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, (economist), 1900-1976
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.

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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.

Box 1, Folder 1  Articles by Herbert M. Bratter, 1930-1960
Box 1, Folder 2  Articles by Herbert M. Bratter, 1930-1963
Box 1, Folder 3  Articles by others, 1930-1932
Box 1, Folder 4  Articles by others, 1933-1936
Box 1, Folder 5  Articles by others, III, 1939-1967
Box 1, Folder 6  Bibliography, 1936-1968
Box 2, Folder 1  Bimetallism, 1904-1966
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Box 2, Folder 3  Certificates, silver, 1963-1967
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Box 4, Folder 1  Conference, silver (Bretton Woods), 1944-1947
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Box 4, Folder 4  Congressional Record Debates on Silver and Inflation, Vol. II, 1933
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Box 4, Folder 6  Dies, Martin, 1934-1954
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Box 5, Folder 2  Executive Proclamation (October 21, 1933), 1933-1934
Box 5, Folder 3  Executive Proclamation II, III, 1926-1935
Box 5, Folder 4  Executive Proclamation IV, V, 1937-1939
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Box 5, Folder 6  Gold laws and regulations, 1933-1934
Box 5, Folder 7  Gold Clause I, 1934-1935
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Box 6, Folder 2-3  Gold Plans, 1949-1955
Box 6, Folder 4  Gold Plans, Committee for Constitutional Government, 1958-1959
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Box 6, Folder 6  Hard Money Debate I, 1953-1956
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Box 7, Folder 2  Historical II, 1890-1965
Box 7, Folder 3  House Hearings, 1932
Box 7, Folder 4  Industrial (silver) I—Possible new uses, 1939-1942
Box 7, Folder 5  Industrial (silver) II—Effects of war stringencies, 1942-1948
Box 7, Folder 6  Industrial (silver) III—Busbar deal, 1942-1964
Box 7, Folder 7  Industrial (silver) IV—Political aspects, 1941-1943
Box 7, Folder 8  Industrial (silver) V—OPM and WPB, 1942-1945
Box 7, Folder 9  Industrial (silver) VI—Other angles, 1942-1950
Box 8, Folder 1  Industrial (silver)—Silver Users Association I., 1960-1967
Box 8, Folder 2  Industrial (silver)—Silver Users Association II., 1970-1973
Box 8, Folder 3  Industrial (silver)—Trading, production and consumption,, 1927-1968
Box 8, Folder 4  International Chamber of Commerce, 1931-1932
Box 8, Folder 5  Letters (silver), 1936-1944
Box 8, Folder 6  London Agreement, 1930-1943
Box 8, Folder 7  Maria Theresa Thaler, 1931-1962
Box 8, Folder 8  Market (silver), 1949-1965
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Box 10, Folder 6  Overseas business reports, 1966-1972
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Box 13, Folder 5  Price Silver, 1923-1942
Box 14, Folder 1  Price, continued (silver), 1942-1968
Box 14, Folder 2  Priorities for silver mines, 1942-1951
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Box 14, Folder 6  Probe IV by Banking and Currency Committee (silver), 1939-1940
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Box 19, Folder 3  Who's who (silver), 1932-1961
Box 19, Folder 4  World currency II, 1935-1936
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Box 51, Folder 18  Financial Times (London), 1946-1950
Box 51, Folder 19  Germany (Black Market), 1945-1946
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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 51, Folder 2  Employment record, 1920-1969
Box 51, Folder 3  Military service materials, 1918-1967
Box 51, Folder 4  School materials, 1914-1921
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Box 51, Folder 6  Julia Rapoza objects (comb and knife), undated
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Box 59, Folder 7  Photographs, Warrensburg, New York, 1890s?

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Consists of clippings, congressional records, briefs, press releases, speeches, correspondence, and notes.

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Box 21, Folder 4  Groseclose, Elgin, 1958-1964
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Contains bulletins, press releases, federal regulations, correspondence, congressional records, and bills.

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Box 25, Folder 2  Laws, Orders and Releases, Volume 2, 1935 April-1939 January
Series 4: Economists' National Committee on Monetary Policy, 1935-1970
Contains correspondence, speeches, memos, clippings, manuscripts, informational posters, and congressional records.

