

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR MENTAL HYGIENE RECORDS

The Oskar Diethelm Library
DeWitt Wallace Institute for the History of Psychiatry
Weill Cornell Medical College
525 East 68th Street
New York, New York 10065

Arranged and described by:
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February 1989

Provenance

The records of the American Foundation for Mental Hygiene were given to the Archives of Psychiatry (now the Oskar Diethelm Library) of New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center in October 1982 by William T. Beaty II, secretary of the Foundation for many years.

The collection is comprised of 2.8 cubic ft. housed in seven .4 cubic ft. boxes.

There are no restrictions regarding use of the collection.

History

The American Foundation for Mental Hygiene was founded on May 24, 1928 by Clifford W. Beers as a fundraising arm for the mental hygiene movement, of which he was a significant progenitor. Beers had spent several years in mental institutions in Connecticut and emerged with the determination to found an organization, worldwide in scope, dedicated to the amelioration of conditions in mental hospitals, the dissemination of information about the care and treatment of insanity, and the prevention of the disease itself. He founded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene in 1909, but was plagued for years by financial difficulties. In 1928 he launched the American Foundation for Mental Hygiene as a platform for raising funds.

While it was intended to support the entire mental hygiene movement, the Foundation was closely allied with the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, sharing staff and management audit offices in NYC. Beers expected the Foundation to be a financial resource, providing stable

reserves upon which the national, state and local committees would draw. Funds were to come from endowments, bequests and long-term gifts, (gifts intended for immediate use would be given directly to the National Committee). However, funds were not as readily available as Beers had hoped.

The Foundation supported the First International Congress on Mental Hygiene, held in 1930. In the decade following its founding, Foundation funds were used for the publication of Albert Deutsch's *The Mentally Ill in America* as well as *Twenty-five Years After: Sidelights on the Mental Hygiene Movement and its Founder*, and a twenty-fifth anniversary edition of *A Mind that Found Itself*. Income was derived from Beers' autobiography and Deutsch's book as well as interest payments.

Though limited, the income arising from royalties from these books supported several endeavors in the years that followed. It supported the work of Dr. Norman Dain, Professor of History at Rutgers University, to write a biography of Clifford Beers. The Foundation also provided major support to the World Federation of Mental Health. It awarded grants to the journal, *Mental Hygiene*, and the Oskar Diethelm Historical Library of Cornell Medical College. The Foundation also served as guardian of Beers' literary estate and of his archives which it eventually donated to the Oskar Diethelm Library. In addition, the Foundation presented an annual Clifford W. Beers Award to consumers of mental health services who made a major nationwide contribution aimed at helping those suffering from mental or emotional disorders.

The Foundation was dissolved in 1981 because the trustees and officers felt the time was appropriate for this action. *Clifford Beers, Advocate for the Insane* had been published in 1980, and a revised edition of *A Mind that Found Itself* was to be released later that year.

At the time of dissolution, the National Mental Health Association (now called Mental Health America) accepted the assets and liabilities of the Foundation to establish a Clifford W. Beers Fund. The income of the Fund was used for the Clifford W. Beers Award and to commence the financing of a periodic Clifford W. Beers Lecture, the latter to be given by a distinguished person on a subject relevant to the field of mental health. As of 2014, the Clifford Beers Award was still conferred annually by Mental Health America, and the Clifford W. Beers Lecture continued to take place annually at the Yale Child Study Center.

Scope and Content

The collection is comprised primarily of minutes of annual meetings and correspondence concerning several projects with which the Foundation was involved during the latter period of its existence, from 1956 to 1981. Minutes cover the time period 1959-1981. Other material concerning annual meetings and occasional special meetings includes memos and

correspondence. Discussions for projects centered around the possibility of an update of Albert Deutsch's book, *The Mentally Ill in America*, originally published by the Foundation in 1946.

A major project which took about twenty-five years to complete was the writing and publication of a scholarly biography of Clifford Beers. In the mid-1950's Mrs. Ruth Farber was selected to write the book and initially began to conduct research based on the extensive Beers archives, but never produced a manuscript. William T. Beaty, secretary of the Foundation from the mid-1960's until its dissolution in 1981, retrieved the archives from her home in Connecticut in 1964. Shortly after, Dr. Norman Dain of Rutgers University began research on the biography, which resulted, in 1980, in a book entitled *Clifford W. Beers, Advocate for the Insane*. A manuscript of this book, prepared prior to extensive cutting and other editorial work, is part of the collection. Critiques of the manuscript by Nina Ridenour and Stanley P. Davies, in addition to reviews of the published book, form part of this collection.

Another publication project was a new edition of *A Mind that Found Itself* by Clifford Beers with a preface by William Beaty and an introduction by Robert Coles.

Interspersed throughout the collection is correspondence pertaining to the transfer of the Beers archives and artifacts from the Foundation to the Oskar Diethelm Library at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. Finally, the collection includes papers concerning the dissolution of the Foundation in 1981. These take the form of correspondence, minutes and legal documents. The collection is not arranged into series, but major groupings of material include annual and special meetings, minutes, correspondence, and Norman Dain's biography. Other material is interspersed throughout the collection.

