927-1941 Education and training, circa 1930-1941 Miscellaneous, circa 1932 Union-management cooperative movement, accident prevention Union membership, circa 1931-1933
BOX 93	Motor vehicle competition, circa 1935 Pensions, circa 1923-1930 Pictures, 1942-1949 Production in repair shops Production measurement system, circa 1928-1942 Cost and unit production at principal roundhouses Costs, production and averages circa 1934-1918 (5 folders)
BOX 94	circa 1939 circa 1941 Production measurement Shop production and costs circa 1931-1942 (8 folders) Unit measurement system Publicity, addresses etc., circa 1935-1939 Safety bulletins, circa 1931-1934 Safety campaign and accident prevention, circa 1931-1932 Safety campaign and posters, circa 1930-1931
BOX 95	Stabilization of employment, circa 1928-1931 Statistics, circa 1926-1932 Suggestions, circa 1925-1931 Survey of shops questionnaire System Federation No. 11, mimeograph releases, cooperative minutes, etc., circa 1929-1940 Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railroad, circa 1928 Thornton, Sir Henry General, circa 1931

Canadian National Railways, 1921-1948

Container

Contents

Resignation, circa 1932
Statements, circa 1923-1932
Union activities, circa 1926-1930
Union aid to management, circa 1930
Union management cooperation, circa 1925; 1939
Wage and employment statistics, circa 1931-1932
Wage deduction controversy, circa 1921-1933
Wage payment system, report by Beyer, circa 1924
Wages, miscellaneous, circa 1933

BOX 96-105

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 1921-1942

Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.
Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.

BOX 96

Agreements, circa 1926-1933
Apprentice training material, circa 1926-1930
Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railroad, circa 1932-1942
Cooperative plan
Committee, circa 1924-1928
Cumulated suggestions, circa 1924-1929

Development
circa 1924

BOX 97

circa 1921-1928
Machinery, circa 1921-1931

Minutes, Glenwood
circa 1924-1930
(4 folders)

BOX 98

Miscellaneous
circa 1930
circa 1931
(2 folders)
Policy introduction to maintenance of way, circa 1928-1931
Policy maintenance of way, circa 1930-1931
Summary of suggestions

circa 1924-1928
circa 1927-1930
circa 1928-1931
circa 1931-1938

BOX 99

Employment stabilization
circa 1923-1929
(5 folders)

BOX 100

circa 1930-1932
(3 folders)
Miscellaneous
Engine failure performance
circa Feb.-June, 1932

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 1921-1942

Container

Contents

	circa July, 1931-1932
	Engine No. 1003
	Financial statements, circa 1932-1941
	Forces, hours (thirty-hour week), etc., circa 1923-1933
BOX 101	Glenwood shops, circa 1923-1924
	Grievances, circa 1931
	Locomotive inspection
	circa 1924-1932
	All lines, circa 1926, 1941
	Eastern lines, circa 1927-1932
BOX 102	Miscellaneous, circa 1927-1928
	Old age pensions, circa 1930-1931
	Overtime, circa 1923-1928
	Posters, circa 1929-1931
	Printing plant organization, circa 1930-1931
	Publicity, circa 1931-1938
	Reconstruction Finance Corp., work loan data, circa 1927-1942
	Rules of service, circa 1928-1930
	Rules changes, circa 1923-1929
	Safety campaigns, circa 1924-1928
	<i>Safety Flashes</i> , circa 1932-1941
BOX 103	Seniority, miscellaneous, circa 1927-1932
	Shop improvement program, circa 1923-1924
	Statistics, circa 1924-1930
	System cooperative meetings, minutes
	circa 1924-1927
	circa 1925-1929
	circa 1928-1938
	System Federation No. 30
	circa 1925-1933
BOX 104	Cooperative agreement, circa 1931
	Cooperative Committee minutes, circa 1931
	Organization, circa 1924-1931
	Unemployment relief
	Miscellaneous, circa 1931-1932
	Reports, circa 1931-1932
	Union gains from cooperation, circa 1923-1931
	Union-management cooperation
	circa 1925-1928
	Plan, circa 1925
	Union membership, shop crafts, circa 1924-1932
BOX 105	Wage increases, circa 1923-1929
	Willard, Daniel
	circa 1923-1929
	Statements, circa 1923-1931

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 1921-1942

Container

Contents

List of speeches, 1910-1929

BOX 106-112

Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1948

Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Tennessee Valley Authority.
Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material, with the exception that speeches and articles by others are organized out of sequence at the end of the series.

