

Oswald Veblen Papers

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Collection Summary

Title: Oswald Veblen Papers

Span Dates: 1881-1960

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1920-1960)

ID No.: MSS44016

Creator: Veblen, Oswald, 1880-1960

Extent: 13,600 items; 43 containers plus 1 overize; 17 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Mathematician. Correspondence, diaries, subject files, articles, book reviews, drafts of books, lecture notebooks, financial papers, and miscellany relating primarily to Veblen's work and research in pure mathematics and mathematical physics and reflecting his association with Princeton University, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., and the American Mathematical Society. Also includes material relating to Veblen's efforts on behalf of displaced German scholars and refugees.

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

Alexander, James W., 1888-1971--Correspondence.

Birkhoff, George David, 1884-1944--Correspondence.

Bohr, Niels, 1885-1962--Correspondence.

Dirac, P. A. M. (Paul Adrien Maurice), 1902-1984--Correspondence.

Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955.

Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959.

Millikan, Robert Andrews, 1868-1953.

Neugebauer, O. (Otto), 1899-1990.

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1904-1967.

Pauling, Linus, 1901-1994.

Richardson, O. W. (Owen Willans), 1879-1959--Correspondence.

Richardson, R. G. D. (Roland George Dwight), 1878-1949--Correspondence.

Russell, Bertrand, 1872-1970--Correspondence.

Stone, Marshall H. (Marshall Harvey), 1903- --Correspondence.

Strauss, Lewis L.--Correspondence.

Struik, Dirk J. (Dirk Jan), 1894-2000--Correspondence.

Veblen, Oswald, 1880-1960.

Von Neumann, John, 1903-1957--Correspondence.

Weyl, Hermann, 1885-1955--Correspondence.

Whitehead, John Henry Constantine, 1904-1960--Correspondence.

Wiener, Norbert, 1894-1964--Correspondence.

Wigner, Eugene Paul, 1902- --Correspondence.

Organizations

American Mathematical Society.

Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, N.J.)

Princeton University.

Subjects

Mathematical physics.

Mathematics--Societies, etc.

Mathematics.
Refugees--United States.
Science--History--20th century.
Universities and colleges--New Jersey.

Titles
Mathematical reviews.

Occupations
Mathematicians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Oswald Veblen, mathematician, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Elizabeth Veblen, in 1963.

Processing History

The papers of Oswald Veblen were arranged and described between 1963-1964. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1976-1977. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

A partial description of the Veblen Papers appears in *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, May 27, 1963, pp. 1-3.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Oswald Veblen 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 Oswald Veblen 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, Oswald Veblen Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1880, June 24	Born, Decorah, Iowa
1898	A.B., University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
1900	A.B., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1903	Ph. D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1903-1905	Associate in mathematics, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

1904	Published <i>A System of Axioms for Geometry</i> . . . Lancaster, Pa.: Press of the New Era Printing Co.
1905-1910	Preceptor in mathematics, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
1907	Published with N. J. Lennes <i>Introduction to Infinitesimal Analysis</i> . New York: J. Wiley & Sons
1908	Married Elizabeth M. D. Richardson
1910-1918	Published with John Wesley Young <i>Projective Geometry</i> . Boston: Ginn & Co. 2 vols.
1910-1932	Professor of mathematics, Princeton University, Princeton, N.Y.
1917-1919	Officer in U. S. Army
1923-1924	President, American Mathematical Society
1923-1924	Chairman of the physical sciences, National Research Council
1927	Published <i>Invariants of Quadratic Differential Forms</i> . Cambridge University Press
1932	Published with J. H. C. Whitehead <i>The Foundations of Differential Geometry</i> . Cambridge [Eng.] University Press
1932-1960	Professor, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J. (professor emeritus, 1950-1960)
1950	President, International Congress of Mathematicians
1960	Died, Princeton, N.J.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Oswald Veblen (1880-1960) span the years 1881-1960, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1920-1960. The papers relate to the upsurge of pure mathematics and mathematical physics in America, the careers of many scientists who played roles in this development, and various key institutions in the scientific and academic community at the time. The collection is organized in [Diaries](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#) series.

From 1932 until his death in 1960 Veblen was a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. The paper reflect in detail that long association and reveal much about the founding and early years of the institute. There is also some early correspondence covering his years of graduate study, then with his colleagues at Princeton University, and later many letters and other material concerning the American Mathematical Society and the founding of *Mathematical Reviews* to replace a German journal reflecting Nazi views.

