

# Goshen College Archives (Indiana)

## Finding Aid - Paul Bender Papers (V/04/018-011)

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# Paul Bender Papers

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## Summary information

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**Repository:** Goshen College Archives (Indiana)

**Title:** Paul Bender Papers

**ID:** V/04/018-011

**Date:** 1920-1985 (date of creation)

**Language:** English

**Physical description:** 1.70 Linear Feet; 3 archives boxes and 1 half archives box

**Note [generalNote]:**

Other Information:

At one time, the Paul Bender papers were cataloged as HM1-148.

In May 2013, the papers were recataloged under the number V-04-18-11.

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

Paul Bender was born June 26, 1899 in Springs, Pennsylvania to Daniel H. and Ida Miller Bender. When he was almost three years old, his mother died, so he, his brother, and sister went to live with his Amish grandparents. When he was six his father married and moved with the family to Scottdale. Three years later they moved again, this time to Hesston, Kansas where Paul grew up. As a teenager, Paul worked for various farmers in McPherson County, often in wheat thrashing. During World War I, Paul was much more fortunate than many young Mennonite men at that time. When the first draft came, Paul was too young. In the second draft, the war was over before Paul was called.

Paul began college at the early age of 17. After two years, he took a year off to teach in a one-room school to about twenty students of various grades in McPerson County. In 1921, he graduated from Hesston College and immediately began teaching at Hesston in the science department. His lifelong commitment to teaching in church schools came out of the nationwide missionary movement to evangelize the world in the 20th century. While he could have accepted other lucrative positions, especially in physics, his commitment kept him at Hesston. He continued teaching chemistry, physics, and math at Hesston until 1932, while also attending graduate school at the University of Iowa during the summers and for three winter sessions. In 1931 he received his doctorate in physics. While at Hesston he met and married Bertha Burholder of Harrisonburg, Virginia who also attended Penn State University before marrying Paul on Christmas Day 1929.

In August 1932, Paul left Hesston for Goshen College for two reasons: 1) Hesston was having troubles financially (in fact for several years, Paul and Bertha received virtually no pay, but were dedicated enough to Christian education to stay), 2) Goshen needed a physics teacher with Paul's qualifications. He would remain at Goshen until 1965 with various leaves for other church work, often education related. In addition to his duties at Goshen College as professor, he also worked as registrar for nearly 20 years. It

was while working in this field of statistics and projections that laid the foundation for some of his later involvements with the Mennonite Board of Education (MBE).

His first leave of absence was from June 1942 to December 1943 to work in several CPS camps: Medaryville, Indiana; Dennison, Iowa; and Grottoes, Virginia. He served as the educational director in Medaryville, and as the director in the other two camps. After CPS he continued to work with MCC on a volunteer basis as the draft counselor for the Goshen area.

His second leave was for two years (1956-57) under MCC to Heerwegen, Netherlands. He had a variety of assignments, but there were two that were more significant. The first task was to be MCC's peace representative. In this he helped the West German government as they looked to the U.S. for an example on how to deal with conscientious objection. Secondly, he evaluated the student exchange and trainee program. While there he and his wife learned a little Dutch. At first their letters were addressed from Holland, but later The Netherlands, and finally from Nederland.

Soon after he returned from the MCC assignment, he was asked to help with the reorganization at Hesston College. At first he worked from Goshen, but soon had to move to Hesston. He stayed there from 1958-62, serving as professor, dean, and an administrator on the reorganization under MBE.

After returning to Goshen, he continued to work part time for MBE, and part time for Goshen College. In 1965 he retired from Goshen College and began working full time for MBE. He was the educational director for MBE and for awhile the only staff personnel. One of his main tasks was to work with statistics and projections of Mennonite college enrollments, budgets, etc. He had first done this as registrar at Goshen College, in 1955 making a very accurate 10-year projection. In 1972 he retired from MBE, but continued to work part time as needed for several years.

When Paul and Bertha first moved to Goshen in 1932, they lived near the college. In 1940 they adopted an eight-year-old girl, Alice Virginia, who died in 1960. In 1945 they bought a small farm and lived there for five years, raising some livestock. While there they took care of several foster children. In 1950 they built a prefabricated house at 1804 Mayflower (the whole job finished in basically one day.) In 1976 they moved to Sycamore Court in Greencroft Retirement Center where Bertha passed away in 1978. After her death, Paul and niece, Nancy Lee, published a book of Bertha's poems, *Whistling in the Dark*. (See Hist Mss 1-878 Bertha Burkholder Bender Collection). In 1986 Paul moved to the Cwentral Manor at Greencroft, and eventually to the nursing home, where he was often visited by sister Ruth.

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## Scope and content

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Papers of a mid-twentieth century Goshen College and Hesston College physics professor and administrator, divided into two series:

- (1) Personal and Professional Papers, circa 1920-1985
- (2) Draft Counseling Files, circa 1953-1956

## Notes

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### Title notes

### Arrangement

By series

### Restrictions on access

These materials are open for public research.

### Conditions governing use

Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C. Copyright not owned by the Mennonite Church USA Archives.

### Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
  - **Description identifier:** ArchonInternalCollectionID:1242
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## Access points

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- Goshen College -- Faculty
  - Conscientious objectors (subject)
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## Collection holdings

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### Series: Personal and Professional Papers

Title: Personal and Professional Papers

Date: circa 1920-1985 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

These papers include Bender's correspondence, subject files, published and unpublished papers, and miscellaneous materials pertaining to his education and career.

Publication status:

Published

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### **V/04/018-011--Box 1 - Personal and Professional Papers**

Title: Personal and Professional Papers

ID: V/04/018-011--Box 1

Date: 1920-1985 (date of creation)

Publication status:

Published

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### **V/04/018-011--Box 2 - Personal and Professional Papers**

Title: Personal and Professional Papers

ID: V/04/018-011--Box 2

Date: 1920-1985 (date of creation)

Publication status:

Published

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### **Series: Draft Counseling Files**

Title: Draft Counseling Files

Date: circa 1953-1956 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

These files document Bender's work in assisting Mennonite and Amish conscientious objectors in securing I-W status. Materials include Bender's correspondence with Mennonite Central Committee and the Elkhart County (Ind.) draft board, as well as files containing correspondence and other paperwork pertaining to individuals Bender counseled.

Publication status:

Published

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### **V/04/018-011--Box 3 - Draft Counseling Files**

Title: Draft Counseling Files

ID: V/04/018-011--Box 3

Date: circa 1953-1956 (date of creation)

Publication status:

Published

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### **V/04/018-011--Box 4 - Draft Counseling Files**

Title: Draft Counseling Files

ID: V/04/018-011--Box 4

Date: circa 1953-1956 (date of creation)

Publication status:

Published

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