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Descriptive Summary

Identifier: ICU.SPCL.WIRTH

Title: Wirth, Louis. Papers

Date: 1918-1952

Size: 34.5 linear ft. (70 boxes)

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

Abstract: Sociologist. The collection contains correspondence, reports, minutes, manuscripts, lecture notes, reprints, manuscripts by others, reprints, reviews, and newspaper clippings. Includes a 1918 term paper on social pathology Wirth wrote as a student for Ernest Burgess. Correspondents include Horace Clayton, Karl Mannheim, Charles Merriam, Gunnar Myrdal, Melchior Palyi, Robert Park, Robert Redfield, Hans Speier, Leopold von Wiese, and others. Contains outline and manuscript chapters of incomplete work, The City. Also includes teaching materials, committee records, and administrative files from the Division of Social Sciences and Department of Sociology while Wirth was at the University of Chicago. Organizations highlighted include the American Sociological Society, the International Sociological Association, the Social Science Research Council, and the Chicago Crime Commission. Topics covered relate to city planning, urban problems, racial discrimination, housing, and education.

Acknowledgments

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:

Louis Wirth. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Louis Wirth (1897 - 1952) was born in Gemunden, Germany, on August 28, 1897. He came to the United States at the age of fourteen. After completing high school in Omaha, he pursued undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Chicago, receiving a Ph.B. degree in 1919.
and worked as a social worker from 1919 to 1922 in the delinquent boys' division of the Bureau of Personal Service; the M.A. degree in 1925, and the Ph.D. degree in 1926. Aside from an appointment to Tulane University for the year 1928-29, he was on the staff of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago continuously since 1926, becoming assistant professor in 1931, associate professor in 1932, and full professor in 1940.

Wirth pursued a varied and productive professional career. His interests ranged widely, covering such fields as urbanization, community study, social planning, housing, social organization, human ecology, race relations, nationalities, minority groups, international relations, social theory, and the sociology of knowledge. In the variety of fields he studied social scientists, scholars, government officials, foundations, research agencies, and action groups often sought his advice and guidance. His writings include several books, of which the first is his justly renowned The Ghetto, and over one hundred learned articles. He was an inspiring and highly effective teacher and mentor, stimulating and guiding a surprisingly large number of graduate students who have since risen to prominent positions in sociology and in other areas. In 1938 he published a book entitled Urbanism as a Way of Life, which argued for urbanism as the prevailing way of life in modern society. Wirth argued that the very size and density of modern cities had changed modern people and their relationships.

His distinguished career is mirrored in the many posts of eminence that he came to occupy. Among them were the following: secretary of the American Sociological Society (1932) and president (1947); regional chairman of the National Resources Planning Board; director of planning, Illinois Post War Planning Commission; consultant and adviser for the Social Science Research Council of the National Resources Planning Board and the Federal Public Housing Authority; president of the American Council on Race Relations; editor, "Sociology Series" of the Macmillan Company; associate editor, American Journal of Sociology; and president, International Association of Sociologists. His election as the first president of the International Association of Sociologists - a position he held at the time of his death - is signal testimony to the high repute that he had achieved in world scholarship.

Wirth died suddenly and unexpectedly one spring day in 1952 in Buffalo, New York at the young age of 55. He had been in Buffalo to speak at a conference on community relations; he collapsed and died following his presentation.

Scope Note

The collection covers Wirth's work from the time of his dismissal from the faculty of Tulane University and his return to the University of Chicago in 1931 to the end of his life. Most of the collection is concerned with Wirth's very active professional life, both in and outside of the University.

It is organized into six series and two addenda. I. General Correspondence; II. Professional Activities and Organizations; III. Manuscripts and Research Material; IV. University of Chicago; V. Newspaper clippings; and VI. Addenda.
The General Correspondence, alphabetically arranged and covering the period from 1931 to 1952, is at its heaviest during the 1940’s and early 1950’s. As his "general" body of correspondence it relates to the whole range of Wirth’s activities and overlaps those specifically listed in subsequent sections of these papers. These subsequent sections also contain additional correspondence of particular pertinence to the matter at hand, and should not be overlooked.

Grouped under Professional Activities and Organizations are a variety of records relating to Wirth’s professional life outside of the University of Chicago. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization (usually a committee, institution, board but occasionally by subject) this section contains such data as minutes, reports, correspondence, and other relevant documentation relating to Wirth’s participation. There is a heavy emphasis on professional societies and conferences, Wirth having served as president of both the American Sociological Society and the International Sociological Association. The material on the Chicago Crime Commission, the Chicago Plan Commission, the Chicago Urban League, the South Side Planning Board, and the Illinois State Housing Board among others reflects Wirth’s involvement in the local affairs of Chicago and Illinois. On a national and international level, the Social Science Research Council, the American Council on Race Relations, UNESCO, and the National Planning Association are among the organizations represented. Throughout this section, city planning, urban problems, racial discrimination, housing, and education are the main themes.

