

# Ray Eber Brown Papers

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

Prepared by Joseph K. Brooks



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

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

Finding aid encoded by Library of  
Congress Manuscript Division, 2011

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011023>

## Collection Summary

Title: Ray Eber Brown Papers

Span Dates: 1915-1962

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1923-1962)

ID No.: MSS14100

Creator: Brown, Ray Eber, 1892-1962

Extent: 23,000 items; 77 containers plus 5 oversize; 36 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Naval architect and engineer. Correspondence, memoranda, diaries, notebooks, subject files, reports, articles, blueprints, charts, graphs, specification sheets, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other printed material pertaining primarily to Brown's career as a naval architect and marine engineer.

## 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

Brown, Ray Eber, 1892-1962.

Fulton, Garland, 1890-1974--Correspondence.

Rosendahl, Charles E. (Charles Emery), 1892-1977--Correspondence.

### Organizations

United States. Dept. of the Navy. Bureau of Aeronautics.

United States. Navy Dept. Bureau of Aeronautics.

### Subjects

Aeronautics, Military--United States.

Airships.

Helium.

Low temperature engineering.

Marine engineering.

Naval architecture.

### Occupations

Engineers.

Naval architects.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The papers of Ray Eber Brown, naval architect and engineer, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Mrs. Ray E. Brown, in 1962-1963.

### Processing History

The papers of Ray Eber Brown were arranged and described in 1964. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Ray Eber Brown has been dedicated to the public.

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Ray Eber Brown 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, Ray Eber Brown papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i>    | <i>Event</i>   |
|----------------|--|
| 1892, Jan. 19  | Born, Allendale, Mich.   |
| 1917           | B. S., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.  |
| 1917-1918      | Ship draftsmen, Bureau of Construction and Repair, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.                    |
| 1918-1919      | Commissioned lieutenant in the navy and served as a naval constructor                                    |
| 1919-1923      | Ship draftsman, New York Shipbuilding Corp., Camden, N. J.   |
| 1923-1927      | Naval architect, Gibbs Brothers, New York, N. Y.   |
| 1927-1942      | Senior engineer and naval architect, Navy bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C.                       |
| 1942-1945      | Senior petroleum engineer, head of Helium Branch, Navy Bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C.          |
| 1945-1962      | Principal natural gas engineer, head of Helium Branch, Navy Bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C.     |
| 1962           | Retired from government service and worked as a consultant in liquid helium for the General Electric Co. |
| 1962, Sept. 26 | Died, Schenectady, N. Y.   |

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Ray Eber Brown (1892-1962), a key figure in the navy's development of helium gas for lighter than air craft, span the years 1916-1962 with the bulk of the material between 1923 and 1962. The papers are arranged into [Diaries](#), [Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#) series and include diaries, correspondence, notebooks, personal papers, reports, articles,

memoranda, blueprints, charts, graphs, specification sheets, photographs, and newspaper clippings. The papers document the study of airships, cryogenics, and the uses of helium.

The [diaries](#) are technical and not personal. Most of the letters in the [Correspondence](#) series are routine; much of the substantial professional correspondence in the papers is part of the personal file of the [Subject File](#), which includes correspondence with naval officers and proponents of lighter-than-air craft such as Garland Fulton and Charles E. Rosendahl. The bulk of the [Subject File](#) reflects Brown's career as a naval architect and engineer, particularly his role in the navy's dirigible program and the development of cryogenic methods for storing and transporting helium in liquid form.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- [Diaries, 1953-1962](#)
- [Correspondence, 1916-1962](#)
- [Subject File, 1915-1962](#)
- [Miscellany](#)
- [Oversize](#)

## Description of Series

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Series</i>   |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1            | <u>Diaries, 1953-1962</u><br>Diaries of brief entries relating to technical matters.<br>Arranged chronologically.   |
| BOX 1-2          | <u>Correspondence, 1916-1962</u><br>Business letters sent and received and official correspondence.<br>Arranged chronologically.  |
| BOX 3-65         | <u>Subject File, 1915-1962</u><br>Topical files, blueprints, personal papers, correspondence, card indexes, and photographs.<br>Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material. |
| BOX 66-77        | <u>Miscellany</u><br>Notes, notebooks, calculations, printed matter, graphs, and drawings.<br>Arranged by type of material.   |
| BOX OV 1-OV 5    | <u>Oversize</u><br>Blueprints, charts, and graphs<br>Arranged as received.  |

# Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i>   |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1            | Diaries, 1953-1962<br>Diaries of brief entries relating to technical matters.<br>Arranged chronologically.  |
| BOX 1            | Diaries, 1953-1962<br>(3 vols.)   |
| BOX 1-2          | Correspondence, 1916-1962<br>Business letters sent and received and official correspondence.<br>Arranged chronologically.   |
| BOX 1            | General   |
| BOX 1            | 1916-1962<br>(32 folders)   |
| BOX 2            | 1949-1962<br>(6 folders)  |
| BOX 2            | Official, 1937, undated   |
| BOX 3-65         | Subject File, 1915-1962<br>Topical files, blueprints, personal papers, correspondence, card indexes,<br>and photographs.<br>Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material. |
| BOX 3-5          | Airships, 1915-1943   |
| BOX 6-11         | Blueprints, 1923-1961   |
| BOX 12-15        | Cylinders and valves, 1932-1957   |
| BOX 16-40        | Helium, 1940-1962   |
| BOX 41           | <i>Leviathan</i> , passenger ocean liner, blueprints  |
| BOX 42-46        | Memoranda, 1923-1941  |
| BOX 47           | Montgomery County Civic Federation, Montgomery County, Md., 1951-1953<br>(2 folders)  |
| BOX 48-52        | Personal file, 1920-1962  |
| BOX 53-57        | Tank cars, 1929-1960  |
| BOX 58           | Tractor trailers, 1942-1952   |
| BOX 58           | Writings, 1923-1954   |
| BOX 59-64        | Card indexes  |
| BOX 65           | Photographs, 1920-1942<br>(4 folders)   |
| BOX 66-77        | Miscellany<br>Notes, notebooks, calculations, printed matter, graphs, and drawings.   |

## Miscellany

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|-----------------|
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Arranged by type of material.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| BOX OV 1-OV 5 | Oversize<br>Blueprints, charts, and graphs<br>Arranged as received. |
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|---------------|--------------------------------|
| BOX OV 1-OV 5 | Blueprints, charts, and graphs |
|---------------|--------------------------------|