

C Schaberg Family, Papers, 1894-1974  
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## INTRODUCTION

The personal and professional papers of Benjamin F. Schaberg, Sr., who worked as an engineer on the Panama Canal, St. Louis sewer projects, World War II army post construction, and Missouri Public Service Commission studies, includes family correspondence between Schaberg and his wife, sisters, and sons. Ben Jr. and John George Schaberg were in China during and after the 1937 Japanese invasion.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The Schaberg Papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by the heirs of Benjamin F. Schaberg on 1 August 1974 (SHS Accession No. 1088).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Benjamin Franklin Schaberg, Sr. was born in 1881 at Clayton, Missouri, the son of John H. (1849- ) and Rosina Grampp Schaberg (1849-1938). There were three sisters, Ida Emilia Schaberg (1877-1965), Emma Lina Kleinschmidt (1872- ), and Lydia Rosina Brocksmith (1874- ). Schaberg attended the University of Missouri-Rolla, then known as the Missouri School of Mines. Trained in engineering, he worked first on the Panama Canal from 1906-1907 and then on railroad elevation projects around the United States. While working in Wilmington, Ohio, he met and married Alice Emma Glass. Following their marriage, they moved to the Clayton-St. Louis area where Schaberg worked on the River Des Peres Foul Water Sewer Project and then on transit system and land valuations. During the Depression Schaberg lost his job, and with the exception of short-term Work Projects Administration jobs, he was unemployed until World War II. During the war Schaberg worked at Fort Riley, Camp Funston, Scott Field, Lambert Field, and Camp Crowder on expanding existing and constructing new facilities.

The Schaberg's were the parents of two sons, Benjamin F., Jr. and John George. When both sons left home to attend the University of Missouri, Alice Emma moved to Columbia. There she supported herself and her family by taking in boarders and working at Stephens College.

Ben Schaberg, Jr. graduated from the University of Missouri in 1936 with a degree in physical education and an emphasis in geography. In 1936 he attended the International Student Congress in connection with the Olympic Games in Berlin. While in Berlin, he was offered a position teaching physical education at the Normal Northwest University, Peiping, China. In January 1937 his younger brother, John (Jack), joined him in Peiping to teach at the Catholic University.

When the Japanese invaded China in the summer of 1937 the brothers became separated. Ben stayed with the university in Peiping, then moved into the interior to continue teaching. Jack moved to Shanghai where he was to teach at St. John's University. As the schools in Shanghai closed after the invasion, Jack found part-time work with the Foreign YMCA and XMHA Radio. He then found full-time employment with the Shanghai Municipal Council. He

also joined the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, American Division, to help with defense of the city. Meanwhile, Ben was teaching gymnastics to Chinese students, leading part of a forced march of students to safer locations, encountering student unrest and strikes, noting the spread of communist propaganda, and taking log trips down the Hunan River and across China into Indo-China.

In 1940 Ben joined Jack in Shanghai, assuming a physical education post with the Foreign YMCA. Jack went to work for the Texas Oil Company (China), Ltd. Both men described bombings, machine-gunning from aircraft, destruction, and national deterioration. Jack's letters are of interest and include much on the social whirl of Shanghai. Ben's letters are written with more introspection, probably due to his isolation from other non-Chinese. His travels broadened his perspective and intensified his impressions, while his background in geography gave his descriptions a technical accuracy.

Texaco sent Jack to work on the Burma Road building service stations and installing tanks. He removed the company records as leader of one of the last convoys across the road during the Japanese takeover in December 1942. Jack subsequently worked for Texaco in India, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Ben returned to the United States with his British-born wife, Ivy Myrna Watson, in January 1942. He worked with lend-lease to China during World War II, making several trips to the Orient and flying the hump. Ben and Ivy were divorced about 1944 or 1945, and he remarried in 1948. Ben later held several positions with import and export firms.

Jack stayed with Texaco until sometime in the 1960s, then worked for the Department of State Agency for International Development, and finally for the Department of the Interior, Office of Oil and Gas. His first marriage to Laverne Crane, ended in 1957. In 1962 he married Marilyn (Lynn) Allen.

