



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the S. Joseph Begun Papers

NMAH.AC.0535

Robert Vietrogoski.

1996

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	S. Joseph Begun Papers
Date:	1888-2000 (bulk 1927-1995)
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0535
Creator:	Begun, S. Joseph (Semi Joseph), 1905-1995
Extent:	21 Cubic feet (46 boxes)
Language:	Collection is in English. Some materials in German and Russian.
Summary:	Semi Joseph Begun was a pioneer in magnetic recording. The papers document Begun's professional career in the field of magnetic recording.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The bulk of the collection was donated by the widow of S. Joseph Begun, Mrs. Ruth W. Begun, in July 1995.

Processing Information

Processed by Bob Vietrogoski (intern), August 1996; revised by Alison Oswald, archivist, 2002.

Preferred Citation

S. Joseph Begun Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

Conditions Governing Use

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

Accruals

Mrs. Ruth Begun donated additional materials in October 1996 and in November 2001.

Biographical / Historical

Semi Joseph Begun, a pioneer in magnetic recording, was born in the Free City of Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland) on December 2, 1905. He earned an M.S. in Engineering in 1929 and a doctorate in 1933 from the Institute of Technology in Berlin for work related to magnetic recording. In 1929, he began working for Schuchhardt A.G., where he designed the first commercially successful magnetic recorder. Later, he worked for Echophon A.G. and C. Lorenz A.G., where he designed the first magnetic tape recorder for use by the German Broadcasting System. Begun emigrated to America in 1935 and worked in New York City both for the Guided Radio Corporation and independently. He and Sidney Wolf formed two companies Acoustic Consultants and Magnetone, a holding company for Begun's patents. In 1938, he joined the Brush Development Company in Cleveland, Ohio. During World War II, Begun served as a member of the National Defense Research Committee. After the war, he wrote *Magnetic Recording* (1949), the first textbook on the subject. In 1952, the Brush Development Company merged with the Cleveland Graphite Bronze Company to form the Clevite Corporation. Begun held several executive positions at Clevite, including Director of Advanced Development and Vice President for International Operations. He was a member of Clevite's Board of Directors and assisted in the merger between Clevite and Gould National Battery in 1968. In 1969, Begun formed Science Management, Inc., (SMI) to serve investment groups and other interested clients with the evaluation of new and existing products and to appraise management ability of new ventures with high technology products. In 1971, Begun founded Auctor Associates, Inc., a consulting firm focused on high technology markets. In 1983, he founded the Society for Prevention of Violence, a non-profit educational organization. Begun held over 50 patents and was the recipient of numerous professional awards. He died in Cleveland on January 5, 1995.

Scope and Contents

The S. Joseph Begun papers contain correspondence, memoranda, patents, printed matter, reports, speeches and writings, awards, biographical materials, and autobiographical and historical material documenting the life and career of S. Joseph Begun.

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1927-1998, is arranged alphabetically by general subject and contains materials related to Begun's education, biographical files and obituaries, and awards.

Series 2: Professional Files, 1924-1992, is organized in general chronological order. Following broad subdivisions covering his early activities in Germany and America, these materials are grouped by corporate affiliation: Brush, the National Defense Research Committee, Clevite, Gould, Science and Management, Inc., and Auctor Associates, Inc. It should be noted that Begun's involvement with various organizations often overlaps; his continuous employment with Brush, Clevite, and Gould means that similar letterheads may be found under different corporate bodies.

Series 3: Writings and Speeches, 1930-1988, documents Begun's publications and presentations, and includes drafts, correspondence, programs, printed matter, magazines, and reprints. It should be stressed that this series is not a bibliography. The series is arranged chronologically.

Series 4: Autobiographical and Historical Materials, 1888, 1930-2000, reflects Begun's efforts in his last years to write his autobiography. He wrote drafts, interviewed former co-workers such as Al Dank and Otto Kornei from the Brush Development Company, and accumulated a considerable number of articles and other materials on the history of magnetic recording. Additional materials include a copy of Begun's autobiography, *My Years in Magnetic Recording*: Dr. Semi Joseph Begun, as edited by Dr. Mark Clark.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into four series.

