

ArMs 1985.039
Box label: A0514-516
3 DBs, 1.35 cubic feet
4C – (7.1.E)

Harold E. Weeks Diaries
1925-1932

Brooklyn Historical Society
Othmer Library
128 Pierrepont Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel. 718.222.4111 FAX 718.222.3794

library@brooklynhistory.org
www.brooklynhistory.org

Diana Garcia
January-February, 2008
Supervisor: Leilani Dawson
January-February, 2008

Abstract

This collection contains seven red cloth-bound diaries from the period 1925-1932 belonging to Harold Eastman Weeks (1886-1960) which include numerous newspaper clippings and enclosures. The diaries contain day-to-day entries pertaining primarily to Mr. Week's professional activities as the Coordinating Engineer at the Brooklyn Edison Company; however, references are also made to his personal, family and social life.

Biographical Note

Harold Eastman Weeks (1886 - 1960), a descendent of the Weeks Family of New Hampshire, and a relative of John Wingate Weeks,¹ worked as the Coordinating Engineer in the Electrical Systems Bureau of the Brooklyn Edison Company.

Mr. Weeks graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1908, served in the Army Air Corps (presumably during World War I) and, during the time frame covered by the diaries, served as a Captain in the Air Corps Reserve².

The diaries outline Mr. Weeks' day-to-day activities as he coordinated the planning and supervision of the Electrical Systems Bureau. Entries primarily relate to Mr. Weeks' duties at the Brooklyn Edison Company (BEC) as well as his professional development, but they also include references to personal activities and interests.

Apart from his regular job duties at BEC, Mr. Weeks furthered his professional development by participating in continuing education courses (such as public utility economics, sales methods and public speaking) and by working as a public utility instructor at both the Brooklyn Edison Company and the New York Edison Company³. He was a member of the BEC Technical Advisory Committee, responsible for the preparation of this committee's reports. He was also a member and coordinator for the Brooklyn Edison Club, responsible for organizing social and sporting events for company employees. Additionally, Mr. Weeks was a member of a number of professional organizations—the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE), the National Electric Light Association (NELA), the New York Electrical Society (NYES), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)—and attended their conferences regularly.

Mr. Weeks volunteered regularly, teaching safety and first aid courses at the Brooklyn Edison Company (Weeks was a member of the Brooklyn Safety Council and a large number of their brochures appear throughout the diaries) as well as teaching mapping and aviation to Boy Scouts. Mr. Weeks also served as a juror on a number of occasions during this period of time.

His personal interests and hobbies – as evidenced by diary entries as well as numerous news clipping throughout the years – included reading literature; playing chess and tennis; fencing; attending the opera and the Boston Symphony performances in New York and participating in the Debate Club and The Cicero Circle among others.

¹ Republican Senator and 48th U.S. Secretary of War (1921-1925), see also the July 18th obituary entry in the 1926 diary.

² See the June 13th entry in the 1927 diary that contains a letter dated June 7, 1927: "Participation of Reserve Officers in Captain Lindbergh's Welcome"; a letter from Colonel Ira F. Fravel, Air Corps, in the back of the 1929 diary; and the July 21st entry for 1932 with contains a *New York Times* clipping entitled "Reserve Corps Orders".

³ 1932 diary, December 1st entry.

He regularly read a number of New York and Brooklyn newspapers (e.g., *New York Times*, *New York Tribune*, *New York Sun*, *Daily News*, *New York World*, *Brooklyn Citizen*, *Brooklyn Standard Union*, *Brooklyn Daily Times*) clipping stories related primarily to the following topics: major local, national and international news events, public utilities, city planning and infrastructure, population estimates, the banking industry and the commodities markets, and aeronautics. Additionally, Weeks regularly and carefully noted the birthdates of the Presidents and other great figures in American history in his diaries.

Mr. Weeks resided at 20 Willow Street, Brooklyn, and was married to Dr. Virginia Travell Weeks, a Brooklyn pediatrician, and sister of Dr. Janet Davidson Travell, President John F. Kennedy's Personal Physician. Mr. and Mrs. Weeks had four children: Sheldon Griswold Weeks, Dr. Willard Travell Weeks, Dr. Elinor Eastman Weeks and Dr. Virginia D. Weeks (Mrs. Herbert van Wie Bergamini).

