Guide to the William Crowell Bray Papers, 1890-1945

Collection number: BANC MSS 73/55 c

The Bancroft Library

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Berkeley, California

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: William Crowell Bray Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1890-1945
Collection Number: BANC MSS 73/55 c
Creator: Bray, William C. (William Crowell), 1879-1946
Extent: Number of containers: 4 boxes and 1 v.Linear feet: 2.1
Repository: The Bancroft Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Abstract: Letters written to Bray and copies of letters by him; papers and articles; notes; reprints, etc. Concerning his career as professor of chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley.
Languages Represented: English

Access
Collection is open for research

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Biographical Sketch

William Crowell Bray was born September 2, 1879 in Wingham, Ontario, Canada. Graduated from the University of Toronto in 1902 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, he received a travelling fellowship which he spent in Germany doing graduate work in chemistry under Professor Robert Luther at the University of Leipzig and received his Ph.D. in 1905.

He moved to the United States and worked as a research associate in physical chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under Professor Arthur A. Noyes from 1905 to 1910, and from 1910 to 1912 he was assistant professor of physico-chemical research.

In 1912 he moved to Berkeley, California to accept the position of assistant professor of chemistry at the University of California. He was naturalized in 1913 and in 1914 married Nora Thomas. He became professor of chemistry in 1918, a position which he held until he was forced to resign in 1945 due to ill health.

During World War I he directed research at the Experimental Station, American University, Washington, D.C. and in 1919 was associate director of the Fixed Nitrogen Research Laboratory. He was, also, chairman of the Department of Chemistry from March 1943 to March 1, 1945. A heart attack late in 1945 immobilized him and after seeming improvement he was suddenly and fatally stricken on February 24, 1946.

His research covered the kinetics of inorganic reactions, especially involving compounds of the halogens and the mechanism of inorganic oxidation-reduction reactions in aqueous solutions.

Scope and Content

The Bray collection came to The Bancroft Library in October 1972 as a gift of Professor Robert E. Connick, with additions in July 1976 as a gift of Warren Matthew. Consisting of four boxes of correspondence and related papers, it includes letters addressed to Bray; copies of letters written by him; notes; awards; financial statements; drafts and reprints of his Papers and articles and papers written by his students. The papers cover such subjects as his studies in inorganic chemistry of oxygenation, chemical kinetics, nitrogen and the halogens, personal and family business and the work of colleagues from his college days.

There is no information in the papers about his work in Washington, D.C. during World War I, his chairmanship of the Department of Chemistry, his teaching career, or the books he authored.

The Key to Arrangement which follows describes the collection in greater detail.

Boxes 1-2

**Letters written to Bray**

Scope and Content Note
Includes letters from colleagues, organizations, family and friends relating to his research and publications in inorganic and physical chemistry, personal business and news of former student colleagues from the Universities of Toronto and Leipzig.

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically. A partial list of correspondents follows the Key to Arrangement. Unlisted letters are arranged alphabetically in miscellanies preceding each letter of the alphabet. Unidentified letters are at the end.

Box 2

**Letters written by Bray, 1900-1945**

Scope and Content Note

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically, with undated letters at the end.

Box 3

**Personalia**

Papers and articles
Reprints
Papers by Bray's students
Seminar notes
Research notes
Vita

American Chemical Society
4 letters, 1923-35
card, January 16, 1933

Scope and Content Note
Included also, budgets and policy statements, 1922-23, and abstracts of papers presented at the September 1939 meeting.
See also Lamb, Arthur B.

Bancroft, Wilder Dwight, 1867-1953
letter, May 30, 1925

Boas, Franz, 1858-1942
letter, May 14, 1931

Brewster, Ray Quincy, 1892-
letter, February 25, 1941

Burton, Eli Franklin, 1879-1948
5 letters, 1905-06

Clark, Robert Harvey, 1880-
5 letters, 1906-41

Coryell, Charles Dubois, 1912-1971
letter, April 10, 1942
card, [April 25] 1942

Dowell, Carr Thomas, 1878-
32 letters, 1914-18
telegram, August 11, 1915

Scope and Content Note

Fink, Colin Garfield, 1881-1953
5 letters, 1905-06

Frankforter, George Bell, 1860-1947
letter, October 8, 1906

Gaffron, Hans, 1902-
letter, June 28, 1931

Scope and Content Note
Included also, reprint of an article by him, *Die photochemische Bildung von Peroxyd bei der Sauerstoff-Übertragung durch Chlorophyll*, 1927.

Hibbert, Harold, 1877-1945
letter, May 15, 1906

Kolb, Adalbert, 1863-
letter, September 9, 1905

Kraus, Charles August, 1875-1957
letter, July 26, 1912

Lamb, Arthur Becket, 1880-1952
5 letters, 1942-43

Lang, William Robert
letter, March 16, 1905

Lind, Samuel Colville, 1879-1965
6 letters, 1905-21

Livingston, Robert Stanley, 1898-
letter, January 26, 1942
Luther, Robert, 1868-1945
4 letters, 1905-06
Mellor, Joseph William, 1869-1938
card, [June 10] 1906
Miller, William Lash, 1866-1940
letter, [March 26] 1906
Mitchell, John Pearce, 1880-
card, November 7, 1905
Noyes, Arthur Amos, 1866-1936
4 letters, 1905-06
Noyes, William Albert, 1857-1941
3 letters, 1917
Ostwald, Wilhelm, 1853-1932
Additional Note
No incoming letters; copy of a letter, n.d., addressed to him in Bray's outgoing correspondence.

Ramsey, James Blaine, 1892-1965
8 letters, 1929-32
Scope and Content Note
Included also, copies of papers by him, *The Iodimetric Determination of Vanadium* and
*The Simultaneous Reduction of Vanadic Acid and Oxygen by Iodine and by Sulfurous Acid.*

Rideal, Eric Keightley, 1890-
letter, September 18, 1928
Roebuck, John Ransom, 1876-
2 letters, 1906
Rosenstein, Ludwig, 1886-
3 letters, 1921, 1922 and no date
Skrabal, Anton, 1877-
2 letters, 1934 and 1937
Scope and Content Note
Included also, seven reprints of articles by him, 1933-38.

Taube, Henry 1915-
12 letters, 1940-45
Scope and Content Note
Included also, a summary of his dissertation, 1940, a reprint of an article by him, *The Production of Atomic Iodide Ion*, 1942, and notes and a list of his published papers.

Tolman, Richard Chace, 1881-1948
letter, June 27, 1913
Vaughan, Thomas Wayland, 1870-1952
letter, July 1, 1931