The Herbert M. Bratter Collection, 1890s-1975

NMAH.AC.0137

Erin Molloy

2012
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Title: The Herbert M. Bratter Collection

Identifier: NMAH.AC.0137

Date: 1890s-1975

Extent: 20 Cubic feet (60 boxes)

Source: Numismatics, Division of, NMAH, SI. Bratter, Herbert Max, 1900-1976 (economist)

Language: English

Some materials in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

Collection is in English.

Summary: The papers document the working files and home movies of Herbert M. Bratter, a financial specialist, and his professional career. The materials consist of biographical materials (academic and military records), press releases, newspaper clippings; daily, weekly and monthly releases from government agencies; clippings from the Congressional Record on monetary matters such as silver and gold; topical files covering a range of monetary subjects; publications, including writings about the Bretton Woods Conference, scrapbooks, and moving image including home movies.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information


Provenance

Transferred to the Archives Center from the National Numismatics Collection on January 15, 1985.

Processing Information

Processed by Grace M. Angle (volunteer) and Robert S. Harding, archivist, November 1986; revised by Alison Oswald, January 2004 and October 2011; revised by Erin Molloy, volunteer, 2012.
Preferred Citation

Herbert M. Bratter Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Accruals

The Archives Center added six cubic feet of material in 2004 and two cubic feet of material in 2011.

Biographical / Historical

Herbert Max Bratter, an economic and financial specialist, was born in New York City, January 22, 1900 and died in San Antonio, Texas, February 19, 1976. Fluent in six languages, Mr. Bratter became an internationally known expert on gold and silver.

Mr. Bratter was educated at City College, New York (1917-1919) and Columbia University (1919-1921). After several positions with private firms, and a period in the early twenties as a statistician in the Chinese Government Bureau of Economic Information, he became an economic analyst for the U.S. Department of Commerce and later for the U.S. Department of the Treasury (1929-1935) and was a member of the American Economic Mission to the Far East (1935). At both Commerce and Treasury “following” silver was one of his official responsibilities. He returned to the private sector and an economics research post with Loomis Sayles & Company, a Massachusetts investment company (1935-1937) and later was in private practice as an economic consultant in Washington, D.C.

The author of more than 125 magazine and newspaper articles and pamphlets, Bratter was also the Washington correspondent and a regular contributor to Banking from 1939 to 1974. Bratter was firmly opposed to any government or monetary action to support the silver industry and in complete disagreement with the Silver Purchase Act. Several members of the Senate consulted him as an expert on silver during periods of legislative debates on pending silver legislation. His publications include The Price of Silver (1930), Japanese Banking (1931), and Silver Market Dictionary (1933).

Scope and Contents

These papers are the working files of a financial specialist from his professional life. They consist of some biographical materials (school and military service records) topical files, press releases, newspaper clippings, daily, weekly and monthly releases from government agencies such as the press summaries of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the Department of Commerce and that agency's Far Eastern Financial Notes, Federal Reserve Board Notes, and periodic releases of the Bank for International Settlements. There are extensive clippings from the Congressional Record on monetary matters and
particularly on silver and gold when these were subjects of legislative interest, a number of congressional committee reports and congressional hearings.

Also included are many clippings from The Economist and a number from Business Week. Newspaper clippings are most frequently from the New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, Washington Post, Washington Star, and Wall Street Journal. During several periods of intense activity relating to silver, Bratter also used a clipping service. There are some clippings from English language papers in other countries and a few in the language of the country.

Regular bulletins of major banks in this and other countries are included among the papers. There are copies of articles by Mr. Bratter, occasional correspondence, and several reports from commercial attaches at U.S. embassies in the Far East. Correspondence is filed in the relevant subject matter folder. The papers include a number of handwritten notes, most of them memoranda to himself on phone calls or face to face conversations with governmental or congressional staff and members of Congress.

While not complete, the material spans a period when the monetary and fiscal policies of the United States were of major economic and political importance, an era of worldwide depression, a period when a number of countries including the United States abandoned the gold standard, the years of the Second World War and the establishment of agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It is complete enough to be useful for doctoral dissertations on several subjects.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into eight series.

The series are organized in the manner in which they were received by the Archives Center: by subject matter and geographically by country. The topical files, political files, and geographical files are arranged alphabetically.

Some folders were incorrectly labeled and some material was not turned over to the Archives Center. For example, the folders relating to world currency omit World Currency I and III. The Guide to Manuscript Collections, 1978, in describing the Bratter collection states, "They also concern the Committee for the Nation to Rebuild Prices and Purchasing Power, a 1930's monetary propaganda group." No such material has been located among the papers. Two brief references to such a group were noted. It is mentioned in the folder on Walter Lippmann in Series 2 and in a Saturday Evening Post article by Raymond Moley in Series 2.

