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: Collection is in English. Some materials in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

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

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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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Box 29, Folder 4  China I and II, 1919, 1931, 1933
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Box 31, Folder 3  China, silver, undated
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Box 31, Folder 7  Chinese mission, 1936
Box 31, Folder 8  Chinese, photographs of Sycee and coins, undated
Box 31, Folder 9  Cuba, undated
Box 31, Folder 10 Egypt, undated
Box 31, Folder 11 Ethiopia, undated
Box 31, Folder 12 France, undated
Box 31, Folder 13 French Indo-China, undated
Box 31, Folder 14 Germany, undated
Box 32, Folder 1  Great Britain, 1931-1963
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Box 33, Folder 1  Japan, 1932-1963
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Box 33, Folder 4  Mexico, 1930-1938
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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
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.

Box 46  
Bratter articles other than silver, 1922-1943 September 1

Box 47  
Bratter articles other than silver, 1943 September 1-1946 December

Box 48  
Press clippings about Bratter's silver articles, 1930-1965

Box 48  
Bratter articles about silver, 1930-1965

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1946-1947, 1946-1947

Box 41, Folder 2  
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Box 42, Folder 1  
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Box 43, Folder 1  
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Box 44, Folder 1  
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Box 45, Folder 1  

Box 45, Folder 2  

Box 45, Folder 3  

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Box 49  
Index cards (subject)

Box 50, Folder 1  
1953-1964, 1953-1964

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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  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
Box 56    Enoshima, 1921
Box 56    Kamakura
Box 56    Kobe
Box 56    Kyoto
Box 56    Miyajima
Box 56    Nagoya
Box 56    Nara
Box 56    Nikko
Box 56    Osaka, 1919-1921
Box 56    Tokyo, 1921-1934
Box 56    Yokohama, 1932
Box 56    Korea, 1921
Box 56    Mexico, 1938-1972
Box 56    Oaxaca, 1943-1948
Box 56    Taxco, 1954
Box 56    Monocco
Box 57    Norway, Oslo
Box 56    Panama
Box 56    Peru, 1921
Box 56    Rangoon, 1923
Box 56    Scotland, 1946
Box 57    Singapore
Box 57  Sri Lanka, 1923

Sweden, 1945

Box 57  Göteborg

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
- Cherry blossoms in Arnold Arboretum, 1936
- Daddy going to Washington in airplane, 1936
- Junia and mother at Newton Highland, 1936
- Grandpa in summer of, 1936
- Junia snowball fight and rolling in Newton Highland, 1937
- Junia skating in Washington, 1937
- Force School dance on May Day, 1937
- Black-and-white and color camera original, reversal, Kodachrome, underexposed, 1950
- 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
- Indoor film, Junia Bratter vacuuming and in pajamas, 1943-1944
- Bretton Woods Conference, 1944
- 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 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 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

Supplemental documentation (notes on films and product literature for Castle Films home movies and Kodascope Eight), undated

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