His exchange of letters and ideas with mathematicians and other scientists in both the United States and Europe represents a prominent part of the collection. Among his correspondents are

Nobel Prize recipients Niels Bohr, P. A. M. Dirac, Albert Einstein, Robert Andrews Millikan, Linus Pauling, Owen Willans Richardson, and Bertrand Russell. Other major correspondents include James W. Alexander, George David Birkhoff, Abraham Flexner, O. Neugebauer, Roland George Dwight Richardson, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Marshall H. Stone, Lewis L. Strauss, Dirk Jan Struik, John Von Neumann, Herman Weyl, John Henry Constantine Whitehead, Norbert Wiener, and Eugene Paul Wigner.

There is considerable material in the papers on Veblen's efforts to aid displaced German scholars and other refugees, including many distinguished scientist. There is also material on his interest in raising the standards of the American scientific community and in stimulating support for research not wedded to specific applied ends. Of particular interest is correspondence detailing the efforts of Veblen and his fellow scientist to raise money between World War I and World War II. The letters include frank comment on the attitudes of business and government toward supporting pure research.

The collection also includes diaries, manuscripts of some of Veblen's speeches and publications, and miscellaneous financial and personal material.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Diaries, 1917-1958](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1902-1960](#)
- [Subject File, 1918-1960](#)
- [Writings File, 1905-1919](#)
- [Miscellany, 1881-1959](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1	<u>Diaries, 1917-1958</u> Pocket diaries containing appointments and other brief notations. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 2-17	<u>General Correspondence, 1902-1960</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically within each correspondent's file.
BOX 18-34	<u>Subject File, 1918-1960</u> Correspondence, memoranda, recommendations, printed matter, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.
BOX 35-38	<u>Writings File, 1905-1919</u> Articles, bibliography, book manuscripts and notes, and book reviews. Arranged by type of writing, with articles organized chronologically.
BOX 38-43	<u>Miscellany, 1881-1959</u> Lecture notebooks and writings of others, biographical data, income tax and insurance data, memorabilia, pocket notebooks, photographs, printed matter, awards, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
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	Mathematical Section officers, 1922-1925
	National Research Fund, 1928, 1934 and undated (3 folders)
	Special Committee to Assist in the Selection of a National Science Foundation Panel, 1947
	National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, 1953
	National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, 1948-1949 (2 folders)
BOX 27	National Research Council

	Administrative Committee, 1935-1936
	Committee reports on expenditures, 1922-1928
	Fellowships in physics, chemistry, and mathematics
	Agenda, 1931-1935
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BOX 28	Analysis
	Board meetings, correspondence, 1929-1937
	(6 folders)
BOX 29	General correspondence, 1923-1947
	(3 folders)
	Reynolds, Neva E., correspondence, 1929-1959 <i>See also Container 10, Reynolds, Neva Tistale</i>
	National University for Advanced Study, 1958-1959
	New Jersey Civil Liberties Union, 1940-1941
	Office of Scientific Research and Development, 1945-1946
	(2 folders)
	Optics
	American Foundation for the Blind, 1958-1960
	(2 folders)
	Boeder, Paul, correspondence, 1959-1960
	Bushnell (D. P.) and Co., 1958
	Chinard, Gilbert, 1959
	Compass Instrument and Optical Co., 1959
	Eastman Kodak Co.
	Edmund Scientific Co., 1958-1959
	Edroy Products Co., 1958-1959
	Feinbloom, William 1958
	Herzberger, Max J., 1958-1959
	Institute for Advanced Study account, 1958-1960
	Job Lot Trading Co., 1958-1959
	Lafayette Radio, 1960
BOX 30	Lighthouse, 1960
	McCutchen, Brunson S., 1959
	Monk, George S., 1960
	Peerless Photo Products, 1958
	Rogers, Eric M., 1959
	Sloan, Louise L., 1957-1959
	Woods, Alan C., 1953-1960
	Zeiss-Alfoldi, 1958
	Instruments, 1958-1960 <i>See also Container 22, Blindness</i>
	Ordnance Department, 1945
	Polish-American Congress, 1946
	Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.
	Association of Scientists, 1948-1949
	Committee, 1930-1931
	Institute of Advanced Studies, 1945
	Institute of Mathematical Research, 1924-1925

Mathematics building

Acoustics, 1930

Decorating, 1930-1931

Miscellaneous, 1930-1931

Mathematics department meetings, 1929

Transfer of funds from General Education Board, 1925-1930

Miscellaneous, 1919-1959

Progressive Citizens of America, 1947

Refugees

General, 1935-1941

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Abrahamson, Ernest L.