- Series 1A, Biographical Materials, 1914-1975
- Series 1, Topical Files, 1930-1974
- Series 2, Political Files, 1930-1967
- Series 3, Laws, Orders and Releases, 1933-1939
- Series 4, Economists' National Committee on Monetary Policy, 1933-1970
- Series 5, Geographical (by country), 1919-1968
- Series 6, Publications, 1933-1962
- Series 7, Scrapbooks, 1922-1969
- Series 7A, Postcards, 1918-1972
- Series 8, Moving Image, 1936-1961
Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
Banking
Economics
Gold
Gold standard
Money
Silver
World Bank
World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:
Bulletins
Clippings

Names:
International Monetary Fund
Numismatics, Division of, NMAH, SI.

Geographic Names:
China
Container Listing

Series 1: Topical Files, 1930-1974
Consists of materials relating to finances, particularly gold, silver, and domestic and international currency. Materials in this series include congressional reports, pamphlets, correspondence, market reports, member directories, charts, newspaper clippings, and notes.

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### Series 1A: Biographical Files, 1890s-1975

Consists of materials about Herbert Max Bratter. Included in this series are correspondence, newspaper clippings, notes, employment documents, photographs, biographical sketches, payroll accounts, employment records, identification cards, school report cards, and certificates.

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Box 33, Folder 11       Venezuela, 1936
Series 6: Publications, 1925-1974

Contains writings by Bratter and others about the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, commonly known as the Bretton Woods Conference. In 1944, delegates from the Allied nations met at the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire to regulate international monetary and financial order.

Subseries 6.1: By Herbert Bratter, 1925-1974

Box 38, Folder 1 Gold and Silver
Box 38, Folder 2 International Monetary System
Box 38, Folder 3 Devaluation, Inflation and Monetary Policy
Box 34-37 Various publications by Bratter and others, 1940-1972
Box 39, Folder 1 Joint Committee on the Economic Report, Monetary Credit & Fiscal Policies, 1949
Box 39, Folder 3 Bratter, Herbert, Silver Market Dictionary, 1933
Box 39, Folder 4 Bratter, Herbert, "Silver Again," Banking, the Journal of the American Bankers Association, June 1960
Box 39, Folder 4 Bratter, Herbert, "The Centennial Story of the National Bank Note," Banking, the Journal of the American Bankers Association, August 1962
Box 39, Folder 4 Bratter, Herbert, "A Visit to the United States Treasury," Banking, the Journal of the American Bankers Association, July 1963
Box 39, Folder 4 Bratter, Herbert, Banking, the Journal of the American Bankers Association, 1964 April
Box 39, Folder 4 Bratter, Herbert, "Banking Insurance," Banking, the Journal of the American Bankers Association, undated
Box 39, Folder 4 Bratter, Herbert. "Should We Turn To Silver?", 1933
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Subseries 6.2: By Others, 1930-1944

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<td>Edie, Lionel D, After Bretton Woods—What?, 1944 August</td>
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<td>Laughlin, J. Lawrence, &quot;Money, Credits and Prices,&quot; 1933</td>
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### Series 7: Scrapbooks, 1922-1969

Consists of hardcover-bound books containing newspaper articles, magazine articles, and correspondence relating to world finance.

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Series 7A: Postcards, 1918-1972

Consists of color and black-and-white postcards and postcard books Bratter collected during his travels. The postcards are from North America, Central America, South America, Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia. The postcards are arranged alphabetically by country and/or region.

