



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Walter Shearer Pamphlet Collection

NMAH.AC.0347

Craig Orr

1990

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives Center, National Museum of American History |
| Title: | Walter Shearer Pamphlet Collection |
| Identifier: | NMAH.AC.0347 |
| Date: | 1948-1973 |
| Extent: | 1.3 Cubic feet |
| Creator: | Shearer, Walter |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | Pamphlets published by the General Motors Company, covering a wide variety of topics, including business and industry, economics, household tips, politics, safety, and self-improvement. There are also a number of pamphlets about General Motors itself. Many of these pamphlets also serve as corporate propaganda. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Arthur L. Shearer, August 14, 1989.

Provenance

These pamphlets were collected by Walter Shearer, president of Bartley Crucible & Refractories, a small ceramics firm located in Trenton, New Jersey. Mr. Shearer evidently acquired most of them through the Trenton Chamber of Commerce, of which he was a member. There is a large GM plant in Trenton, which accounts for the large number of GM pamphlets in the collection.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Craig Orr, 1990

Preferred Citation

Walter Shearer Pamphlet Collection, 1948-1973, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Reproduction fees for commercial use.

Scope and Contents

The bulk of this collection consists of pamphlets published by the General Motors Company. These pamphlets were produced and distributed by GM's Personnel and Employee Relations Staff as part of its "Information Rack Service." The pamphlets cover a wide variety of topics, including business and industry, economics, education, household tips, politics, safety, and self improvement. There are also a number of pamphlets and reprints about General Motors itself.

Many of these pamphlets particularly those dealing with business and industry also serve as corporate propaganda. For example, several discuss the harmony between labor and management at GM and favorably contrast GM workers' wages with those in other industries. Many others attempt to improve the company's workers, through tips on improving one's work habits, how to get along with others, and self improvement through education. Others deal with safety, psychology, and health issues. In addition, the political pamphlets provide insight into the company's attitudes during the Cold War.

Other, non General Motors publications originate from a variety of sources, such as the New Jersey state government; various U.S. governmental agencies; several schools; and a number of corporations and businesses, primarily in New Jersey. These pamphlets also cover a wide range of subjects, including social security, medicine and Medicare, health, political education, and selling techniques. Unlike the GM pamphlets, which have a propaganda nature, the "other" publications aim primarily at informing.

The pamphlets are arranged into 13 categories, such as economics, education, politics, technology, etc. Within each category, the pamphlets are grouped into folders by topic. The folders are arranged alphabetically by topic. General Motors and non General Motors publications are kept in separate folders. The inventory lists all folders and shows which are GM publications and which are not.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into thirteen series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Propaganda, Capitalist

Names:

General Motors Corporation

Container Listing

Business and Industry

- Box 1, Folder 1 Competition and Technological Progress, 1958 -1962. Contains pamphlets describing the need for GM competitiveness and describing workers' advantages gained from GM's competitiveness and technological progress.
- Box 1, Folder 2 Higher Productivity and Economic Progress, 1952 -1963. These pamphlets stress the progress GM has made in recent years and the resulting improvements in workers' economic situations.
- Box 1, Folder 3 Industrialization Historical View, 1952 -1963. Pamphlets look at "the world before modern industry" and the process of industrialization and technological progress from an historical aspect.
- Box 1, Folder 4 Job Security and Unemployment, 1955 -1963. Contains information about unemployment insurance and about how workers can contribute to job security "take a personal interest in your company's profit because your company can not survive without profit."
- Box 1, Folder 5 Justification of Big Business, 1957 -1962. A defense of "Bigness" in industry; GM and small businesses; and a reprinted article from Look by Senator Hubert Humphrey.
- Box 1, Folder 6 Other Industries, 1952 1963. "How to Make Tanks in a Hurry;" the highway transportation story; oil refining and transportation; rifle-making.
- Box 1, Folder 7 Other Industries, undated [non GM]. Information on the Pyrofax Gas Corporation, Westavco, the National Gypsum Company, and Chas. Taylor's Sons Company.
- Box 1, Folder 8 Publications The Youth You Supervise, 1959. [non GM]
- Box 1, Folder 9 Worker Motivation, 1955 -1961. Encourage employees to use their imaginations, make suggestions, and stress the importance of each employee to the job.