Correspondence

BOX 106

Clapp, Gordon R.

circa 1935-1939

circa 1940-1942

Gant, George, circa 1942-1944

Jandrey, A. S., circa 1940-1941

Lilienthal, David E., circa 1936-1941

Miscellaneous, circa 1935-1941

Shultz, E. B., circa 1941

Administrative codes, circa 1939-1942

Apprenticeship Council, circa 1939-1941

Board of Adjustment, referees, circa 1940

BOX 107

Employee relationship policy, circa 1934-1945

Employee conditions, circa 1936-1943

Freight rate issue, circa 1943

Grievances

Labor-Management Conference regarding case of W. E. Blanton and Douglas Parker, Nov. 1940

Procedure for settling plant grievances, circa 1942-1945

Statement re discharge of A. R. Dean and C. R. Seaton

Joint cooperative committees

Committee meetings, circa 1940-1944

Minutes

circa 1943-1944

BOX 108

circa 1945-1948

(5 folders)

BOX 109

circa 1948

Program and achievements, circa 1941-1946

Labor-management relations

Agreements of 1940

Board-council meeting, 16 May 1944

Proposed plans, circa 1944

Work papers, circa 1931; 1937-1940

BOX 110

Legislation, proposed, circa 1933-1941

Miscellaneous

Publicity

Magazine, circa 1935-1944

Newspaper clippings, circa 1935-1938

Teamwork, circa 1943-1948

Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1948

Container

Contents

- Tennessee Electric v. TVA*, circa 1938
- Training plans
circa 1936-1938
circa 1939-1941
circa 1942-1945
- Wage adjustments, circa 1936-1945
- Wage conferences, circa 1939; 1945-1947
- BOX 111** Wage and jurisdictional disputes, circa 1936-1939
- War Manpower Commission, relations with, circa 1943
- Waterway transportation, circa 1943-1945
- BOX 112** Speeches and articles about TVA, 1935-1947
- BOX 113-114** **Bonneville Power Administration, 1940-1947**
Correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, notes, charts, articles, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to the Bonneville Power Administration.
Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
- BOX 113** Administrative orders, circa 1940-1943
Construction policies, circa 1945
Collective agreement between administrator and Columbia Power Trades Council, circa 1945-1947
Labor agreement, circa 1945-1947
Legislation, circa 1940-1945
Maps, Bonneville area, circa 1941-1946
- BOX 114** Reports, circa 1941-1945
Sweden, "State Controlled Companies in Sweden," circa 1943
Wage conference, circa 1945-1946
Wage and employee information, circa 1946-1947
- BOX 115-124** **Speech and Article File, 1919-1947**
Correspondence and texts of speeches and articles by Beyer, including drafts and printed and near print copies. Arranged according to type of material and chronologically therein, with the exception of Beyer's draft history of railroad personnel located at the end of the series.
Arranged alphabetically by topic, organization, or type of material.
- BOX 115** Correspondence, 1923-1947
(21 folders)
- BOX 116** Texts
1919, Mar. "Efficiency Through Democracy in Railway Industry of America"
1923, Oct. "Employee Morale Problem of Our Railroads"
1924
Apr.
"Business Policy," Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
Policy Holders Service Bureau, Metropolitan Life Co.
Nov. "A Constructive Program for the Federated Railway Men of Canada"
1925
Feb. "Citizenship of Industry"
Aug. "Railroad Union-Management Cooperation"

Speech and Article File, 1919-1947

Container

Contents

1926, June

"The Cooperative Policy of the Railway Employees Department"

"The Value of the Railway Shopman to His Industry"

1927

Feb., National Civic Federation luncheon remarks

June, Railway Employees Department Convention

Sept., "Labor's Contribution to the Scientific Organization of the Industry"

Dec., Industrial Seminar, Congregational Churches

1928

May

Baltimore and Ohio System Federation Convention

"Labor's Constructive Function in the Railway Industry"

Oct.

"Experiences with Cooperation Between Labor and Management in the Railway Industry"

1929

Mar., "Sources of Potential Leaders in Industry"

Apr., Review of *Human Relations in Railroading*

June, Baltimore and Ohio Plan of Cooperation

1930, Dec.

"Union-Management Competes and Wins"

"That Acid Test, The Ledger Indicates Success"

1931, Mar.

