

Henry Putney Beers

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

Prepared by T. Michael Womack



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

1994

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Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Henry Putney Beers

Span Dates: 1910-1992

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1930-1970)

ID No.: MSS59477

Creator: Beers, Henry Putney, 1907-

Extent: 7,500 items; 18 containers; 7 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Historian, bibliographer, and archivist with the National Archives and Records Service. Correspondence, memoranda, writings, book reviews, reports, and other papers relating primarily to Beers's work as a bibliographer in American history.

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.

Names:

Beers, Henry Putney, 1907-

Sioussat, St. George L. (St. George Leakin), 1878-1960

United States. National Archives and Records Service

United States. Navy--Military life

United States. Works Progress Administration

Subjects:

Archival surveys

Depressions--1929--United States

Public records

World War, 1939-1945

United States--History--Bibliography

United States--Social life and customs--1918-1945

Occupations:

Archivists

Bibliographers

Historians

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Henry Putney Beers, archivist, historian, and bibliographer, were given to the Library of Congress in two installments by Beers in 1980 and 1992.

Copyright Status:

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Henry Putney Beers in these papers is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Henry Putney Beers Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1907, May 7	Born, Scranton, Pa.
1930	B.S., Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.
1931	M.A., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
1933-1934	Surveyor, supervisor, and bibliographer, Historical Records Survey of Pennsylvania, Civil Works Administration, Philadelphia, Pa.
1935	Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
1936-1937	Research assistant and editor, Survey of Federal Archives, Works Progress Administration, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
1938-1944	Assistant archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
1944-1946	Seaman and specialist third class, United States Navy, serving from Jan. 1945 to Jan. 1946 as a historian in the Bureau of Naval Personnel
1946	Archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
1946-1950	Historian, <i>Foreign Relations, Diplomatic Papers of the United States</i> (Latin America), State Department, Washington, D.C.
1950-1958	Historian (assistant editor), <i>The Territorial Papers of the United States</i> (project was transferred from State Department to National Archives in May 1950)
1958-1968	Archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Henry Putney Beers (1907-1996) span the years 1910-1992, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period between 1930 and 1970. The collection focuses on Beers's professional activity as a bibliographer in American history. It consists of three series: [Correspondence](#), [Bibliographies](#), and [Miscellany](#). Included in the papers are correspondence, reports and memoranda, employment records, office files, academic records, and other material pertaining to Beers's life and career.

The [Correspondence](#) series in the collection documents Beers's private and professional life from his college days through 1992. Topics of interest include hardships during the Great Depression and Beers's concern for and assistance to his aging parents, efforts to find a job after receiving his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1935; his persistence and eventual success in getting a position at the National Archives; his personal and professional relationship with his doctoral advisor, St. George L. Sioussat, who later became head of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress; the courtship of his future wife and their early married life; and his detailed accounts of life in the navy during World War II. The series also provides a chronicle of the development of Beers's thirty-year career as an archivist, bibliographer, and historian.

The [Bibliographies](#) series reflects Beers's activity as a compiler of historical publications. It consists primarily of correspondence with archival repositories and publishers, reports and memoranda, and book reviews. While a student at the University of Pennsylvania, Beers compiled bibliographies on the American Indian, frontier history, and the trans-Mississippi West, subjects pertinent to his doctoral dissertation. Around this time he also compiled bibliographies on the states of New York and Pennsylvania. Beers's major work, *Bibliographies in American History*, first published in 1938, was followed by numerous updated editions over the next fifty years. Foreign archival records relevant to American history were compiled

in *The French and British in the Old Northwest*, *French and Spanish Records of Louisiana*, *The French in North America*, and *Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest*. During the centennial of the Civil War, Beers published guides to archival holdings of both the federal and Confederate governments. He also published several works on the United States Navy.

The [Miscellany](#) series consists of material relating to Beers's education, employment, and finances. The professional office file chronicles his surveys of federal records while with the Works Progress Administration and the National Archives as well as his stint as project editor with *The Territorial Papers of the United States*. The series also contains a small section of writings by Beers comprised mostly of book reviews, papers, and material relating to the published version of his doctoral dissertation.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1926-1992.](#)
- [Bibliographies, 1929-1992, n.d.](#)
- [Miscellany, 1910-1992, n.d.](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1-5

Correspondence, 1926-1992

Letters sent and received with enclosed and related matter.
Arranged chronologically.

BOX 6-10

Bibliographies, 1929-1992, n.d.