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ECONOMICS

- Box 1, Folder 10 Financial and Legal Affairs, 1954 and undated [non GM] Deal with the stock market, personal investing, how to save money on oil heating bills, and preparation of personal wills.
- Box 1, Folder 11 Savings and Inflation, 1954 -1964. How to save money, maintaining good credit, causes of inflation, "how much is your money worth?"

Box 1, Folder 12 Social Security, 1953 -1973. [non GM]. Primarily explanatory booklets from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Box 1, Folder 13 Wages and Benefits, 1958 and 1970. Comparison of GM wages with other industries, and pamphlet on "Ten Years of Industrial Peace at GM."

EDUCATION

Box 1, Folder 14 Art and Literature, 1954 -1958. Contains a pamphlet of poetry by Helen Deutsch, a booklet with short articles about famous American literary figures, and a brochure about French Impressionist art.

Box 1, Folder 15 Education, 1952 -1958. Contains pamphlets informing about college for workers' children and its value.

Box 1, Folder 16 Famous Men in Science, Industry, and Politics, 1952 1963. Contains pamphlets about the lives of significant industrialists, e.g., George Westinghouse and Charles Goodyear, and about the lives of great men such as Theodore Roosevelt, James Watt, Albert Einstein, and Benjamin Franklin.

Box 1, Folder 17 Trenton Junior College and School of Industrial Arts Catalogs, 1957 1966. [non GM]

ENVIRONMENT

Box 1, Folder 18 Air Pollution, 1967. [non GM]

Box 1, Folder 19 Environment, 1957. Contains a pamphlet urging readers not to litter and how to keep their yards neat and attractive.

Box 1, Folder 20 Weather, 1955- 1962. Explain weather patterns, and how storms develop. Tips for what to do if a major storm hits.

GENERAL MOTORS

Box 1, Folder 21 Cars, 1954 1962. Contains a reprint about GM from the Saturday Evening Post of 1954, two albums of historic GM cars, and a booklet on GM construction.

Box 1, Folder 22 General Motors GM Lives Here, 1953; A Look at General Motors, 1960

Box 1, Folder 23 General Motors Report on Progress in Areas of Public Concern, 1972.

Box 1, Folder 24 General Motors Reprints from Time Magazine, 1954 and 1956.

- Box 1, Folder 25 General Motors Talks and Addresses by GM Officials, 1954 -1967.
- Box 1, Folder 26 General Motors Visits Behind the Scenes at GM Research Laboratories:
Where the Future is Our Assignment, 1960

HEALTH AND HUMAN RELATIONS

- Box 1, Folder 27 Aging, 1959 -1964. [non GM] Explanatory pamphlets about the aging process
and a New Jersey pamphlet about older workers.
- Box 1, Folder 28 Health, 1953 -1963. Pamphlets cover various health aspects such as weight
loss, headaches, heart disease, vitamins, and "hangover cures and other
myths."
- Box 1, Folder 29 Health, 1967 -1973. [non GM] Pamphlets on Parkinson's Disease, Diabetes,
fasting, x rays, colds, and "What You Can Do About Your Breathing."
- Box 1, Folder 30 Human Relations, 1954 -1964. Concerns relations between teenagers and
their parents, between friends, and advice on "how to get along with people."
- Box 1, Folder 31 Medicare and Medicaid, 1965 -1972. [non GM] Handouts from the
Department of Health and Human Services.
- Box 1, Folder 32 Psychology, 1955-1960. Primarily encourage employees to use their
imaginings in solving problems, not to be discouraged by failure, and to
maintain a cheerful outlook. There is also a booklet of facts concerning
mental health.
- Box 1, Folder 33 Psychology, undated [non GM] Directory of out patient psychiatric services
in New Jersey and a pamphlet on assigning blame for mistakes in the
workplace.

