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Descriptive Summary

Identifier ICU.SPCL.ADIRECTOR

Title Director, Aaron. Papers

Date 1918-2001

Size 5 linear feet (6 boxes)

Repository Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Aaron Director was a professor in Law and Economics at the University of Chicago from 1946 to 1965. His papers include correspondence, notes, and drafts of essays, lectures, and policy statements spanning the years 1932 to 1994. Much of the correspondence focuses on American monetary policy and administrative matters regarding the Journal of Law and Economics. The series covering Director’s research and writing includes a broad range of notes, drafts, annotations, and academic materials. Additionally, the Aaron Director Papers include a series devoted to materials attributed to the economist and Nobel Laureate George J. Stigler. Director and Stigler frequently collaborated on works of economic theory, and Director preserved a significant collection of Stigler’s papers. These materials include notes, drafts, and publications produced over the length of Stigler’s tenure at the University of Chicago.

Information on Use

Access
No restrictions. Open for research.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Director, Aaron. Papers [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note
Aaron Director was born September 21, 1901 in Charterisk, Russia, in what is now the Ukraine. He immigrated with his family to Portland, Oregon in 1913. He attended Yale University, graduating with a degree in economics in 1924 after only three years. Director later attended the University of Chicago, earning a graduate degree in economics and teaching introductory courses in the Department of Economics. In 1946, he was appointed to the faculty of the University of Chicago Law School, where he began applying principles of economics to the study
of law. Through collaborations with his brother-in-law Milton Friedman, Henry Simons, and George Stigler, Director asserted a tremendous influence on a broad range of legal scholarship. With this work, he became closely associated with the Chicago School of Economics, a free-market methodology at the basis of the World Bank’s policies in the 1980s and 1990s. Among Director’s students were federal judges Richard Posner, Robert Bork, and Frank Easterbrook.

Throughout his career, Director maintained a strong collaborative impulse in his writing and teaching. He famously co-taught a course with future law school dean and Attorney General Edward H. Levi in the 1950s. In the course, Director would use economic data and methods to challenge Levi’s legally-reasoned conclusions. Though his publication list is short, Director’s influence can be seen in the writings of many Chicago economists and legal scholars. Said George Stigler, "Most of Aaron’s articles have been published under the names of his colleagues."

With Ronald Coase, Director founded the Journal of Law and Economics in 1958. In 1962, he helped to found the Committee on a Free Society. Perhaps Director’s greatest legacy is his thorough consideration of antitrust policy, advocating a laissez-faire system in which market forces, rather than governmental regulations, guide economic competition.

After retiring from the Law School in 1965, Director relocated to California and took a position at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. He died September 11, 2004, at his home in Los Altos Hills, California.

Also represented in these papers is Director’s colleague George J. Stigler (1911-1991). Stigler, the 1982 Nobel Laureate in Economics, worked out his theories of public regulation in large part through conversations and debates with Director in the 1960s. After Stigler’s death, Director and Milton Friedman presented monetary gifts in excess of one million dollars to the University of Chicago Economics Department in Stigler’s honor. These gifts led to the establishment of the George J. Stigler Professorship in Economics at the University.

Scope Note
The Aaron Director Papers consist of five series. Series I contains personal and professional correspondence from the years 1940 to 1997. Series II holds notes and drafts from 1933 to 1994. These documents include various legal decisions, economic data, course notes, and drafts of formal papers. Series III includes drafts, notes, articles, and correspondence attributed to Director’s close friend and colleague, George J. Stigler. Series IV contains personal material relating to the lives of Director and his family. Series V contains oversized materials including photographs and other personal material transferred from Series IV.

Related Resources
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

Coase, Ronald. Papers

Levi, Edward H. Papers
Simons, Henry C. Papers

Stigler, George. Papers

University of Chicago. Department of Economics. Records

University of Chicago. Law School. Records

**Subject Headings**

- Director, Aaron
- Coase, R.H. (Ronald Harry)
- Friedman, Milton, 1912-
- Stigler, George Joseph, 1911-
- University of Chicago. Law School
- Monetary policy

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: Correspondence**

Series I contains personal and professional correspondence. Topics include discussions and position statements on American monetary policy, the hiring of Ronald Coase by the University of Buffalo, and details of the University of Chicago’s Law-Economics program of the early 1960s. Additionally, the series contains a small amount of correspondence relating to the Journal of Law and Economics in the 1950s and 1960s.

Box 1
Folder 1
  Greeting cards, 1940-1997
Box 1
Folder 2
  Correspondence, 1946-1952
Box 1
Folder 3
  Correspondence, 1947
Box 1
Folder 4
  Correspondence, 1962-1963
Box 1
Folder 5
  Correspondence, 1965-1991
Box 1
Folder 6

**Series II: Research and Writing**
Series II is comprised of Director’s writing, research and teaching material from 1933 to 1994, as well as similar material from some of his students and colleagues. These documents include drafts of papers and lectures, course notes and syllabi, collections of statistical data, court decisions, and reading notes and summaries. Dated materials are placed first, followed by undated materials.