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1927-1998

Subseries 1, Academic Records, 1927-1933
Subseries 2, Awards, 1929-1994, undated
Subseries 3, Biographical files, circa 1935-1994; 1998
Subseries 4, Correspondence, 1946-1992
Subseries 5, Diary fragments, 1969-1970
Subseries 6, Wire Recorder, 1983-1994
Subseries 7, Financial Records, 1960
Subseries 8, Obituaries, 1995
Subseries 9, Photographs, circa 1940s-1987

Series 2: Professional Files, 1924-1992

Subseries 1, Early Career in Germany, 1929-1949
Subseries 2, Early Career in America, 1935-1948
Subseries 3, Brush Development Company, 1936-1960s
Subseries 4, National Defense Research Committee, 1942-1948
Subseries 5, Electro-Sonic Laboratories, Inc., circa, 1924, 1938, 1953-1962
Subseries 6, Clevite, 1952-1979
Subseries 7, Gould, Inc., 1968-1989
Subseries 8, Science and Management, Inc., circa, 1969-1970
Subseries 9, Auctor Associates, Inc., circa, 1968-1992

Series 3: Writings and Speeches, 1930-1988

Series 4: Autobiographical and Historical Materials, 1888 (bulk 1930-2000)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Magnetic recorders and recording

Types of Materials:

Awards
Biography files
Business records -- 20th century
Correspondence -- 20th century
Memorandums
Patents
Personal papers -- 20th century
Photographs -- 20th century
Professional papers
Reports
Speeches

Container Listing

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1927 - 1998

Subseries 1.1: Academic Records, 1927 - 1933

Box 1, Folder 1	"Comprehensive Examination", 1929
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Box 1, Folder 1	Thesis, 1932
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Box 1, Folder 2-3	Dissertation, 1933
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Box 1, Folder 4-7	Notebook #1, circa 1927-1933
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Box 2, Folder 1-2	Notebook #2, circa 1927-1933
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Box 2, Folder 3-5	Notebook #3, circa 1927-1933
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Subseries 1.2: Awards, 1929 - 1994, undated

Box 2, Folder 6-7

Box 42	Diplomas and other awards, 1929 - 1994
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Subseries 1.3: Biographical files, circa 1935-1994, 1998

Box 3, Folder 1-2

Subseries 1.4: Correspondence, 1946 - 1992

Box 3, Folder 3

Subseries 1.5: Diary fragments, 1969 - 1970

Box 3, Folder 4

Subseries 1.6: Wire recorder, 1983 - 1994

Box 3, Folder 4A

[Image\(s\)](#)

Subseries 1.7: Financial Records, 1960

Box 3, Folder 5

Subseries 1.8: Obituaries, 1995

Box 3, Folder 6

Subseries 1.9: Photographs, circa 1940s-1987

Box 3, Folder 7

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 2: Professional Files, 1927 - 1998

Subseries 2.1: Early Career in Germany, 1929 - 1949

Box 3, Folder 8 CIRCA Lorenz, printed matter, 1949, 1936

Box 3, Folder 9 Dailygraph instruction booklet, circa 1931

Box 3, Folder 10 Echophon, 1929 - 1932

Box 3, Folder 11 Patents, 1932 - 1943
Language: German.

Subseries 2.2: Early Career in America, 1935 - 1948

Box 3, Folder 12 Correspondence--Acoustic Consultants, 1938 - 1940

Box 3, Folder 13 Correspondence--C. Lorenz A.G., 1935 - 1936

Box 3, Folder 14 Correspondence--Federal Telegraph Company, 1936, undated

Box 3, Folder 15-16 Correspondence--General, 1935 - 1937, undated

Box 3, Folder 17 Correspondence--Kallman, Heinz E., 1936 - 1941

Box 3, Folder 18 Correspondence--Kosters, Heinrich, [undated]

Box 3, Folder 19-20 Correspondence--Pineles, S. Michael, 1936 - 1944

Box 3, Folder 21 Correspondence--Saraga, W., 1936 - 1937

Box 3, Folder 22 Correspondence--Steudel, H.A., 1936

Box 4, Folder 1-2 Wolf, Sidney K., 1936 - 1948, undated

Box 4, Folder 3 Correspondence--Guided Radio Corporation, 1935 - 1937

Box 4, Folder 4 Magnetone--Correspondence, Linguaphone, 1937

Box 4, Folder 5 Magnetone--License agreements, 1944 - 1945, 1937

Box 4, Folder 6 Magnetone--Miscellany, 1935 - 1940

Box 4, Folder 7-8 Magnetone--Patents, 1936 - 1940, undated

Box 4, Folder 9 Magnetone--"Some Historic Data", undated

Box 4, Folder 10 Magnetone--Clippings, 1930s-1940s

Subseries 2.3: Brush Development Company, 1936-1960s

Box 4, Folder 10A [History of Brush Development, 1946, 1990](#)