Harold Eastman Weeks died June 30, 1960, in Lake Placid, New York, at 74 years of age.

Sources

"Harold E. Weeks," *New York Times*, July 1, 1960, accessed online January 31, 2008.

Dartmouth College Library: <http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b1684553~S1>.

"Pioneering Physician: Janet Grame Travell," *New York Times*, January 27, 1961, accessed online March 9, 2008.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of seven diaries from the period 1925-1932 (a diary does not exist for 1928) and is arranged chronologically. Each diary documents the day-to-day operations of the Electrical System Bureau of the Brooklyn Edison Company, one of the major participants in Brooklyn's electrification, as chronicled by Harold E. Weeks, Coordinating Engineer. They also contain references—in the form of numerous enclosures—to local, national and international news events; public utilities; city planning and infrastructure; population estimates; the banking industry; the commodities markets; aeronautics; and the private life of Mr. Weeks.

Entries and enclosures pertaining to the day-to-day operations of the Brooklyn Edison Company's Electrical System Bureau, include logs, measurements and calculations for Brooklyn substations; trouble reports; AC/DC transmission calculations for Brooklyn circuits; projected costs; plans for changeover programs; reports of outages; references to large customer changeovers; completion schedules and Bureau staff vacation schedules.

Other enclosures consist primarily of newspaper clippings as well as system diagrams; blueprints; work orders; schedules; reports; memoranda; brochures and programs; statements of work and some maps and correspondence.

Topics of interest include the merger of the Brooklyn Edison Company with Consolidated Gas of New York⁴ and the death of Thomas Alva Edison⁵. The numerous Safety Council brochures included in the diaries, particularly in 1925 and 1926, are also of interest as ephemera documenting how BEC communicated safety concerns with the Brooklyn community during the build-out of the municipal electrical infrastructure.

⁴ See news clippings located between the cover page and first entry of the 1929 diary.

⁵ See entry for October 18, 1931.

Condition

All diaries are wrapped in buffered tissue paper as most are in fragile condition with weak or broken spines. Stains from both glued and loose newspaper clippings are prevalent, and some text fading exists. Many enclosures are glued and the text of some typewritten enclosures has faded. The diary paper is embrittled and should be handled with care. Where possible, metal fasteners and pressure-sensitive tape were removed; papers unfolded and illegible materials photocopied onto acid-free buffered paper.

Conditions of Access

The collection is available to researchers by appointment at the Brooklyn Historical Society Othmer Library.

Conditions of Reproduction and Use

Photocopies for reference are permitted at the discretion of the Archivist.

Permission to publish materials must be obtained in writing from the Brooklyn Historical Society Othmer Library, 128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201; Tel. 718.222.4111; Fax 718.222.3794; E-mail: archivist@brooklynhistory.org

Related Material

The Papers of the Weeks Family of Lancaster, New Hampshire, Dartmouth College Library:
<http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b1684553~S1>

The Papers of John Wingate Weeks at Dartmouth College, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College <http://ead.dartmouth.edu/html/ml1.html>

The Janet G. Travell, M.D. Papers, The George Washington University, Melvin Gelman Library, University Archives

Access Points

Personal names:

Weeks, Harold Eastman, 1886-1960

Travell, Janet G., 1901-1997

Weeks, John W. (John Wingate), 1860-1926

Corporate names:

Brooklyn Edison Company

New York Edison Company

Subjects:

Electric power systems

Electrification

Electric power distribution New York (State)

Aeronautics, Military

Chronological subject:

20th-century America

Geographic subject:
Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)

Form/Genre:
Diaries
Clippings
Brochures
Blueprints
Schedules
Diagrams
Memoranda
Correspondence
Programs

Occupations subject:
Engineers

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, date (if known); Diaries of Harold E. Weeks ; Accession number (ArMs 1985.039); box number; folder number; Brooklyn Historical Society Othmer Library, 128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Diary (1925)	1925
	2	Diary (1926)	1926
	3	Diary (1927)	1927
2	4	Diary (1929)	1929
	5	Diary (1930)	1930
	6	Diary (1931)	1931
3	7	Diary (1932)	1932