Finding Aid to the Jesse Rabinowitz Papers, 1944-1999, bulk 1948-1995

Finding Aid written by Jennifer Davis
Funding for processing this collection was provided by the estate of Jesse Rabinowitz.

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Finding Aid to the Jesse Rabinowitz Papers, 1944-1999, bulk 1948-1995

Collection Number: BANC MSS 2003/333 c

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Date Completed:
August 2006

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Collection Summary
Collection Title: Jesse Rabinowitz papers
Date (inclusive): 1944-1999,
Date (bulk): bulk 1948-1995
Collection Number: BANC MSS 2003/333 c
Creator: Rabinowitz, Jesse
Extent: Number of containers: 11 cartons, 2 boxes
Linear feet: 14.4 linear feet
Repository: The Bancroft Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Abstract: The Jesse Rabinowitz papers, 1944-1999, consist of correspondence, writings, research, and personal papers relating to his life and work as a biochemist. The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence, research material, and professional papers that Rabinowitz collected during his 40 year career with the Department of Biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley. Also included is a small array of personal papers which present a view of Rabinowitz's wide-ranging interests, as well as a limited collection of personal photographs.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English. There are some materials in French and Yiddish.

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the library's online catalog.

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Jesse Rabinowitz Papers, BANC MSS 2003/333 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Alternate Forms Available
There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Separated Material
No materials have been separated from this collection.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Rabinowitz, Jesse--Archives
University of California, Berkeley. Dept. of Molecular and Cell Biology
Folic acid in human nutrition
Biochemistry--Research
Faculty papers.
History of science and technology collection

Acquisition Information
The Jesse Rabinowitz Papers were given to The Bancroft Library by Mr. Edward Penhoet on October 17, 2003.

Accruals
No additions are expected.

Processing Information
Processed by Jennifer Davis in 2006.

Biographical Information
Jesse Charles Rabinowitz was born on April 28, 1925 in New York, New York. He was the only child of Julius and Frances Rabinowitz, immigrants to the United States from Eastern Europe. When he was eleven, the family relocated to Jersey Homesteads, an experimental Jewish co-op. In 1945, Rabinowitz received a bachelor's degree in chemistry at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn. From University of Wisconsin, he obtained a master's degree in biochemistry in 1947 and a Ph.D. in 1949.

After completing his doctorate, Rabinowitz spent a year studying under David Green at the University of Wisconsin Enzyme Institute. From 1951-1952, Rabinowitz furthered his postdoctoral study of purine fermentation by anaerobic bacteria at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1952 he joined the National Institutes of Health. Rabinowitz then joined the Department of Biochemistry at UC Berkeley in 1957, where he served as chair of the department from 1978 to 1983. During his long and distinguished career, Professor Rabinowitz taught and mentored many graduate and doctoral students. Rabinowitz became professor emeritus of the Biochemistry Department in 1991.

Over the course of his career, Rabinowitz did groundbreaking research in the essential B vitamin, folic acid. This research was begun under the tutelage of his graduate school professor, Esmond Snell and continued with one of Rabinowitz's graduate students, Dean Appling. As a result of their research, it is now widely advised that pregnant women take folic acid to prevent birth defects in newborns. In UC Berkeley's "In Memoriam" tribute, a colleague of Rabinowitz is quoted "Jesse worked out a good part of the basic biology of folic acid. In our research on chromosome breaks caused by folic acid deficiency, we keep coming across Jesse's old work. All his papers are classics."

Over the course of his career, Rabinowitz authored many scientific articles on the subjects of enzymology, purine fermentation, folic acid, clostridial ferredoxin, iron-sulfur proteins, and protein synthesis. In recognition of his contributions to science, he was awarded fellowships with the United States Public Health Service in 1962, the National Science Foundation in 1970, the Guggenheim Foundation in 1977, the National Academy of Sciences in 1981, and the American Academy of Microbiology in 1997. Rabinowitz was also the editor of the Journal of Biological Chemistry from 1965-1970 and from 1974-1977.