Inventory

Box # 1

Folder 1	Annual meeting, includes minutes	1981
	Paper by Norman Dain, "Who was Clifford Beers?"	
2	Annual meeting, correspondence	1981
3	Annual meeting, includes minutes	1981
4	Special meeting, includes minutes	11/19/1981
5	Annual meetings	1979-1980
6	Annual meetings	1978-1979
7	Annual meeting	1978
8	Annual meeting	1977
9	Annual meeting, includes minutes	1974
10	Special meeting, includes minutes	10/11/1966
11	Annual meeting - memo	12/7/1965
12	Annual meeting, includes minutes	12/10/1963

13	Annual meeting, includes minutes	1959-1963
Box # 2		
Folder 1	Correspondence	10-12/1981
2	Correspondence	1-9/1981
3	Correspondence	10-12/1980
4	Correspondence and printed material	1975-1980
5	Correspondence	6-12/1979
6	Correspondence	2-4/1979
7	Correspondence	1976
8	Correspondence	1974-1975
9	Correspondence	1972-1974
10	Correspondence	1968-1972
Box # 3		
Folder 1	Correspondence, memos, minutes Includes copy of Clifford Beers' will, critique of Norman Dain's biography	1974-1980
2	Correspondence	5-10/1976
3	Correspondence	1970-1976
4	Correspondence	1973-10/1975
5	Correspondence	1968-1970
6	Correspondence, memos	1968-1975
7	General correspondence	1964-1974
8	General correspondence	1961-1973
9	General correspondence	1963-1972
10	General correspondence. Includes material re: Ruth Farber's return of Beers' papers	1963-1964
11	General correspondence	1964-1974
Box # 4		
Folder 1	Correspondence re: Albert Deutsch's, <i>The Mentally Ill in America</i>	1965-1979
2	Clifford W. Beers Guidance Clinic, Inc.	1967-1978
3	Clifford W. Beers Award	10/7/1976
4	Clifford W. Beers Award	1977-1979
5	Clifford W. Beers Award	1976
6	"My Name is Legion" by Nora Stirling and Nina Ridenour- a dramatization based on <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1953
7	Financial statements	1959-1967
8	John Rawlings Rees	5/8/1969

9	World Federation for Mental Health 20th Anniversary Fund	1968-1969
10	World Federation for Mental Health - affiliation	1964-1970
11	Deposit of Beers' archives and artifacts with History Section, New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center	1965-1976
12	Correspondence re: Beers' archives	1964
13	Correspondence re: Nina Redenour's donation of some of Beers' archives to the Library at the Menninger Foundation	1962-1963
14	Correspondence re: Clara Beers, including her move to Westchester Division by Emily Martin. Includes certificate of incorporation of AFMH	1965-1966
15	Biographical sketch of Clara Beers by Emily Martin	1966
16	Suggested authors for Beers' biography	1956-1972

Box # 5

Folder 1	Hyman M. Forstener's summary of developments of the mental health movement, 1952-1975, to appear in the new edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1975
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3	Hyman M. Forstener's summary of developments of the mental health movement 1952-1975 to appear in the new edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1975
4	Hyman M. Forstener's summary of developments of the mental health movement 1952-1975 to appear in the new edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1975
5	Robert Cole's introduction to <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	n.d.
6	Material re: new edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1980
7	New edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1980
8	New edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1980

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Box # 5

Folder 9	New edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1980
10	New edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1975-1980
11	New edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1975
12	New edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1975

Box # 6

Folder 1	Contract for Norman Dain's biography, Univ of Pittsburgh Press	1980
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2	Biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain Correspondence re: payments, etc., contract	1966-1971
3	Biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain Correspondence re: payments, etc., contract	1964-1965
4	Critique of Norman Dain's biography of Clifford Beers by Nina Ridenour	1976
5	Critique of Norman Dain's biography of Clifford Beers by Stanley P. Davies	1976
6	Dissolution of American Foundation for Mental Hygiene	1976
7	Dissolution of American Foundation for Mental Hygiene	1981
8	Reviews of Norman Dain's biography, minutes, correspondence	1970-1980
9	Draft of history of American Foundation for Mental Hygiene by Eric T. Carlson and Patricia Noel. Reviews of Norman Dain's biography. Contracts re: biography and a new edition of <i>A Mind that Found Itself</i>	1969-1980
10	Contract re: Norman Dain's biography, minutes	1977-1980
11	Includes correspondence re: Norman Dain's biography	1977-1979
12	Manuscript of index for Norman Dain's biography	1980

Box # 7

Folder 1	Biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain	1980
2	Biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain	1978-1980
3	Biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain	1976-1977
4	Biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain, includes draft of epilogue	1974-1976
5	Dust jacket for biography of Clifford Beers by Norman Dain	1980
6	University of Pittsburgh Press book catalogs, includes review of Norman Dain's biography	1980
7	Review of Norman Dain's biography which appeared in University of Pittsburgh newspaper	1981

Box # 8

	Manuscript of Norman Dain's biography of Clifford Beers in two volumes, pages 1-997	
Folder 1	Curriculum vita of Norman Dain	1977
2	Notes made by Stanley P. Davies on Norman Dain's biography of Clifford Beers	n.d.