Box 4, Folder 11 Annual report (typescript), 1947

Box 4, Folder 12-15 Correspondence--Magnetic Recording Industries, 1948 - 1954

Box 4, Folder 16 Correspondence--"R", 1947

Box 4, Folder 17 Correspondence--New employment, 1952 - 1953

Box 4, Folder 18 Correspondence--Sonotone Corporation, 1936 - 1937, 1941 - 1942, 1952

Box 5, Folder 1-6 Correspondence and memoranda, 1940 - 1952

Box 5, Folder 7 Demonstration of stereo sound for television, 1954

Box 5, Folder 8 Export matters, 1947

Box 5, Folder 8A Legal case, Armour Research vs. Brush Development, 1949

Box 5, Folder 9 Lists of visitors and travel, 1951

Box 5, Folder 10 Merger agreement, 1952

Box 5, Folder 11 Play House Theater Committee, 1950

Box 5, Folder 12 Printed matter, circa 1940s-1960s

Box 5, Folder 13 [Product Files--BK-201 Railroad Wire Recorder, 1946 - 1948](#)

Box 5, Folder 14 Product Files--BK-303 Wire Recorder, 1947

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Box 5, Folder 16-20 [Product Files--BK-401 Soundmirror \(includes photographs\), 1946 - 1949](#)

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Box 6, Folder 4	Product Files--BK-415 Soundmirror, 1949
Box 6, Folder 5	Product Files--BK-416 Chassis, 1948 - 1949
Box 6, Folder 6	Product Files--BK430 Airport Recorder, 1949 - 1950
Box 6, Folder 7	Product Files--BK-443 Soundmirror, 1951 - 1952
Box 6, Folder 8-11	Product Files--BK-501 "Mail-A-Voice," undated (includes Mail-A-Voice disk and photographs), 1947 - 1950
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Box 6, Folder 13-14	Magnetic recording accessories, 1947 - 1950
Box 7, Folder 1-2	Magnetic recording accessories, 1951 - 1952
Box 7, Folder 3-6	Magnetic recording media, 1947 - 1952
Box 7, Folder 7-8	Magnetic storage devices (computer memory), 1949
Box 7, Folder 9	RC-20 Cutter, 1940
Box 7, Folder 10	TA-2 Transient Analyzer, 1941
Box 7, Folder 11	Soundmirror--Promotional materials, printed matter, 1939 - 1950
Box 7, Folder 12	Soundmirror--Survey of Soundmirror outlets, 1949
Box 7, Folder 13	Soundmirror--Telephone conference recorder, 1949
Box 7, Folder 14	Soundmirror--Transcription recorder, 1949
Box 7, Folder 15	Soundmirror--Promotional literature and photographs, circa 1945-1950
Box 8, Folder 1	Reports--"Development of Improved Magnetic Recording Media", 1947
Box 8, Folder 2	Reports--"Electron Beam Reproducing Head for Magnetic Tape Recording", 1953
Box 8, Folder 3	Reports--Engineering Division reports, miscellaneous, 1948 - 1952
Box 8, Folder 4	Reports--Magnetic Components Division, 1952
Box 8, Folder 4A	Reports--List of firms & labs working with electronic computers, 1952
Box 45	Reports--"Non-Linear Systems, Inc.", undated

Box 8, Folder 5	Reports--"Organization Chart and Manual for the Manufacturing, Division of the Brush Development Company," The Trundle Engineering Company, 1947
Box 8, Folder 6	Reports--"Plated Magnetic Sound Carriers", 1944 - 1945
Box 8, Folder 7-8	Reports--"Report on the Magnetophone"/ reports on European tape development, 1944 - 1945
Box 8, Folder 9	Seismic Recording--Correspondence, The Texas Company (Texaco), 1953
Box 8, Folder 10	Seismic Recording--General correspondence, 1955
Box 8, Folder 11	Travel Files, Europe, 1950
Box 8, Folder 12	International Magnetic Sound Meeting, 1952
Box 8, Folder 13	Clippings, undated

Subseries 2.4: National Defense Research Committee, 1942 - 1948

Box 9, Folder 1-3	Correspondence and memoranda, 1942 - 1948
Box 9, Folder 4	Minutes, 1943 - 1945
Box 9, Folder 5	Miscellaneous, 1943 - 1945
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Box 9, Folder 7	Reports--"Investigations on New Magnetic Recording Media", 1945
Box 9, Folder 8	Reports--"Investigations on New Magnetic Recording Media", 1945

Subseries 2.5: Electro-Sonic Laboratories, Inc., circa 1938, 1953 - 1962, circa 1924