Correspondence, book reviews, reports, memoranda, and drafts.
Arranged alphabetically by title or subject.

BOX 11-18

Miscellany, 1910-1992, n.d.

Academic records, biographical material, employment records, financial records, professional office file, and writings.
Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of organization.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-5	Correspondence, 1926-1992 Letters sent and received with enclosed and related matter. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1926-1935 (10 folders)
BOX 2	1936-1939 (7 folders)
BOX 3	1940-1958 (7 folders)
BOX 4	1959-1972 (6 folders)
BOX 5	1973-1992 (8 folders)
BOX 6-10	Bibliographies, 1929-1992, n.d. Correspondence, book reviews, reports, memoranda, and drafts. Arranged alphabetically by title or subject.
BOX 6	<i>Bibliographies in American History</i> Correspondence Re compilation, 1958-1980 With publishers, 1936-1992, n.d. (4 folders) Reviews, 1938-1983 "Bibliographies of the American Indian," 1934 "Bibliographies of the Trans-Mississippi West," n.d. "Bibliography Frontier History, 1922," 1933
BOX 7	<i>The French and British in the Old Northwest</i> Correspondence with archival repositories, 1946-1992, n.d. (3 folders) Reviews, 1964-1966, n.d. <i>French and Spanish Records of Louisiana</i> Correspondence with publisher, 1987-1992 Reviews, 1988-1991 <i>The French in North America</i> Correspondence With archival repositories 1929-1930, 1945-1954 (2 folders)
BOX 8	1955-1958, n.d. With publisher, 1953-1976, n.d. (2 folders)

Bibliographies, 1929-1992, n.d.

Container

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- Reviews, 1957-1960, n.d.
Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War, reviews, 1963
Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America
Correspondence with archival repositories, 1962-1963
National Archives, internal memoranda, 1959-1967
Naval records
Reports and memoranda
Indexed, 1939-1942
(3 folders)
BOX 9 Not indexed, 1937-1958, n.d.
(3 folders)
"New York Bibliographies," 1935
Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest
Correspondence
With archival repositories
Arizona, 1939-1977, n.d.
California
1939-1970
BOX 10 1971-1977
New Mexico, 1939-1975
Texas, 1939-1977, n.d.
(2 folders)
With publisher, 1960-1963, 1971-1992, n.d.
(3 folders)
Reviews, 1979-1984
- BOX 11-18** **Miscellany, 1910-1992, n.d.**
Academic records, biographical material, employment records, financial records, professional office file, and writings.
Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of organization.
- BOX 11** Academic records
Lafayette College, Easton, Pa., 1926-1930
(5 folders)
- BOX 12** Thomas Jefferson School, Scranton, Pa., 1914-1922
Technical High School, Scranton, Pa., 1922-1926
(4 folders)
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa., 1930-1935
(3 folders)
- BOX 13** (3 folders)
- BOX 14** Awards, 1956-1990
Biographical material, 1923-1992, n.d.
Birth records, 1910, 1944-1950, n.d.
Books given to libraries, 1980, 1989
Boy Scouts of America, 1920-1929, n.d.
Diaries, 1925-1928
Employment records

Miscellany, 1910-1992, n.d.

Container

Contents

	Miscellaneous, 1933-1968, n.d.
	National Archives, 1934-1979
	Navy, 1944-1946
	State Department, 1946-1954, n.d.
BOX 15	Financial records, 1927-1986 (4 folders) Professional office file Civil Works Administration, reports and instructions, 1933-1934 National Archives Archives technician training course, 1965
BOX 16	Reports and memoranda, 1937-1947 (2 folders) <i>The Territorial Papers of the United States</i> (editorial project) Grant and fellowship applications, 1940-1969 Miscellany, 1949-1955 Works Progress Administration, survey of federal archives Letters sent 1936-1938 (2 folders)
BOX 17	Reports and memoranda Indexed, 1936-1937 (4 folders) Not indexed, 1936-1938, n.d. (2 folders) Reports on archives of United States territorial acquisitions, 1936-1942 Writings Bibliographies of publications by Beers, 1948-1983, n.d. Book reviews, 1935-1973, n.d.
BOX 18	Conference papers and lectures, 1943-1962 Distribution of publications by Beers, 1938-1948, n.d. <i>The Western Military Frontier</i> (published version of dissertation) Correspondence with publisher, 1933-1936, 1967, n.d. Reviews, 1936-1937, n.d.