In addition to his career as professor at UC Berkeley, Rabinowitz was an avid photographer, music devotee, cellist, cook, dancer, and traveler. Rabinowitz enjoyed three sabbaticals in Paris and vacationed in Japan, Guatemala, and Egypt, among many other countries. His photographs of the people he met on his travels have been exhibited at galleries around the San Francisco Bay Area. For a photograph he made of a child in Mexico, Rabinowitz won the 1969 Saturday Review magazine World Travel Photography Grand Prize in Color. Rabinowitz's extensive personal slide collection may be found at the McHenry Library of University of California, Santa Cruz. The University Library at University of California, Santa Cruz also received a donation of 2,700 classical CDs from Rabinowitz's personal collection.

Jesse Rabinowitz died of melanoma Tuesday, September 9, 2003 at his home in Kensington, California.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Jesse Rabinowitz papers, 1944-1999, consist of correspondence, research, and personal papers relating to his life and work as a biochemist. The bulk of the collection includes correspondence, research material, and professional papers that Rabinowitz collected during his 40 year career with the Department of Biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley. Also included is a small array of personal papers which present a view of Rabinowitz's wide-ranging interests, as well as a limited collection of personal photographs.

The correspondence files make up the bulk of the collection and include letters to and from Rabinowitz as well as research materials, reprints, notes, and personal information. Collected in the General Research series is correspondence, notes, and various other material representing the following subjects: enzymology, purine fermentation, folic acid coenzymes, ferredoxin, iron-sulfur proteins, and protein biosynthesis. Grant applications and correspondence relating to grants are also
Rabinowitz collected reprints which illustrate 50 years of his research efforts in biochemistry; this work is also found in the General Research series.

Professional materials pertaining to Rabinowitz's career at the University of California, Berkeley and his outside affiliations are found in the University of California, Berkeley and the Professional Affiliations series. There is a notable lack of course materials found in the collection.

Rabinowitz was an avid traveler, amateur photographer, dancer, and cook. These personal interests are represented by his personal papers files. Included is correspondence, photographs, travelogues, and ephemera. Lastly, a small collection of photographs of Rabinowitz's lab colleagues and friends is found in the photographs series.

Series 1 Correspondence 1949-1997

Physical Description: Cartons 1-5
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Content Note
The correspondence files include incoming and outgoing correspondence of Dr. Rabinowitz's personal relations and colleagues. Correspondence is often in relation to biochemistry research and occasionally includes the scientific papers and research materials of Rabinowitz's colleagues. It is not uncommon to simultaneously find research and personal information within an individual letter or folder. Also included is correspondence to and from former students.

Carton 1, Folder 1

Abramowitz, Nurith 1966-1969

Carton 1, Folder 2

Allen, Esther 1960-1964

Carton 1, Folder 3-4

Ames, Bruce 1957-1993

Carton 1, Folder 5

Anderson, Bruce 1963-1965

Carton 1, Folder 6-8

Appling, Dean 1979-1995

Carton 1, Folder 9

Arnon, Stephen 1961-1968

Carton 1, Folder 10

A Miscellaneous 1957-1993

Carton 1, Folder 11

Baggett, Matthew 1965

Carton 1, Folder 12

Bailey, Laura K. 1967-1968

Carton 1, Folder 13

Baindur, Swati 1986-1989

Carton 1, Folder 14

Barany, George 1973-1974

Carton 1, Folder 15

Barker, H.A. 1953-1970

Carton 1, Folder 16

Blicharski, Janine 1966-1979

Carton 1, Folder 17

Brennan, Tim 1979

Carton 1, Folder 18

Broderick, James 1971-1982

Carton 1, Folder 19

Brody, Ed and Charlotte 1976-1986

Carton 1, Folder 20

Bruckner, R. 1985

Carton 1, Folder 21

Bryngelson, Lori 1987
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Carton 4, Folder 12  Sternlicht, Himan 1974-1976
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Carton 4, Folder 35  X-Y-Z Miscellaneous 1965-1989
Carton 4, Folder 36  Ziegler, Erica 1973-1992
Series 2 General Research Files 1947-1997

Physical Description: Cartons 4-7

Arrangement
Arranged as received.

