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BRAGDON, JOHN STEWART:  
Papers, 1954-1962

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Papers of John Stewart Bragdon span the years 1954 through 1962. During that period Bragdon held the positions of advisor on public works planning to the Council of Economic Advisors (1954-55), Special Assistant to the President for Public Works Planning (1955-60), member of the civil Aeronautics Board (1960-61), and consultant to the House Committee on Public Works (1961-62).

The bulk of Bragdon's papers, which consist of correspondence, memoranda, reports, statistical data, notes, and mimeographed and printed items, pertain to his roles as advisor, special assistant, and consultant on public works. Except for one folder relating to his appointment to the CAB, there is no significant material on his tenure with that agency.

The Bragdon Papers indicate that in his various advisory roles on public works, within both the executive and legislative branches, Bragdon was concerned primarily with four subjects: the achievement of effective state and local public works planning and its coordination with federal public works planning, the provision for a "shelf" of public works that could be undertaken as a contracyclical measure during economic recessions, implementation of the Federal Highway Act of 1956, and the development of a systematic approach to water resources development.

Evidence in the Bragdon manuscripts reveals that Bragdon encountered many difficulties in pursuing these objectives, inasmuch as his role was merely advisory. During the Eisenhower Administration, his efforts to create a statutory office of public works planning were met with resistance from the agencies and departments jealous of their prerogatives. His attempt to create a public works contingency plan for economic recessions was defeated, in part, by the Department of the Treasury and Bureau of the Budget officials who felt that public works acceleration would not be effective as a short-run measure and that the mere existence of such a contingency plan would be mistaken from a psychological standpoint in that it might aggravate fears of an economic downturn and precipitate a crisis.

Bragdon also encountered agency opposition in his proposal to finance a portion of the expanding federal highway system through the use of tolls. Finally, his effort to establish a coordinated water resources policy ran afoul of agencies unwilling to relinquish authority over projects under construction and those planned for the future, and a Congress that spoke for particular groups and represented the viewpoint of the state in the complex constitutional dispute over federal versus state control of water rights.

During his tenure as consultant to the House Committee on Public Works, chaired by Congressman John Blatnik of Minnesota Bragdon again attempted to implement several of his ideas that had been frustrated during the Eisenhower Administration. With Blatnik, he drafted in 1962 a "Public Works Planning Act" that would have provided for a statutory coordinator of public works, readiness public works plans to be implemented during economic recessions, assistance to state and local governments in public works planning, and comprehensive water resources planning. Again he failed to see his vision of comprehensive, coordinated public works and water resources planning become a reality, as Congress passed instead an omnibus appropriation bill for a list of specific public works.

Apparently, Bragdon's frustrations in dealing with the White House staff during his service as advisor in the executive branch prompted his attempt in 1961 to write and expose detailing the roadblocks he encountered while serving as advisor on public works. His papers, particularly the series dealing with Bragdon's projected book, reflect his opinions of the Bureau of the Budget and the White House congressional liaison staff. Bragdon believed that the Bureau of the Budget, in making substantive policy proposals, overstepped its functions, which should have been purely budgetary. The congressional liaison staff, in Bragdon's view, subordinated ideas to political considerations. He concluded that the net effect of the obstructionism of the Budget Bureau and the liaison staff was to block the presentation of innovative ideas to decision makers. Bragdon believed that a complete reorganization of the White House Staff was necessary to solve the problem. To counter-act the narrow perspective of the Bureau of the Budget and the congressional liaison staff, he proposed the creation of a "substantive staff" of expert in specific functional areas that would have screened ideas, shaped those that were worthwhile into sound proposals, and forward them to the chief executive.

In addition to materials on Bragdon's major spheres of responsibility, this collection contains materials on related subjects, such as the Ad Hoc Interagency Committee for Metropolitan Area Development, on which Bragdon represented the White House; the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization; and the International Joint Commission, including material on the Columbia River Basin and the Canadian-American Boundary Waters issues. Finally, the papers contain items of a purely personal nature.

Individuals who corresponded frequently with Bragdon or whose names appear often in the collection include Sherman Adams, John A. Blatnik, Arthur F. Burns, Clarence Davis, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Robert Merriam, Wilton B. Persons, Floyd D. Peterson, Nelson Rockefeller, Raymond Saulnier, and Elmer Staats. In addition, there are scattered items of correspondence from Larry O'Brien, Eugene Burdick, Lucius Clay, Leonard Jordan, John F. Kennedy, Fletcher Knebel, David Lawrence, Gale McGee, Frederick Mueller, and Theodore Sorenson.

A final note regarding the organization of the collection: except for the second series, which contains materials relating to Bragdon's proposed book, his filing system was not rearranged by the staff of the Eisenhower Library. Unfortunately, Bragdon's system is not wholly rational or consistent. The first series is arranged alphabetically by subject matter, and chronologically within each subject. The remaining three series are arranged in a rough alphabetical fashion by subject, but the chronological order within each subject is erratic and inconsistent. Also, in some instances, material filed in one series could logically have been filed in another. In addition, the

folder titles sometimes refer only to the bulk of the material within a folder; the remainder of the items could have been filed under a more appropriate heading. Finally, duplicate materials appear often in different portions of the files. It is probable that approximately 15 per cent of the items in the collection are duplicates.

