



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
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0535
Date:	1888-2000 (bulk 1927-1995)
Extent:	21 Cubic feet (46 boxes)
Creator:	Begun, S. Joseph (Semi Joseph), 1905-1995
Language:	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

The collection is open for research use.

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

Box 1, Folder 1 Thesis , 1932

Box 1, Folder 2-3 Dissertation , 1933

Box 1, Folder 4-7 Notebook #1 , circa 1927-1933

Box 2, Folder 1-2 Notebook #2 , circa 1927-1933

Box 2, Folder 3-5 Notebook #3, circa 1927-1933

Subseries 1.2: Awards , 1929 - 1994, undated

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Box 42 Diplomas and other awards, 1929 - 1994

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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- Box 3, Folder 8 CIRCA Lorenz, printed matter , 1949, 1936
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- Box 3, Folder 10 Echophon , 1929 - 1932
- Box 3, Folder 11 Patents, 1932 - 1943, 1932 - 1943

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
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- 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

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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

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Box 7, Folder 10	TA-2 Transient Analyzer , 1941
Box 7, Folder 11	Soundmirror--Promotional materials, printed matter , 1939 - 1950 Image(s)
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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

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- Box 32, Folder 7 Die Diktiermaschine im Grossbetrieb," *Elektrotechnische Zeitschrift*, v. 9 , 1932 March 3
- 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 Americaca*, 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
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- 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
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- 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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- Box 35, Folder 9 "Theory of Magnetography," I.R.E. Convention, New York, New York , 1958 March 27
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- Box 35, Folder 13 "The Economic Consequences of the Development and Application of Semiconductors," Aachen Institute of Technology, Aachen, Germany , 1970 October 30

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