"Keeping at the Job"

"Steady Work Through Cooperation"

1932

Apr., "Constructive Human Relations in the Railway Industry"

May, "Labor's Contribution to Democratic Influences in Industry"

July, "Labor-Management Cooperation"

BOX 117

1933

Feb., "An Industrial Policy for America"

Mar., Articles regarding Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins

Aug., "Unemployment and the Morale of Industry"

1934 Nov., Brotherhood of Clerks Convention

1935 Nov., "How Development of Personnel Has Contributed to Progress of the Transportation Industry"

1937

Mar., "Collective Bargaining Under the Railway Labor Act"

June, "What Engineers Should Know about Labor Problems"

1938

Feb., "Railroad Labor Relations Today"

Mar., "Collective Bargaining and Labor Management Cooperation"

May, "A Practical Program for the Coordination of Government, Labor and Management"

June, Winant Speech, Geneva, Switzerland

Oct., "The Art of Mediation"

Dec., "Mediation"

1939

Speech and Article File, 1919-1947

Container

Contents

	May, "Making Democracy Work"
	June, "Making Collective Bargaining Work"
	Dec., Convention
BOX 118	1940
	Jan.
	Round Table Discussion, National Conference of Christians and Jews
	"Engineers as Arbitrators"
	Mar., "Mediation, the Next Step"
	July, Address before Convention of Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees
	Oct., "Total Cooperation"
	Nov., "Labor's Contribution to Industry"
	Dec., "Government's Role in Collective Bargaining"
	1941
	Jan.
	"Research and Collective Bargaining"
	"Railway Labor Relations and the National Defense"
	Mar., "Defense and the National Mediation Board"
	1942
	May, "Manpower, A Pressing Problem"
	July, "Railroad Manpower Problems in Wartime"
	July, "Manpower for Railroad Maintenance of Way"
	Aug., "Mediation and Conciliation"
	Sept., "Manpower Problems in Mass Transportation"
	Sept., "Maintenance of Way Manpower Problems," Roadmasters and Maintenance of Way
	Sept., "Meeting the Manpower Problem"
BOX 119	Oct., "Manpower Program for Trucking Industry"
	Nov., "Human Engineering in Industry"
	Dec.
	"The Manpower Problem"
	"Labor Utilization in Manpower Conservation Program"
	1943
	Jan., "Manpower Problems of the Private Truck Carrier"
	Mar., "Transportation Workers in Wartime"
	May, "Railroad Manpower in Wartime"
	July, "Manpower for the Railroad Maintenance of Way"
	Oct., "Labor Relations in Wartime"
	Oct., "Transportation Labor Problems in Wartime and After"
	1944
	Jan., "Railroaders in Wartime"
	Aug., "Review of <i>Governmental Adjustment of Labor Disputes</i> "
	1945
	"Employee Relations in the Public Service, Present and Future"
	1946
	Jan., "Employee Relations"
	Aug., "Personnel Management in Industry"

Speech and Article File, 1919-1947

Container

Contents

	Sept., "Fundamentals of Labor-Management Cooperation"
	Oct., "Bonneville Power and Labor"
	1947
	Jan.
	"Labor Relations and the Public Service"
	"Labor Situation," League of Women Voters
	June, "Employee Relations in Publicly Owned Utilities"
	Undated
	American Railroads Under Federal Control
	"Brotherhood [of Railway Carmen] and Union-Management Cooperation"
	"Cooperative Research and the Railway Fuel Program"
	"Democratic Organization of Labor for Cooperative Production"
	"Industrial Function of the Organized Labor Movement"
	"Management of Cooperative Factories"
	"Plan for Establishing Industry Labor Codes"
	"Productivity of Railway Shop Employees"
BOX 120	Draft history regarding railroads
BOX 121	Drafts history regarding railroads
BOX 122	Drafts history regarding railroads
BOX 123	Draft history regarding railroads
BOX 124	Drafts history regarding railroads
BOX 125	Scrapbooks, 1909-1943
	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	Addition, 1933-1951
	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

Addition, 1933-1951

Container

Contents

	History of railroad personnel
	Labor-management speeches
	Labor-management study
	Railroad articles
	United Textile Workers
	Utilities
BOX 127	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
BOX 128	Tennessee Valley Authority
	Thirty-hour week
	Transport personnel
BOX 129	Clara Beyer miscellany
	Correspondence
	Business, 1938-1951
	Personal, 1942-1945
	Social
	Perkins, Frances
	White House
	Memorabilia
	Notebook of labor legislation, 1939-1945
BOX OV 1-OV 5	Oversize, 1923-1943
	Certificates and scrapbooks.
	Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	General Railroad File
	Rail Transport Conference, Geneva, Switzerland
	1939
	Certificate (Container 60)
BOX OV 2	Scrapbooks (Container 125)
	1923-1930
BOX OV 3	1926-1936
BOX OV 4	1942-1943
BOX OV 5	Addition
	Biographical
	Appointments to government positions, 1935-1936 (Container 126)