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Box 10, Folder 1-13	Correspondence, 1953 November-1958 April
Box 11, Folder 1-10	Correspondence, 1958 May-1962
Box 12, Folder 1	Drawings, blueprints, plans, 1924, 1938, circa 1950s
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Box 12, Folder 8	Printed matter, miscellaneous, circa 1953-1959
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Box 13, Folder 3	Annual and Quarterly reports, 1965 - 1968
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Box 13, Folder 7	Corporate publications--Clevite Ordnance, undated
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Box 18, Folder 4	Reports--"Study of High Packing Density Magnetic Tape Storage Devices", 1956
Box 18, Folder 5	Reports--"A Survey of Promising Areas in the Field of Nuclear Energy", 1956
Box 19, Folder 1-4	Reports--"Tape Packing Factor Study", 1956 - 1957
Box 19, Folder 5	Reports--"Market Survey Report: Cast and Sintered Bronze Bars and Bushings", 1957
Box 19, Folder 6	Reports--"Proposal: Investigation into Methods of Increasing the Information Packing Factor on Magnetic Tape", 1957
Box 19, Folder 7-8	Reports--"Status Report on an Advanced Magnetic Development", 1958
Box 20, Folder 1	Reports--"Report on Operations Electronic Research Division", 1961
Box 20, Folder 2	Reports--Reports on other countries, miscellaneous, 1961
Box 20, Folder 3	Reports--"Experimental Study of Application of Magnetic Recording to Digital Transducers", 1963

Box 20, Folder 4	Reports--"Top Management Classification Manual," Employee Handbook, undated, 1966
Box 20, Folder 5-6	Reports--"Clevite Research Center Proposed 1968 Operations", 1967
Box 20, Folder 7	Reports--Clevite Technical Center Discussions and Mid-Year Reviews, 1968 - 1969
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Box 21, Folder 1	Reports--"Outlook for Major Military Equipment Programs: 1970-1974", 1969
Box 21, Folder 2	Reports--"Clevite Canada Ltd. Mechanical Products Division 1970 Annual Plan", 1969
Box 21, Folder 3	Reports--"Clevite de Mexico Annual Report and Long Range Plan, 1969
Box 21, Folder 3A	Reports--Theory of Magnetography, undated
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Box 24, Folder 6 Reports--"Market Evaluation, Piezoelectric Division", 1970

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Box 25, Folder 1 Reports--"GLMR Resources Review", 1981

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Box 25, Folder 3 "Test and Measurement Instruments and Systems", 1989

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Subseries 2.8: Science and Management, Inc., circa 1969-1970

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Box 26, Folder 3 Bally--Disclosure form, 1981

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Box 27, Folder 1 Reports--"Strategic Profile" & Annual Report, 1982, 1978

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Box 46	"Chem-Tronics, Inc., Annual Report", 1984
Box 46	"Troubleshooting Flow Diagram Index", 1984 - 1985
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Box 32, Folder 7	Die Diktiermaschine im Grossbetrieb," Elektrotechnische Zeitschrift, v. 9, 1932 March 3 Language: German.
Box 32, Folder 8	"The New Steel Tone Tape Machine," Electrical Communication, 15:1, 1936 July
Box 32, Folder 9	"Recent Developments in Magnetic Sound Recording," Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, 28:5, 1937 May
Box 32, Folder 10	"Magnetic Recording-Reproducing Machine for Objective Study," Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, 29:2, 1937 August
Box 32, Folder 11	"On Synthetic Reverberation," (with S.K. Wolf), Communications, 1938 August
Box 32, Folder 12	"Magnetic Recording," Electronics, 11:9, 1938 September
Box 32, Folder 13	"A New Magnetic Recorder and Its Adaptations," Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, v. 33, 1939 November
Box 32, Folder 14	"Some Problems of Disk Recording," Proceedings of the I.R.E., 28:9, 1940 September
Box 32, Folder 15	"New Recording Machine Combining Disk Recording and Magnetic Recording, with Short Reference to the Present Status of Each," Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, v. 35, 1940 November
Box 32, Folder 16	"General Considerations of the Crystal Cutter," (with T.E. Lynch), Communications, 1940 December
Box 32, Folder 17	"General Considerations Regarding Disc Recording and Playback", circa 1940
Box 32, Folder 18	"Temperature Controlled Disk Recording Cutter," Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, v. 36, 1941 June
Box 32, Folder 19	"Magnetic Recording and Some of Its Applications in the Broadcast Field," Proceedings of the I.R.E., 29:8, 1941 August
Box 32, Folder 19A	"A New Instrument for Recording Transient Phenomena," AIEE, 1941 December