Alice Emma Schaberg remained in Columbia, Missouri, while her husband lived in Clayton. Benjamin F. Schaberg, Sr. died in a nursing home in 1967. There is little information about the family after the early 1950s.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is arranged chronologically by the writer of the letters. Copies of correspondence were made for distribution to family members or to allow the original to be passed to others. Benjamin F. Schaberg, Sr. maintained a nearly complete file of all family correspondence.

The papers of Benjamin E. Schaberg, Sr. are both personal and professional and include reports, journals, charts, maps, and memorabilia of his engineering career. Letters to family members describe daily routines, financial matters, life in Columbia and Clayton, Missouri, politics, work, home attitudes, and economic conditions. During World War II Schaberg was employed on military base construction projects. His letters describe the sizes of bases, the types of troops and number being trained, training procedures, weapons, aircraft, cavalry units, and personnel at Fort Riley, Camp Funston, Scott Field, Lambert Field, and Camp Crowder.

Benjamin F. Schaberg, Jr. and his younger brother, John George, were in China during the Japanese invasion of 1937 and were subsequently involved in World War II through lend-lease to China and the building of the Burma Road. In their letters, both men describe the war, economic problems, education, food, scenery, historical sites, and social life in China.

Following the war, John Schaberg continued to work for the Texas Oil Company in

China, the Philippine Islands, India, and Thailand. Letters describe these countries and the oil industry during the post-war recovery period.

## FOLDER LIST

### **Benjamin Schaberg, Sr., Personal Papers**

- f. 1-3 Minute book, programs, and attendance lists for Longfellow Reading Circle, Clayton, Missouri, 1890s. Class notes on analytics from Missouri School of Mines.
- f. 4-9 Humorous and sentimental postcards, 1907-1913, n.d.
- f. 10-24 Letters, 1936-1948. Written by Schaberg to his sons, his sisters, and his wife. Topics include economic conditions in Columbia and Clayton, University of Missouri students, housing, cars, sports, China, Japan, the Sino-Japanese War, politics, and war fever and apathy. Descriptions of army camps and troops training.

### **Benjamin Schaberg, Sr., Professional Papers**

- f. 25-35 Isthmian Canal Commission, Culebra, Panama Canal Zone, 1906-1907. Notes, charts, and measurements made by Schaberg as an assistant chief engineer. Ground composition and hardness charts, elevations, and maps of borings and test pits.
- f. 36-40 Journals, 1908, 1911. Notes on the St. Louis Mont-Saur and Smithson Traction Company. Survey diaries containing conversations with employers and employees about the River Des Peres Foul Water Sewer and noting labor problems, weather conditions, equipment, materials, and specifications. Schaberg was an assistant engineer for the City of St. Louis.
- f. 41 Expense Record, 1909-1911
- f. 42 Volume of charts and sketches by Schaberg on the River Des Peres sewer, with engineering notes on targets, transits, plug sets, and measurements.
- f. 43-46 Letter Books, 1908-1914. St. Louis Mont-Saur and Smithson Rail Road, search for work, and the River Des Peres Foul Water Sewer.
- f. 47-66 River Des Peres Foul Water Sewer, 1910-1914. Correspondence, reports, charts, maps, and claim justifications and responses.
- f. 67 Invention, 1914. Schaberg invented a locking clutch bolt and nut lock. Drawing and correspondence with patent lawyer.
- f. 68-70 Correspondence, 1913-1921. Professional organizations, Missouri School of Mines, Masons, and concrete cost formulas.
- f. 71 Travel expenses, 1920-1921.
- f. 72-88 Valuation Studies, 1920-1921. Line valuation of the United Railways Company, St. Louis.
- f. 89-90 Resumes, correspondence, and job applications.
- f. 91-96 Cost studies on construction, Missouri Public Service Commission, c. 1920s-1931.

- f. 97-104 Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, 1934-1943. Construction projects.
- f. 105-119 St. Louis County Water Company, Missouri Public Service Commission, 1943-1950. Appraisals, inventories, equipment retirement, cost analysis of material, labor, and overhead.
- f. 120-121 Financial and Estate Papers, 1958-1969.