HOUSEHOLD TIPS

- Box 1, Folder 34 Cooking, 1951 -1962. Contains pamphlets with recipes for dishes such as
"Cakes Men Like" and for picnic meals.
- Box 1, Folder 35 Household Tips, 1954 -1962. Contains hints about how to handle household
problems, such as termites, and how to simplify housework.

LEISURE

- Box 1, Folder 36 Construction, undated Contains the "Welder's Vest Pocket Guide" with
hints for the job, and also contains a chart of nuts and bolts which explains
different types, sizes, and functions.

- Box 1, Folder 37 Do It Yourself, 1951 -1960. Pamphlets covering various home "fix it" activities, ideas for hand made gifts, craft patterns, and how to use a circular saw.
- Box 1, Folder 38 Fishing, undated [non GM] Pocket manual of fresh water fishing.
- Box 1, Folder 39 Gardening, 1950 -1953. Pamphlets on how to plant and care for flower and vegetable gardens.
- Box 1, Folder 40 Reading, 1953 -1961. Importance of reading to children and learning to improve reading speed and comprehension.
- Box 1, Folder 41 Sports, Games, and Outdoor Activities, 1954 -1964. Pamphlets concerning bird-watching, backyard games for children, boating and fishing, golf. Most provide tips for self improvement. Also includes "TV Tips on Major Sports" a guide to watching sports on TV.
- Box 1, Folder 42 Travel, 1959 and 1963. Describe the national park system and Washington, D.C.
- Box 1, Folder 43 Travel, 1956 and undated [non GM] Brochures on New York City in winter and on New Jersey.

POLITICS

- Box 1, Folder 44 Political Education, undated [non GM] Three pamphlets giving history of Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- Box 1, Folder 45 Political Education Communism, 1959 -1962. Cold War era explanations of the "Red Menace" and what it means.
- Box 1, Folder 46 Political Education United States, 1952 -1962. Explanatory pamphlets about the American political system, how it works, and the role of the individual in the process. Profile of new states (Hawaii and Alaska). Story of the U.S. flag and the Statue of Liberty. Pamphlet by J. Edgar Hoover on crime prevention.

PUBLICATIONS

- Box 1, Folder 47 Guide Posts, 1953 -1959.
- Box 1, Folder 48 Limelight, 1954-1955.
- Box 1, Folder 49 The Right Hand, 1952 -1959. [non GM]
- Box 2, Folder 50 The Specialist, 1929. [non GM]

- Box 2, Folder 51 Teases and Tests from The Reader's Digest, 1969. [non GM]
- Box 2, Folder 52 They Find Us Hard to Believe, 1951. [non GM]
- Box 2, Folder 53 Words to Live By, 1960 -1962.

SAFETY

- Box 2, Folder 1 Safe Driving, 1953 1962. Pamphlets emphasizing importance of good citizenship while driving, obedience to traffic rules, and safety tips. Also, how to teach your children to be responsible drivers.
- Box 2, Folder 2 Safe Driving, 1958 and 1967. [non GM] Pamphlets on "The Road to Safety" and "Are you Fit to Drive?"
- Box 2, Folder 3 Safety and Emergency Instructions, 1948 1964. Accident prevention in the home, on the job, and while hunting; fire prevention; and emergency first aid.

SELF IMPROVEMENT

- Box 2, Folder 4 Manners, 1953 -1960. Guides to modern manners.
- Box 2, Folder 5 Misc., 1951 -1960. How to improve one's posture, memory, straight thinking, and vocabulary, and how to prevent insomnia.
- Box 2, Folder 6 Selling Techniques, 1955 1958. [non GM] A "List of Trades and How to Reach 'Em," and other tips on improving one's salesmanship.

TECHNOLOGY

- Box 2, Folder 7 Aerospace, 1961. [non GM] Pamphlet on predicted aerospace activities in the 1960s which profiles companies involved in space research and development.
- Box 2, Folder 8 Technology, 1953 -1962. Information on Atomic Power, the H Bomb plant, astronomy, space research, and "electronic