A collection of slides used by General Bragdon to illustrate his lectures on public works planning was turned over to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Audiovisual Collection for proper handling.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

May 21, 1893	Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
1915	B.S., U.S. Military Academy
1919	Graduated from U.S. Engineering School
1923	M.S., Carnegie Institute of Technology
1923-24	Instructor, U.S. Military Academy
1924-27	Instructor, U.S. Engineering School
1928	Graduated from Command and General Staff School
1929-31	Army General Staff, Philippine Islands
1931-35	Contract Officer, Engineering Department, War Department
1935-37	Assistant Division Engineer, North Atlantic Division, Engineering Department, War Department
1937-41	U.S. District Engineer, Providence, Rhode Island
1941-44	Division Engineer, South Atlantic Division, War Department
1944-49	Director of Military Construction, Office of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army
1948-51	Assistant Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army
1951-53	Construction Engineer, Vermilya-Brown Construction Company
1954	Vice President, Vermilya-Brown Construction Company
1954-55	Staff, Council of Economic Advisors
1955-60	Special Assistant to the President for Public Works Planning
1960-61	Member, Civil Aeronautics Board
1961-62	Consultant, House Committee on Public Works
January 7, 1964	Died, Washington, D.C.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

<u>Box Nos.</u>	<u>Series</u>
1-2	Personal Files, 1954-62. Less than 2 containers. Correspondence and printed material pertaining to General Bragdon's personal and business affairs. Also, letters of appointment to government position and letters of congratulations relating to the appointments. Arranged alphabetically, by subject, and chronologically within each subject.
2	Book File, 1961. Less than 1 container. Correspondence, drafts of chapters, notes and printed items relating to Bragdon's effort to write a book detailing his experiences as advisor on public works planning during the Eisenhower Administration. Arranged alphabetically, by subject.
2-6	Public Works Planning File, 1954-61. Less than 4 containers. Correspondence, memoranda, drafts of legislation, minutes of meetings, reports, notes, statistical data, and mimeographed and printed materials relating to Bragdon's service as advisor on public works planning to the Eisenhower Administration. Arranged alphabetically, by subject.
6-10	House Public Works Committee File, 1956-62. 4 containers. Correspondence, memoranda, drafts of legislation, reports, notes, statistical data, and mimeographed and printed materials relating to Bragdon's tenure as consultant to the House Committee on Public Works. Arranged alphabetically, by subject.

## CONTAINER LIST

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
	SERIES I: PERSONAL FILES, 1954-62
1	General Bragdon - Personal - 1954-1955
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1956
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1957
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1958
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1959
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1960
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1961
	General Bragdon - Personal - 1962
2	Letters of Appointment
	Transcript of Hearing - General Bragdon's Appointment
	SERIES II: BOOK FILE, 1961
	Book -- A Look at the White House -- General [empty]
	Book -- Correspondence
	Book -- Correspondence and Draft on Interstate Highway System
	Book -- Correspondence and Draft on Interstate System Financing
	Book -- Draft on Interstate Highway System - Limited Access
	Book -- Correspondence and Synopsis
	Book -- Draft on Public Works Recession Planning
	Book -- Old Roads -- Draft
	Book -- Synopsis

Bureau of the Budget -- Article on

SERIES III: PUBLIC WORKS PLANNING FILE, 1954-61

Ad Hoc Interagency Committee on Metropolitan Area Problems

Balance of Trade and Slide Lecture Notes

Bureau of the Budget

3

Comprehensive Planning (1)-(3)

Co-ordinator of Public Works Planning (1)(2)

Chronologies

Drought Study

Grants-in-Aid for Public Works Planning

International Joint Commission

Planning - Water

Public Works Planning Unit (Old)

PWPU Material

Planning

Planning - General

Planning (Report to the President)

Public Works (Co-ordinator)

Public Works (Economy)

Public Works (Planning)

Public Works Planning (Charts)

Public Works Planning (General)

Public Works Planning (Long Range)

- 4 Roads (1)-(10)
  - Roads - First Interim Report (1)(2)
  - Roads - Interim Report
  - Roads - National Highway Plan "M"
  - Roads - Toll (1)-(3)
  - Statistics - Miscellaneous
  - Stabilization Planning
  - Major Stabilization and Acceleration Plan

- 5 Water (1)-(6)
  - Water - Chronology
  - Water - Implementing - PACWRP
  - Water - Planning (1)(2)

- 6 Water - PACWRP (1)(2)
  - Water Policy
  - Water Projects
  - Water (Reclamation)
  - Water Resources
  - Water Resources (PACWRP)
  - White House Re-Organization (1)(2)

SERIES IV: HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE FILE, 1956-62

Anti-Recession Bills



Bills

Comprehensive Planning - Possible Persons to Testify

Congressman Blatnik - Speech on Planning (September 1961)

Delaware River Compact

Education

Executive Order - Natural Resources and Public Works (Proposed)

Housing

7

International Joint Commission

Office of Public Works Co-ordination and Acceleration (Proposed)

Public Works Committee (1)-(3)

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title I

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title I

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title II

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title II (Public)

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title III

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title II (Draft)

8

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title IV

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Title IV

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - (Back-up for Title IV)

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Early Drafts

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Draft - Extra Copies

Public Works Planning Act of 1962 - Sources of Opposition

Public Works Planning Bill and Titles

Public Works Planning Act of 1962

Intermediate Public Works Stabilization Acceleration Plan

9 Major Public Works Stabilization Acceleration Plan

Roads

Roads - Toll (1)(2)

Roads - Transportation

State and Local Planning (1)(2)

Urban Affairs

Water

Water Resources

Water Resources Council - Statistics Supporting

10 Water Resources Council, River Basin Commissions, Assistance to States

Water Rights

END OF CONTAINER LIST

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