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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
Box 39, Folder 4  U.S. Department of Commerce, "The Price of Silver," 1930
Box 39, Folder 5  Hot money articles, 1960-1964
Box 39, Folder 6  Changing Reserve Ratio, House and Senate debates, 1965
Box 39, Folder 7  Removal of Gold Cover, Senate debates, 1968
Box 40, Folder 1  Articles, 1939-1974
Box 40, Folder 2  Treasury Department, 1944
Box 40, Folder 3-4 "The Monetary Standards Inquiry," Number 1-Number 11 (pamphlet series)
Box 51, Folder 32 Bratter, Herbert, "Banking During the Seventies," , 1950
Box 51, Folder 33 Bratter, Herbert, "The Centennial Story of the National Bank Note," , 1962 August
Box 51, Folder 34 Bratter, Herbert, "China's Job Begins at Home," Nations' Business, 1947
Box 51, Folder 35 Bratter, Herbert, "The Case for Japan and China," Asia, 1937 November
Box 51, Folder 36 Bratter, Herbert, Commercial and Financial Chronicle (columns by Bratter), 1946
Box 51, Folder 37 Bratter, Herbert, "Contentions of Silver Advocates," , 1940
Box 51, Folder 38 Bratter, Herbert, "Cotton Bullets from Japan," , 1934 November
Box 51, Folder 39 Bratter, Herbert, "Crusade Against Sound Money," , 1954
Box 51, Folder 40 Bratter, Herbert, "Drafting Silver for the War," , 1943 January
Box 51, Folder 41 Bratter, Herbert, Foreign Exchange Control in Latin America, Foreign Policy Reports, 1939
Box 51, Folder 42 Bratter, Herbert, "A Glimpse of the Ruhr," , undated
Box 51, Folder 43 Bratter, Herbert, "Hard Money Examined," , 1944
Box 51, Folder 44 Bratter, Herbert," Hot Money," Revue Economique Internationale, 1937 November
Box 51, Folder 45 Bratter, Herbert, Indian Finance (columns by Bratter), 1947-1948
Box 51, Folder 46 Bratter, Herbert, "San Isidro," , 1925
Box 51, Folder 47 Bratter, Herbert, "The Silver Episode," , 1938
Box 51, Folder 48 Bratter, Herbert, "Unidentified story," , undated
Box 52, Folder 1 Bratter, Herbert, "Some Observations on Bretton Woods," , 1945
Box 52, Folder 2 Bratter, Herbert, "Sources of Local Information," Banking, 1960
Box 52, Folder 3 Bratter, Herbert, Various articles (bound), 1930-1960
Box 52, Folder 4  Bratter, Herbert, Various articles (bound), 1925-1960
Box 52, Folder 5  Bratter, Herbert, Financial monographs (bound), 1929-1936
Box 52, Folder 6  Newspaper and magazine articles written by Bratter, 1925-1965

Subseries 6.2: By Others, 1930-1944

Box 52, Folder 7  Boothby, Robert, Goods or Gold? The Meaning of the Bretton Woods Agreement, 1944
Box 52, Folder 8  Carothers, Neil, Notes on Financial Money, 1930
Box 52, Folder 9  Edie, Lionel D, After Bretton Woods--What?, 1944 August
Box 52, Folder 10  Laughlin, J. Lawrence, "Money, Credits and Prices," 1933
Box 52, Folder 11  White, Compton I, Extension of Stabilization Fund and Powers. Hearing before the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures (S. 991), 1943

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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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Box 49  Index cards (subject)
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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.

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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

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Box 53, Folder OF 137
   Savannah Conference of Fund and Bank Governors, 1946

Box 53, Folder OF 137
   Mexico, Kodachrome, color, 1947

Box 53, Folder OF 137
   [Junia's?] prom dress, 1949 June
Box 53, Folder
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Charleston, [South Carolina?], spring, 1950

Box 53, Folder
OF137
Junia on bicycle at Marlyn, 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, Marlyn 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
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8 mm camera original, reversal

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