Box 1
Folder 7
Mitchell, Wesley C., "Bentham’s Felicific Calculus," annotated reprint, 1918
Box 1
Folder 8
Publications, 1927-1992
Box 1
Folder 9
Box 1
Folder 10
Drafts, 1933 and n.d.
Box 1
Folder 11
Reprints, 1936-1987
Box 1
Folder 12
Manuscripts and reprints, 1937-1946
Box 2
Folder 1
Drafts and syllabus, 1937-1958
Box 2
Folder 2
Drafts, 1939 and n.d.
Box 2
Folder 3
"War and Economic Organization," lecture material, 1940
Box 2
Folder 4
Economics coursebook, 1946
Box 2
Folder 5
Drafts, 1946 and n.d.
Box 2
Folder 6
Lectures, drafts, and notes, 1956 and n.d.
Box 2
Folder 7
Notes, 1964-1968
Box 2
Folder 8
  Smith, Adam, notes on his texts and associated drafts, 1970-1971
Box 2
Folder 9
Box 2
Folder 10
Box 2
Folder 11
Box 2
Folder 12
  Banker's Circular, notes, n.d.
Box 2
Folder 13
Box 2
Folder 14
  Banking and economy, drafts, n.d.
Box 2
Folder 15
  Currency theory, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 1
  Economists and monopoly, notes and draft, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 2
  Joplin, Thomas, notes on several of his texts, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 3
  Kefauver, Cary Estes, notes on court decisions, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 4
  Manuscript, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 5
  McLellan, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 6
  Parliamentary papers, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 7
Box 3
Folder 8
  Patent practices, draft, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 9
  Patent practices, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 10
  Photocopied publications, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 11
  Poor law opinions, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 12
  Smith, Adam, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 13
  Smith, Adam, summary of text, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 14
  Standard Oil, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 15
  Tooke, Thomas, notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 16
  Trademarks, drafts and notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 17
  War finance literature, discussion outlines and notes, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 18
  Watkins, Myron, Industrial Combinations and Public Policy, summary, n.d.
Box 3
Folder 19
Box 3
Folder 20
  Drafts, n.d.
Box 4
Folder 1
  Notes and articles, n.d.
Box 4
Folder 2
  Notes and court decisions, n.d.
Series III: George J. Stigler Collection

Series III contains material collected by Director, related to the work of his colleague George J. Stigler (1911-1991). The materials in this series comprise a small collection of Stigler’s drafts, articles, and correspondence dating from 1932 until his death in 1991. Additionally, this series contains notes and correspondence relating to the founding of the Stigler Professorship in the University of Chicago’s economics department. These materials are organized chronologically, with undated materials placed at the end of the series.

Box 5
Folder 1
  Manuscripts and articles, 1932-1994
Box 5
Folder 2
  Lectures, articles, and correspondence, 1938-1985
Box 5
Folder 3
  Drafts, 1968-1973
Box 5
Folder 4
  Drafts, 1968-1991
Box 5
Folder 5
  Drafts, 1970
Box 5
Folder 6
  Henry Calvert Simons remembrance, reprint, 1974
Box 5
Folder 7
  "De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum," reprint, 1977
Box 5
Folder 8
  Demsetz, H., correspondence 1982
Box 5
Folder 9
  Manuscripts and publications, 1983-1994
Box 5
Folder 10
  Stigler Professorship Fund, correspondence and list of donors, 1993-1994
Series IV: Personal

Series IV contains material related to the personal lives of Director and his family. Among the materials collected here are Director’s certificate of marriage to Maude Katherine Hill and Maude’s will and death certificate. Additionally, the series contains various memorabilia from Director’s international travels. The series also includes a folder containing contracts and correspondence relating to Director’s faculty appointments at the University of Chicago from 1952 to 1969. Oversize personal material and photographs can be found in Series V.

Series IV: Personal

Box 6
Folder 1
   Address directory, n.d.

Box 6
Folder 2
   Codicil to will, 1985

Box 6
Folder 3
   Director, Maude Katherine Hill, will and death certificate, 1962-1978

Box 6
Folder 4
   Gift of personal residence to University of Chicago, 1993-1994

Box 6
Folder 5
   Gumbert, Milton J., death certificate, 1984

Box 6
Folder 6
   Holiday gift purchases, 1994

Box 6
Folder 7
   Marriage certificate, 1937

Box 6
Folder 8
   Passport, 1951

Box 6
Folder 9
   Pocket diaries, 1970-1972

Box 6
Folder 10
   Postcards, blank, 1940s
Box 6
Folder 11
  Postcards, blank, n.d.
Box 6
Folder 12
  Real estate documents, 1965
Box 6
Folder 13
  Reproduction of portrait of John Stuart Mill, n.d.
Box 6
Folder 14
  Travel memorabilia, 1940s
Box 6
Folder 15
  University of Chicago faculty appointments, 1952-1969

Series V: Oversize Materials and Photographs

Series V contains a certificate presented to Director by the governor of Texas on May 5, 1963. It also holds folders containing photographs of Director, his wife, Maude Katherine Hill Director, and Joel Seidman.

Box 7
Folder 1
  Certificate, "Honorary Texas Citizen," 1963
Box 7
Folder 2
  Photographs of unidentified children and Maude Katherine Hill Director, 2001 and n.d.
Box 7
Folder 3
  Portrait of Director, n.d.
Box 7
Folder 4
  Photograph of Joel Seidman, n.d.