The section on Research, including manuscripts, reprints, book reviews, and related correspondence contains Wirth’s own writings, although occasionally there are articles by students and colleagues retained for reference. This material alphabetically arranged covers the period from 1930 to 1952, with an occasional earlier piece such as "Life at the Chicago Public Bathing Beaches," a term paper he wrote as a student in Ernest W. Burgess’s Social Pathology class in 1918. The correspondence, comments, and a typewritten copy of Gunner Myrdal’s The Negro in America is the only major piece in this section that is not Wirth’s. During the last ten years of his life, he projected a major scholarly work on the city. An outline of The City was prepared and a few chapters drafted. Boxes 39-49 contain bibliographies, outlines, and other materials to have been used for the work that was never completed.

Wirth’s activities specifically connected with teaching and administrative matters at the University of Chicago are arranged alphabetically in Series IV. As a representative of the Sociology Department, he played a large part in developing a one-year course in the Social Sciences. Wirth’s records on the committee charged with this responsibility are included as are other records related to courses he taught, in particular on the Sociology of Knowledge. There are some University Committee records such as the Social Science Research Committee, the Committee on Communication, and the Committee on Values. These records often contain correspondence and minutes.

Series V, Newspaper Clippings, contains clippings which are dated and identified, accumulated by Wirth in the 1930’s and early 1940’s. Arranged by subject matter, they reflect Wirth’s concern with community, national, and international problems.

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

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

**Subject Headings**

- Cayton, Horace R. (Horace Roscoe), 1903-1970
- Mannheim, Karl, 1893-1947
- Merriam, Charles Edward, 1874-1953
- Myrdal, Gunnar, 1898-
- Palyi, Melchior, 1892-1970
- Park, Robert Ezra, 1864-1944
- Redfield, Robert, 1897-
- Speier, Hans
- Wiese, Leopold von, 1876-1969
- Wirth, Louis, 1897-1952
- Chicago Crime Commission
- American Sociological Society
- International Sociological Association
- Social Science Research Council (U.S.)
- University of Chicago -- Administration
- University of Chicago. Dept. of Sociology
- University of Chicago. Division of the Social Sciences
- University of Chicago. Social Science Research Committee
- Urban policy
- Sociology, Urban
- City planning
- Race discrimination
- Sociology

**INVENTORY**

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Social Science Research Council, Committee on Urbanism, Rural Urban Attitudes, typescript

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Social Science Research Council, Committee on the Organization for Research in the Social Sciences, analysis of questionnaire: Financial Arrangements Between Universities and Faculty Members Engaged in Social Science Research

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Social Science Research Council, monograph: Housing Needs and Demands

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Social Science Research Council, Commission of inquiry appointed by the Social Science Research Council in 1933, reports written by Harold F. Gosnell and Frank A. Fetter

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Social Science Research Council, Conferences: Exploratory Research Conference on the Reorganization of the Areas and the Functions of Local Government, May 7-8, 1932 Representatives of the University Social Science Research Organization, Cambridge, November, 1937. Research Conference on Culturally Isolated Groups, memorandum to chairman, K. Young. Industrial Relations Conference at Cambridge - April 21-22, 1939, memorandum
Box 35
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Social Science Research Council, publications of the Social Science Research Council - 1932-33

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Social Science Research Council, University Social Science Research Organizations, correspondence: Allen - Buck

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• Attainable Social Goals for America
• The Bearing of Recent Social Trends Upon Attainable Programs for Peace and World Organization

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Mss concerning the city of Chicago

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Folder 5
City Planning, manuscripts by lecturers - 1944:
• Blucher, Walter H., The City - Organism and Artifact
• Chatters, Carl H., The Fiscal Reconstruction of the Metropolis
• Frankfort, Henri, The Earliest Cities
• Hilberseimer, Ludwig and Caldwell, Alfred, Design to Fit the Human Spirit: The Evolution of City Plans
• Hudnut, Joseph, The Art and Science of City Planning
• Knight, Frank H., The Planful Act: The Possibilities and Limitations of Collective Rationality
• Merriam, Charles E., In Search of Political Forms for the Modern Metropolis
• Nef, John U., Building in Western History: In Its Relation to Modern Architecture
• Riemer, Svend, Escape into Decentralization (Reprint)

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Manuscripts, C
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• Comments on the Bonus Question
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• Community Organization and Planning, Introduction to Arthur Hillman’s Book Consensus and Mass Communication