### **Alice Emma Glass Schaberg Papers**

- f. 122-137 Correspondence, 1936-1954, n.d. Letters written to friends and family, particularly to her husband, Benjamin F. Schaberg, Sr. Circular letters and reminiscences from classmates and plans for a reunion at Wilmington, Ohio, 1951-1954.
- f. 138 Household Accounts, 1920-1922
- f. 139-141 Tax and insurance information for house in Columbia, 1935-1956.
- f. 142-143 Glass family genealogy, obituaries, and estate settlements.

### **Ida Emilia Schaberg Papers**

- f. 144-147 Correspondence, 1930, 1937-1941, 1953. Includes a few letters from Lina Schaberg Kleinschmidt and Lydia Schaberg Brocksmith. Ida and Lina visited China in 1940.

### **Benjamin F. Schaberg, Jr., Diaries, 1928-1929**

- f. 148 Two travel diaries describing Boy Scouts of America roving tours. In 1928 the St. Louis troop traveled east through Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., New York, Canada, and back to St. Louis in about twenty days. Lists daily routine, activities, and food. In 1929 the same troop traveled west through Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado. Descriptive entries on activities, landscape, towns, and roads.

### **Benjamin F. Schaberg, Jr., Correspondence**

- f. 149 1924-1925, 1929-1930. Trips and summer jobs.
- f. 150 1932-1933. Concern a summer job in Lander, Wyoming, and trip into Mexico. Descriptive and informative on living conditions and means of travel.
- f. 151-161 China, 1935-1940. Letters describe Ben's work at university in Peiping, economic conditions, Chinese educational standards, foods, social life, students, homes, sporting events, and sightseeing. After the Japanese invasion in 1937 the letters recount the war, including bombings and air raids, atrocities, the surrender of Peiping, and student unrest at the university in the interior where he taught. Letters from 1938 vacation describe a trip he took south through China, into Indo-China, and back to Shanghai via Hong Kong. After September 1939 the letters discuss his duties as director of the Foreign YMCA

- in Shanghai.
- f. 162-166 1941-1949, 1953, 1955. Letters from Ben and first wife, Ivy, describing their trip from China to the U.S. and impressions as they drove from California to Missouri, 1941. Also letters describing Ben's subsequent work with lend-lease to China, including trips to China, India, and Burma and "flying the hump." After 1946 the bulk of his correspondence is on postcards.

### **John George (Jack) Schaberg Papers**

- f. 167-174 1926, 1930-1940. Letters from trip to Niagara Falls with Boy Scouts, 1930. Letters describing his trip to China (1937), impressions of the country, life in Peiping, decision to relocate to Shanghai, work at a YMCA summer camp, and life in Shanghai during Japanese invasion and occupation, 1937-1940. While in Shanghai, Jack worked with the YMCA, XMHA Radio, the Shanghai Municipal Council, and beginning in 1940, with Texaco.
- f. 175-183 1941-1951. Letters written while working for Texaco in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Burma. Includes descriptions of establishing fueling stations and installing gasoline tanks on Burma Road and a vivid picture of the evacuation and destruction as he drove the last trucks from Rangoon to Chungking in late 1942 when the road closed. Letters from India, post-war China, and the Philippine Islands.
- f. 184-186 1952-1972, n.d. Letters written while working for Texaco in New York City and Thailand during the early 1950s. The few letters from post 1954 indicate he later worked for the Agency for International Development and the Department of Interior, Office of Oil and Gas.

### **Miscellaneous Correspondence and Photographs**

- f. 187-188 Miscellaneous correspondence not written by a family member. Topics concern the family, especially Ben and Jack and their exploits in China.
- f. 189-193 Photographs of Benjamin F. Schaberg, Sr., his wife, his mother, and sisters. Photographs of Ben, Jr., in China and Jack in St. Louis, China, Thailand, and the Philippines; Rolla School of Mines; Iberia, Missouri; Rolla scenes; River Des Peres Water Sewer construction, 1911; unidentified people; Clayton, Missouri, scenes

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