Argentina

Box 54 Buenos Aires

Box 54 Mendoza, 1926

Box 54 Australia, 1927

Box 54 Austria

Box 54 Belgium, 1920

Box 54 Bermuda, 1952

Bolivia

Box 54 La Paz

Box 54 Tiahuanaco

Box 54 Brazil, 1936

Box 54 Canada

Box 54 Chile

China

Box 54 Hong Kong, 1923

Box 54 Nanking, 1925

Box 54 Shanghai, 1921

Box 54 Su-Chow and Hangchow, 1922

Box 54 Cuba
Box 54  Czechoslovakia, 1920-1946

Box 54  Denmark, 1945

Egypt

Box 54  Cairo, 1921

Box 54  Port-Said, 1921

England

Box 54  Canterbury, Stratford-on-Avon, and Warwick

Box 54  London, 1920

Box 54  Salisbury

Box 55  Eritrea, 1923

France

Box 55  Lyons, 1923

Box 55  Marseille, Nice, and Monte Carlo

Box 55  Paris, 1945

Box 55  Paris, Versailles, and Saint Quentin, 1920

Germany

Box 55  Berlin, 1920

Box 55  Bremen, 1945

Box 55  Cologne and Nuremberg

Box 55  Dresden and Leipzig, 1920

Box 55  Frankfort

Box 55  Hamburg, 1920
Box 55 Nuremberg
Box 55 Potsdam

Greece
Box 55 Athens, 1923
Box 55 Crete, 1923
Box 55 Greece

Box 55 Guatemala
Box 55 Holland, 1945
Box 55 Ireland, 1945-1946

Italy
Box 55 Bologna, 1923
Box 55 Como and Lugano
Box 55 Florence, 1923
Box 55 Milan, 1920
Box 55 Naples
Box 55 Naples and Pozzuoli, 1923
Box 55 Pompeii, 1923
Box 55 Rome, 1923
Box 55 Tivoli
Box 55 Venice and Genoa, 1920-1923
Box 55 Verona and Milano, 1920

Japan
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Sweden, 1945

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Box 57  Stockholm

Box 57  Switzerland, 1946

Box 57  Thailand, 1923

United States, 1918-1948

Box 57  Arizona, 1938

Box 57  California, 1938

Box 57  Colorado, 1938

Box 57  Florida

Box 57  Georgia, 1921

Box 57  Hawaii, 1921

Box 57  Illinois, 1948

Box 57  Massachusetts

Box 57  New Jersey

Box 57  New Mexico, 1938

Box 57  New York, 1918

Box 57  Utah, 1938

Box 57  Virginia, 1948

Box 57  Washington, District of Columbia
Box 57  Yemen, 1923
Box 57  Yugoslavia, 1958
Box 57  Miscellaneous
Series 8: Moving Image, 1936-1961

Consists of fifteen 8 mm films that include both home movies and some commercially-issued films from 1936-1961. The commercial films include World Parade Mexico (1952), World Parade Paris (1953). The home movies were taken presumably by Herbert Bratter of his daughter Junia, other family members, friends, and his travels domestically and internationally. The films are silent and in both black and white and color.

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Junia and friends egg rolling, 1936

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Cherry blossoms in Arnold Arboretum, 1936

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Daddy going to Washington in airplane, 1936

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Junia and mother at Newton Highland, 1936

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Grandpa in summer of, 1936

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Junia snowball fight and rolling in Newton Highland, 1937

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Junia skating in Washington, 1937

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Force School dance on May Day, 1937

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Black-and-white and color camera original, reversal, Kodachrome, underexposed, 1950

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Junia Bratter, Mary Kate, Violet Jane, Johnsons, Wilford Whites, at home and on the canal. Bill Kuhns, Amos Taylor, and C.I. White, 1943-1944

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Indoor film, Junia Bratter vacuuming and in pajamas, 1943-1944

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Bretton Woods Conference, 1944

Box 53, Folder OF 137

Box 53, Folder OF 137
- Savannah Conference of Fund and Bank Governors, 1946
Box 53, Folder OF137  
Mexico, Kodachrome, color, 1947

Box 53, Folder OF137  
[Junia's?] prom dress, 1949 June

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Charleston, [South Carolina?], spring, 1950

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Junia on bicycle at Marilyn, 1941

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Junia at Camp May Flather, 1941

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Jousting at Chimney Rocks near Camp May Flather, 1941

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Mexico City, Pachuca, Morelia, Lake Patzcuaro, Merida, Chichen Itza, and Uxmal, 1941

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Black and white and color

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Junia in park at end of Cathedral Avenue, 1942

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Montreal sightseeing, 1943

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Skyline Drive, Cherokee {Reservation?}, 1938

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Junia on bike, Marilyn on roof with friends, May Day at Horace Mann School, Junia with cat, Junia telling about Gulliver's Travels

Box 53, Folder OF137  
[Junia and Gloria?] at Bluemont, Virginia, 1939

Box 53, Folder OF137  
[Damaged buildings in Europe, ?], 1946

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Black and white camera original, reversal

Box 53, Folder OF137  
Over and underexposed
Box 53, Folder OF137
Poor quality, with light leaks

Box 53, Folder OF137
[Home movies—travel, cruise ship in tropical location, ]

Box 53, Folder OF137
8 mm camera original, reversal

Box 53, Folder OF137
Europe, 1946

Box 53, Folder OF137
Krazy Kat in Egypt, Inca Land, Hawaii, and Mystic India, 1941

Box 53, Folder OF137
World Parade, Mexico, 1952

Box 53, Folder OF137
Guatemala, 1939

Box 53, Folder OF137
Cuba, 1940

Box 53, Folder OF137
Skyline Drive, 1940

Box 53, Folder OF137
Washington, D.C., 1941

Box 53, Folder OF137
Germany and Austria, 1946

Box 53, Folder OF137
World Parade, Paris, 1953

Box 53, Folder OF137
Darion and Skyline, 1961

Box 52, Folder 12
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