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- Dispersal of Cities and Industries as a Defense Against the Atomic Bomb
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  - Integrative Tendencies in International Relations (10th Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion)
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• Let’s Face the Issue - Dec. 17, 1944
• Life at the Chicago Public Bathing Beaches (Social Pathology Term Paper - Summer, 1918)

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Plan for Metropolitan Chicago (won 2nd prize in the American newspaper contest - the transportation section is by Louis Wirth)

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- Probable Forms of Post World War II Mass Behavior in the U.S.
- Problems and Orientations of Research in the Race Relations in the U.S.
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- President Truman's Message to Congress - March 12, 1947

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- Recent Migration to Chicago, introduction to book by Ronald Freedman
- Recent Social Change: The Urban Community
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• Report of the Local Community Research Committee to the Social Science Research Council and memorandum to Local Research Committee
• Research in Racial and Cultural Relations
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• The Rights of Man in American Democracy
• The Role of the American Council on Race Relations
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• The Scope of the Institute: Syllabus Outline for Institute on Race Relations and Community Organization
• Skytop Meeting: Remarks on behalf of the Committee of Reorganization for Research in the Social Sciences
• The Social Control of the Social Scientist
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• The Social Responsibility of Radio
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• The Social Science in the Service of Society
• The Social Setting of Postwar Higher Education
• Social Stratification: A Report on Research in Social Stratification and Social Mobility in the U.S.

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• These Fifty Years: Human Rights - 1900-1950

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• University Real Estate: Confidential Report to the Board of Trust of the University of Chicago, March 30, 1936

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• Urbanism: Memorandum on Industrialism and Industrialization
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• The Role of the Citizen in Community Service
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• Urbanism as a Field of Research at the University of Chicago
• Urbanism as a Way of Life

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• War: Is a Hitler Defeat Essential to the Reservation of Democracy in the Western Hemisphere
• The American Community Faces the War

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• What Do We Know About Prejudice?
• What Has Happened in Chicago Since the Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, "To Secure These Rights"?
• What is Ahead for the American Economy?
• World Community, World Society, and World Government
• This World in an Atomic Age

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Adler, Mortimer, Religion in a Modern World

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Alexander, Franz, Reaction Types in the Economic Depression

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Alinsky, Sol, Catholic Leadership

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Blumer, Herbert, Social Adjustment

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Bogardus, Emory S., The Field and Problems of Social Psychology

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Brandt, Karl, The Back-to-the-Land Movement

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Cahnman, Werner, Geopolitics and the Theory of Regionalism An Outline of Defensive Action in Asia

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth, Cayton, Horace, The Morale of the Negro and National Defer Research on the Urban Negro, Prospectus for the Study of the Migration and Adjustment of Negroes to Cities

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Copeland, Lewis C., The Social Role of Ideologies, a proposed research project

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Culp, Dorothy, The American Legion: A Study in Pressure Politics

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Eggan, Fred, A Memorandum on Franz Boas’ Primitive Art

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Hook, Sidney, The New Medievalism

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Lasswell, H. and Palyi, H., The Library of Realistic Politics

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Mayo, Elton, Routine Interaction and the Problem of Collaboration (The Hitler Complex)

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Merrill, Francis E., The Role of the Stock Exchange in the Metropolitan Community

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Newcomb, Mrs. (?), Occupational Shifts Study of Chicago

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Parsons, Talcott, The Professions and Social Structure

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: von Hentig, Hans, The Limits of Penal Treatment

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Woodward, James W., Some Implications of Our Present Knowledge Concerning Prejudice

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Woodworth, Arthur Heath, Two Early American “Sociologies”

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: Young, Charles H., Research Methods in Social Science

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Myrdal, Gunner, The Negro in American, typewritten copy, correspondence, and comments (See also: General Correspondence - Myrdal)

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Manuscripts collected by Louis Wirth: (continued)

Subseries 2: Reprints

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List of Publications

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Reprints, A-B
• Advertising for the Sophisticated in Bulletin of the Financial Advertisers Association - Jan 1941
• Appearance of Harmony in Notes and News No. 65
• Biases in Education for Business. Business Education for What?
• Proceedings of the University of Chicago Conference on Business Education - 1940

Box 55
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Reprints, C-E
• Culture Conflict and Misconduct. Social Forces, Vol. IX, No. 4 - June 1931
• Does the Atomic Bomb Doom the Modern City? League of Iowa Municipalities, Vol. I, No. 5
• Effect of Recent Social Trends on Urban Planning. Public Management, Vol. XXVII, No. 1

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Effect of War on American Minorities: A Research Memorandum reprinted by Social Science Research Council - Mar 1943