Ascoli, Guido

BOX 31

Basch, Alfred, 1941-1944

Baule, Bernard, 1934-1947

Beer, Ferdinand Pierre, 1942

Bemporad, Giulio, 1939

Bergman, Stefan, 1941-1946

Bergman, Gustav, 1939

Bernays, Paul I., 1939

Bernstein, Felix, 1943

Bers, Lipman, 1941

Berwald, Ludwig, 1939-1942

Blum, Richard, 1950-1952

Blumenthal, Otto, 1938-1940

Bohm, Franz,

Born, Max, 1940

Brauer, Alfred T., 1938-1943

Bruns, Walter J., 1939-1940

Castelnuovo, Gina, 1930-1945

Dehn, Max, 1938-1945

Dember, Harry, 1941

Dienes, Paul, 1939

Duschek, Adalbert, 1938-1939

Ehrenhaft, Flex, 1939-1941

Fenchel, Werner

Frank, Philipp, 1939

Freudenthal, Hans, 1940

Fried, Hans, 1940-1941

Froehlich, Walter, 1939-1942

Frucht, Robert, 1938-1947

Funk, Paul, 1939

Furth, R., 1940

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Geiringer, Hilda, 1939-1944

Goldstein, Louis, 1939

Goldstein, Moritz and Thomas, 1939

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Golomb, Michael, 1938-1942
 Gross, Wilhelm, 1939
 Guenther, Gotthard, 1938-1940
 Gumbel, Emil J., 1936-1944
 Hadamard, Jacques, 1936-1942
 Halm, Hans, 1937
 Hamburger, Hans, 1938-1943
 Hausdorff, Felix, 1939
 Heilbronn, Hans, 1940
 Hellinger, Ernst, 1938-1941
 Helly, Elizabeth, 1944
 Helmer, Olaf, 1937
 Houtermans, Charlotte R., 1939
 Houtermans, Fritz Georg, 1939
 Jacchia, Luigi, 1939
 Jacobsthal, Ernst Erich, 1938-1944
 Jaffe, George, 1939
 Jehle, Herbert, 1938-1941
 John, Fritz
 Jolles, Stanislaus,
 Jordan, Henri, 1945
 Kogbetliantz, Ervand, 1940-1941
 Kottler, Friedrich, 1938-1940
 Kuhn, Paul, 1939-1944
 Langevin, Paul, 1941-1942
 Levi, Friedrich W., 1935-1941
 Lewin, Gerhard
 Loewig, Henry, 1939-1947
 Loewner, Charles
 Lubelski, S., 1938
 Lukacs, Eugene, 1938-1942
 Mahler, Kurt, 1940
 Mann, Henry, 1938-1944
 Marx, Erich, 1939-1944
 Mayer, Anton, E., 1938-1942
 Mosztowski, Andrzej, 1941
 Nachoo, Hans, 1939
 Neumann, Bernard, 1939
 Noether, Fritz, 1940-1946
 Noether, Herman, 1943-1946
 Noether, Herman and Gottfried, 1938-1942
 (2 folders)
 Pietrkowski, Stefan
 Pinl, Max, 1938-1939
 Pollaczek, Felix, 1938-1940
 Polya, George, 1940-1941

	Prager, Willy, 1938-1939 Pringsheim, Peter, 1940 Reiche, Fritz, 1939-1941 Reiss, Max, 1935 Remak, Robert Erich, 1938-1940 Rogosinski, Werner, 1940 Rosenthal, Arthur, 1938-1942 Rothe, Erich, 1934-1944 Salomon, Albert Scherk, Peter, 1939-1941 Schoenflies, Albert, 1938-1939 Schwarz, Stefan, 1939 Schwerdtfeger, Hans, 1935-1940 Segre, Beniamino, 1938-1941 Sternberg, Wolfgang, 1939-1949 (2 folders) Tarski, Alfred, 1939-1940 Terracini, Alessandro, 1938-1943 Theilheimer, Feodor, 1942 Thirring, Hans, 1938-1939 Varsonyi, Andrew, 1940 Voletrra, Edoardo, 1940 Voletrra, Enrico, 1939 Wason, Wolfgang, 1938-1942 Weinstein, Alexander, 1939-1946 Winternitz, Artur, 1938-1940 Wolf, Franktisek, 1940 Wunndheiler, Alexander, 1940-1941 Zilsel, Edgar Research Board for National Security General correspondence, 1945-1946 (2 folders) Proposed formation of panels, 1945 Applied mathematics Computing devices Fluid mechanics Shock waves theory Spanish intellectual aid, 1939 Stony Brook-Millstone watersheds Association, 1954-1955 Tass, 1941 University Federation for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom, 1938 Veblen, Thorstein B., correspondence relating to, 1933-1957 World War I service, 1918-1919
BOX 34	
BOX 35-38	Writings File, 1905-1919 Articles, bibliography, book manuscripts and notes, and book reviews. Arranged by type of writing, with articles organized chronologically.

