

JULIUS SHISKIN PAPERS, (1934) 1955-78

Collection Type

Personal Papers

Extent

10.8 linear feet (ca. 21,600 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Open. Some items are temporarily restricted under terms of the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, or under National Archives and Records Administration general restrictions (36 CFR 1256).

Copyright

Mrs. Julius Shiskin donated to the United States of America her copyrights in all of her husband's unpublished writings in National Archives collections. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain.

Processed by

Paul Conway, November 1983

Biography

Julius Shiskin

1913 - Born, New York, NY

1931-36 - Student, Rutgers University (BA, MS)

1936-37 - Graduate student, Columbia University

1934-38 - Instructor, Rutgers University

1938-42 - Staff assistant, National Bureau of Economic Research

1942-45 - Chief Economist, War Production Board

1945-67 - Chief Statistician, Bureau of Census

1968-69 - Assistant Director for Program Planning, Bureau of Census

1969-73 - Chief Statistician, Office of Management and Budget

1973-78 - Commissioner, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor

1978 - Deceased

Scope and Content Note

The Shiskin papers consist of copies of his professional articles and books; a clipping file on his career and those of his associates; and miscellaneous papers and books accumulated during his government service, but especially from 1969 to 1978. While most of the materials are on the public record in scattered locations, their convenient compilations here makes the collection a valuable resource.

Julius Shiskin, a student and colleague of former Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur Burns, began his career at the War Production Board and built his reputation as a skilled economist and statistician at the Bureau of Census. While on sabbatical

from the Bureau in 1954, Shiskin developed the method of using computers to calculate seasonal adjustments of economic data time series. His system yielded more accurate results and allowed quicker release of the complicated indexes. In 1961, Shiskin published his book "Signals of Recession and Recovery," laying the groundwork for the monthly forecasting of business trends. His Census Bureau periodical "Business Conditions Digest," also begun in 1961, has widely disseminated the data needed to make these forecasts. His two publications mark the beginning of the public fixation with national economic statistics.

By 1969, his reputation firmly established, he was asked to head up the Office of Management and Budget's efforts to coordinate the budget of all federal statistical offices and speed up the release of key economic statistics. In 1973 President Nixon nominated him to replace his friend and colleague Geoffrey Moore as Commissioner of Labor Statistics.

As Commissioner during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations, Shiskin was instrumental in preserving the political neutrality of the government's unemployment and work force statistics. Shiskin oversaw the complete overhaul of the preparation of the Consumer Price Index, testified before Congress, and represented the Department of Labor in statistical task forces and international organizations.

The Shiskin papers are most useful for documenting the evolution of his career and his role in developing modern statistical methods. The clipping files portray the changing public perception of the value of economic statistics and Shiskin's efforts to guide the use of these figures. The Shiskin papers do not contain copies of official correspondence, internal memoranda, or technical reports prepared as a public servant. Only broad inference can be made from his papers about his routine activities or his relations with other government officials.

Related Materials (November 1983)

The Ford Library contains very little material in other collections directly relating to Shiskin's activities as Commissioner of Labor Statistics. Information on the broader topics within Shiskin's official domain, including the release of labor statistics and the reform and use of key economic indicators, is scattered in the major files dealing with economic affairs, especially the records of the Council of Economic

Advisers, the files of L. William Seidman, and the papers of Arthur Burns.

The permanently valuable official records from Shiskin's service in the Census Bureau (RG 29) and the Office of Management and Budget (RG 51) are located in the National Archives' Judicial Fiscal and Social Branch. At this writing, the Department of Labor has not released to the National Archives any records of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (RG 257) dated after 1945.

Last Modified Date

2024-05-20

Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File, 1935-78.

(Boxes 1-9, 3.4 linear feet)

Shiskin's articles for scholarly and professional journals, papers delivered at conferences, speeches, and testimony before congressional committees. Included are a 1935 class paper prepared under Arthur Burns at Rutgers University and testimony at his confirmation hearings.

Arranged chronologically by date of earliest publication.

Box 1 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1935-59

Box 2 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1960-64

Box 3 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1965-69

Box 4 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1969-70

Box 5 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1970-72

Box 6 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1972-74

Box 7 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1974-75

Box 8 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1975-77

Box 9 - Articles, Papers, and Public Statements File

Status	Title
OPEN	1977-78

General Subject File, 1969-78.

(Boxes 9-10, 0.6 linear feet)

Primarily congratulatory correspondence on Shiskin's appointments, and personal information on his finances and on the careers of his children or their spouses. Also includes speech drafts and a small stamp accumulation.

Arranged alphabetically by topic.

Box 9 (Continued) - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Audiovisual Material Transferred
OPEN	Correspondence - Congratulatory, 1969-78
OPEN	Foreign Stamps
OPEN	International Statistical Institute, 1967-74
OPEN	Norwood, Janet L.

Box 10 - General Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Rubin, Alan M.
OPEN	Rubin, Laura S.
OPEN	Shiskin, Carol - "Basic Data on the Economy of Yugoslavia"
OPEN	Shiskin, Julius - Biographical Material

Status	Title
OPEN	Shiskin, Julius - Publications List
OPEN	Shiskin, Julius - Published Biographical Material
OPEN	Shiskin, Julius - Reappointment
OPEN	"Signals of Recession and Recovery" - French Preface
OPEN	Speech Outlines (1)-(3)
OPEN	Toblowsky, Peggy

Clipping File, 1950-78.

(Boxes 11-12, 0.8 linear feet)

Newspaper and magazine clippings on Shiskin's career and professional activities. More recent clippings also concern the careers of his associates or economic issues of interest to Shiskin. Many are numbered to correspond to the clipping list files in the first folder of the series.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 11 - Clipping File

Status	Title
OPEN	1950-74

Box 12 - Clipping File

Status	Title
OPEN	1974-78

Book Authored by Shiskin, 1940-67.

(Box 13, 0.5 linear feet)

Books authored or co-authored by Shiskin.

Arranged chronologically.

(Note: the container list is not available.)

Box 13 - Books by Shiskin

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status Title

Reference File, 1934-78.

(Boxes 13-18, 5.5 linear feet)

Reference books arranged by author, and unarranged articles, journals, and magazines on a variety of statistical and economic topics. Included are numerous annual reports and papers of the National Bureau of Economic Research and numerous issues of the "Journal of the Royal Statistical Society." The full list of materials in this series is filed in container 13.

Partially arranged - by alphabetically by author.

(Note: the container list is not available.)

Box 13 (Continued) - Reference File

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status Title

Box 14 - Reference File

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status Title

Box 15 - Reference File

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status Title

Box 16 - Reference File

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status Title

Box 17 - Reference File

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status Title

Box 18 - Reference File

(Note: The list is not available.)

Status	Title
---------------	--------------