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Reprints, G-I

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Reprints, I-M
• International Tension as objects of Social Investigation, Chapter (?)
• Life in the City. The Library and the Community by L. Carnovsky Martin, University of Chicago Press - 1944
• The Literature of Sociology, 1934, II. Social Studies, Vol. XXVI Dec 1935
• Morale and Minority Groups. The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLVII, No. 3 - Nov 1941

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Reprints, N-O
• Our Population Makeup is Changing. Real Estate - Sep 27, 1941

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Planning Means Freedom

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Reprints, P-R
• Postwar Political and Social Conditions and Higher Education. Annals of the American Academy
• Prerequisites for Peace. Unity, Vol. CXXVI, No. 12 - Feb 1941
• The Prospects of Regional Research in Relation to Social Planning.
• Race and Public Policy. The Scientific Monthly, Vol. LVIII - April 1947
• Rebuilding Metropolitan Chicago. The University of Chicago Magazine Vol. XXXVIII - May 1946

Box 56
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Reprints, R-S
• Responsibility of Social Science. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science - Jan 1947
• Responsibility of Suburban Residents. Community Fund of Chicago, 1947
• The Scope and Problems of the Community. Publications of the Sociological Society of America, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 - May 1933
• Should We Adopt President Truman’s Civil Rights Program? University of Chicago Round Table, No. 568 - Feb 1949
• Social Goals for Nation and World. The Survey - Jul 1949

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Reprints, S
• Sociological Research Is Needed in the Field of Housing. Journal of Housing, Vol. V, No. 6
• A Sociologist’s View. Journal of Housing, Vol. VIII, No. 3 - March
• Sociology: Vocations for Those Interested in It. Vocational Guidance Series, No.1

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Reprints, S-W
• Some Jewish Types of Personality. Publications of the American Sociological Society, Vol. XXXII - 1926
• Symposium on Present Trends in Guidance. Proceedings of the Second Annual Guidance Conference, Purdue University - Nov 6-7, 1936
• Types of Nationalism. The American Journal of Sociology, Vol XLI No. 6 - May 1936
• Un-American Education. University of Chicago Round Table. No. 60 Nov 20, 1949
• Urban Communities. The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLVII No. 6 - May 1942
• What About Public Service Building Corporations. Freehold - May
• What Causes Unemployment, A Forum of Representatives of Agriculture Labor, and Urban Employers, University of Illinois - Jun 1944
• What Do We Know About Prejudice? University of Chicago Round Table, No. 528 - May 1948

Subseries 3: Book Reviews

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Book Reviews, B-C
• Cities are Abnormal. ed. by Elmer T. Peterson, Univ. of Okla. Pres 1946

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Folder 9
Book Reviews, C-H
• Commentary on Numbers by Julius H. Greenstone, Jewish Publication Society, 1939
• Contemporary Social Problems by Louis Wirth, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1939, review written by G. C. Atteberry, American Sociological Review
• Delinquency Areas by Clifford R. Shaw, F. M. Zorbaugh, H. McKay, L. S. Cottrell, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1929.
• Development of Collective Enterprise: Dynamics of an Emergent Economy by Seba Eldridge and associates, Univ. of Kan. Press, 19
• Essays on Population by James Alfred Field, Univ. of Chicago Press 1931
• Escape from Freedom by Erich Fromm, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1941
• The Gold Coast and the Slum by Harvey W. Zorbaugh, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1929
• High Cost of Prejudice by Bucklin Moon, Julian Messner, Inc.

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Folder 10
Book Reviews, H-W
• Hitler by Emil Lengyel, The Dial Press, 1932
• The Jack-Roller by Clifford R. Show, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1930
• The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution by Salo W. Baron, Jewish Publication Soc. of Am, 1942
• Jewish Family Solidarity: Myth or Fact? Nogaless Press, 1940
• Psychologie der Werbung by Karl Marbe, C. E. Poeschel Verlag, 1927
• Race and Nationality as Factors in American Life by Henry Pratt Fairchild, The Ronald Press Co.
• Social and Cultural Dynamics by P. A. Sorokin, Am. Book Co., 1937
• Social Science Research Council Publications
• The Social Survey of Merseyside, ed. by D. Caradog Jones, Univ. Press of Liverpool, 1934
• Soziologische Studien und Kritiken by Ferdinand Tonnies, Fischer, 1929
• Über die Form des Amerikanischen Geistes by Erich Voeglin, J. C. B. Mohr, 1928
• Verhandlungen des Vierten Deutschen Soziologentages. J.C.B Mohr,
• Wort, Wert, Gemeinschaft by Gerhard von Mutius, Reinhardt, 1929 Research

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