Box 32, Folder 20	"The Correlation Between Elastic Deformation and Vertical Forces in Lateral Recording," Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, 13:3, 1942 January
Box 33, Folder 1	"A New Instrument for Recording Transient Phenomena," Electrical Engineering, 61:4, 1942 April
Box 33, Folder 2	"Recent Developments in the Field of Magnetic Recording," Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, 48:1, 1947 January
Box 33, Folder 3	"Schematic Ringhead & Equipment Circuit", 1948
Box 33, Folder 4	Magnetic Recording--Book, (New York: Murray Hill Books), 1949
Box 33, Folder 5	Magnetic Recording--Correspondence, 1958, 1947 - 1949
Box 33, Folder 6-8	Magnetic Recording--Illustrations, 1949
Box 34, Folder 1	"Magnetic Recording: Performance Characteristics and Standards for Magnetic Equipment," FM-TV, 9:5, 1949 May
Box 34, Folder 2	"The Limitations of Sound Recording," Communications, 1949 August
Box 34, Folder 3	"Magnetic Recording," Scientific Monthly, 59:3, 1949 September
Box 34, Folder 4	"The Future of Magnetic Recording," Brush National Sales Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, 1949 October 31-November 1
Box 34, Folder 5	"Some Comments on Standardization and Magnetic Recording Equipment," Brush National, 1949
Box 34, Folder 6	Brush National Sales Convention, Cleveland, Ohio (MISSING), 1949 November 2
Box 34, Folder 7	Talk re: recording, Watson Laboratories, Red Bank, New Jersey, 1949 November 30
Box 34, Folder 8	"The Brush Multi-Channel Airport Recorder," Airways Communication Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, 1950 January 26
Box 34, Folder 9	Talk to students, Case Institute of Technology, 1950 February 22
Box 34, Folder 10	"Introduction to I.R.E. Symposium on Sound Recording," I.R.E. Convention, New York, New York, 1950 March 9
Box 34, Folder 11	Talk re: memory devices, Cleveland I.R.E. section, 1950 September 29
Box 34, Folder 12	"Europe As I Saw It," Men's Discussion Group of the Council on World Affairs, 1950 November 15

Box 34, Folder 13	Talk re: Brush Development Company, Cleveland Audio Engineering Society, 1951 February 21
Box 34, Folder 14	Talk re: magnetic recording, Boston I.R.E. section meeting, 1951 May 3
Box 34, Folder 15	Speaker introductions, Engineering Lecture Series, Brush Development Company, Cleveland, Ohio, October 18 and November 13, 1951
Box 34, Folder 16	Talk to students, Fenn College, 1952 March 1
Box 34, Folder 17	Talk to students, Case Institute of Technology, 1952 May 14
Box 34, Folder 18	"A Few Thoughts on Some Important Electronic Developments," Gilbert MacKay Associates Executive Forum dinner, New York, New York, 1952 June 12
Box 34, Folder 19	Talk re: trends in electronic instrumentation, I.R.E. Symposium at Instrument Society of America Meeting, Cleveland, Ohio, September 8-12., 1952 September 8-12
Box 34, Folder 20	"Memory Methods for Magnetic Recording," Rochester Section of the Photographic Society of America, Rochester, New York, 1953 February 12
Box 34, Folder 21	Talk re: European trip, I.R.E. Cleveland section, 1953 September 24
Box 34, Folder 22	Welcoming remarks, Department of Defense Symposium on Magnetic Recording, Washington, D.C., 1953 October 12
Box 34, Folder 23	Talk re: automation, Acme Steel Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1954 February 19
Box 34, Folder 24	"A Survey of Magnetic Recording," presented at AIEE Fall General Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, October 11-15, 1954, published in Communication and Electronics, 1955 January
Box 34, Folder 24A	Paper delivered at SEG program in Dallas re: geophysical exploration, 1954 November
Box 34, Folder 24B	A New Recorder for Geophysical Exploration Work, 1954
Box 34, Folder 25	"Magnetic Tape Improves Geophysical Recordings," Electronics, 1955 January
Box 35, Folder 1	"A New Magnetic Memory Device for Business Machines," A.I.E.E. Committee on Computing Devices, A.I.E.E. Winter General Meeting, New York, New York, 1955 January 31-February 4
Box 35, Folder 2	"The Application of Magnetic Recording for Geophysical Instrumentation," 10th Annual Instrument Conference of the Instrument Society of America, Los Angeles, California, 1955 September 12-6

Box 35, Folder 3	"Production of Electronic Circuits by Mechanized Wiring," (with Felix Rosenthal), Radio-Electronics-Television Manufacturers Association Symposium on Automation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1955 September 27
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