BOX 35	Articles 1905, "Lechala's General Geometry" 1906, "The Square Root and the Relations of Order" 1908, "On the Well-Ordered Subsets of the Continuum" 1910, "Letter to the editor of the Jahresbericht" 1913, Decomposition of an N-Space by a Polyhedron" 1917, "On the Deformation of an N-Cell" 1924 "Extensions on Relative Tensors" "Invariance of the Poincaré Numbers of a Discrete Group" "Projective Invariants of Affine Geometry of Paths" 1927, "Invariants of Quadratic Differential Forms," correspondence relating to 1928, "Conformal Tensors and Connection" 1929, "Henry Burchard Fine- in Memoriam" 1932, "Quadratic Differential Forms," Cambridge Tract No. 24, correspondence relating to 1933, "Spinors in Projective Relativity" 1934, "The Dirac Equation in Projective Relativity," with A. H. Taub and John Von Neumann 1935-1936, "Introduction to Infinitesimal Analysis," correspondence relating to 1937 [?], "Geometry of Complex Domains," with John Von Neumann, 1937 [?], bound volume of 1955 reprint 1950, "Opening Address" of International Congress of Mathematicians Undated, "Projective Relativity" Bibliography
BOX 36	Book notes and chapters (14 folders)
BOX 37	(22 folders)
BOX 38	(16 folders) Book reviews, 1932-1933
BOX 38-43	Miscellany, 1881-1959 Lecture notebooks and writings of others, biographical data, income tax and insurance data, memorabilia, pocket notebooks, photographs, printed matter, awards, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 38	Austin Motor Co., 1951-1955 (4 folders)
BOX 39	Bibliographical material on others Clothes washing machine, 1949 Eastman Kodak Co., 1955-1956 European trips, 1951-1952, 1954, 1956 (3 folders) Forest conservation, 1950-1952 General miscellany Glasses prescriptions, 1944

	Income taxes, 1957-1959
	Insurance
	Pickfords Ltd., 1953
	Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association, 1950-1951
	Lecture notebooks
	"Foundations of Geometry," E. H. Moore, 1901
	(2 folders)
	"Differential Geometry I," H. Maschke, 1902
	"Theory of Functions," O. Bolza, 1902
	(2 vols.)
BOX 40	"Linear Substitution Groups," H. Maschke, undated
	"Theory of Numbers," L. E. Dickson, undated
	Untitled and undated notebooks
	Medical expenses, 1957-1958
	(2 folders)
	Memorabilia
	Mercer County, N.J., Recreation Advisory Council, 1959
	Notebooks (pocket), circa 1938, circa 1944, 1945-1946
	(3 vols.)
BOX 41	Passport, 1955
	Photographs
	Photography, 1926-1953
	Printed matter
	Lattimore, Owen J., case, 1953
	Oppenheimer, J. Robert, security case, 1954
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	(3 folders)
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BOX 43	(3 folders)
	Property owned by Veblen
	Maine, Brooklin (Hancock County), 1947-1958
	Princeton, N.J.
	Battle Road, 1959
	Herrontown Road, 1941-1951
	Morningside Avenue, 1910-1944
	General correspondence, 1935-1951
	Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas <i>See Oversize</i>
	Renault automobile, 1956-1957
	Spanish refugee aid, 1953
	Touring Club of France, 1958
	Water softener, 1959
	Writings of others
	"An Explicit Expression for the Detrimant of the Matrix . . .," J. S. DeWet
	"Introduction à la Théorie des Structures
	Infinitésimales et des Pseudogroupes de Lie," C. Ehresmann
	"Tensor Coordinates of Linear Spaces," W. Givens

Miscellany, 1881-1959

Container

Contents

“On Five-Dimensional Relativity Theory,” O. Klein

“A Remark on the Coupling of Gravitation and Electron,” Hermann Weyl

BOX OV 1

Oversize

Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas.

Arranged and described according to the series, container, and folder from which it was removed.

BOX OV 1

Miscellany

Photographs, certificates, awards, and diplomas (Container 42)