Scope and Content Note
The General Research Files include papers relating to Professor Rabinowitz's work in the field of biochemistry. In addition to his own research, Rabinowitz also collected the work of his colleagues. Reprints of published papers, correspondence, and notes are included. Major research topics covered include: enzymology, purine fermentation, folic acid coenzymes, clostridial ferredoxin, formyltetrahydrofolate synthetase, iron-sulfur proteins, and protein synthesis. Research conducted prior to 1963 is not found in this collection. Much of the material is undated. Also included are applications and materials related to grant work. Reprints represent over 50 years of published scientific articles authored by Rabinowitz. Major subjects of the articles include: the vitamin B6 group; purine fermentation by clostridium cylindrosporum; folic acid; Vitamin B12; protein synthesis; and clostridial ferredoxin. Coauthors include Esmond Snell, W.E. Pricer, Richard Malkin, J.-S. Hong, Norman Curthoys, Charles E. Samuel, Ann S. Delk, Cheryl L. Murray, and Dean Appling.

Carton 4, Folder 37-49

Carton 5, Folder 1-34
Research Files 1963-1996

Carton 6, Folder 1-26

Carton 6, Folder 27-33
Grants 1968-1997

Carton 7, Folder 1-6
Grants 1968-1997

Carton 7, Folder 7-13
Reprints 1947-1995

Series 3 University of California, Berkeley 1957-1999

Physical Description: Carton 7, 8

Arrangement
Arranged as received.

Scope and Content Note
Rabinowitz's collection of files pertaining to his career with the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Biochemistry is found this series. The Departmental Files include administrative papers; curriculum notes; and Rabinowitz's bio-bibliography. There is a very limited collection of course lecture notes. The Committees files contain documentation relating to the committees Rabinowitz took part in at the University of California, Berkeley. In particular, Rabinowitz was active on the College of Natural Resources Academic Planning Committee and the Health and Medical Sciences Program Curriculum Committee.

Carton 7, Folder 14-41
Departmental Files 1957-1999

Carton 8, Folder 1-8
Departmental Files 1957-1999

Carton 8, Folder 9-21
Committees 1957-1999
Series 4 Professional Affiliations 1948-1995

Physical Description: Cartons 8, 9
Arrangement
Arranged as received.

Scope and Content Note
The professional affiliations series represents Jesse Rabinowitz's membership in professional associations; attendance at biochemistry conferences; and miscellaneous professional papers. Rabinowitz was an active member of the American Society of Biological Chemistry; correspondence, memoranda, and meeting notes in relation to this association are included in the Associations sub-series. Conference files include meeting minutes, programs, rosters, notes, and correspondence. There is also a small amount of scientific paper reprints that were presented at the conferences.

Carton 8, Folder 22-27

Carton 8, Folder 28-37

Carton 8, Folder 38-56
Miscellaneous Professional 1948-1994

Carton 9, Folder 1-6
Miscellaneous Professional 1948-1994

Series 5 Personal Papers 1945-1996

Physical Description: Cartons 9-11
Arrangement
Arranged as received.

Scope and Content Note
Rabinowitz's Personal Papers present a view of his interests in various associations, clubs, music, Scottish dance, travel, and more. There is a small amount of correspondence relating to his family. Also in this series is miscellaneous correspondence, including retirement letters and postcards to and from the Biochemistry lab. Travel Files contain material relating to Rabinowitz's personal travels across the world. He spent several sabbaticals in Paris, and vacationed in Japan, Guatemala, and Egypt among other countries. Of particular significance is the file entitled Travel Chronology; it provides a chronological list of the trips that Rabinowitz took from 1963-1994. Included is correspondence, postcards, pamphlets, ephemera, photographs, and brochures.

Carton 9, Folder 7-63
Personal Papers 1953-1996

Carton 10, Folder 1-28
Personal Papers 1953-1996

Carton 10, Folder 29-31
Thesis Research Notebooks 1945-1949

Carton 10, Folder 32-51
Travel Files 1953-1996

Carton 11, Folder 1-41
Travel Files 1953-1996
Series 6 Photographs 1947-1987

Physical Description: Boxes 1-2

Arrangement
Arranged as received.

Scope and Content Note
Laboratory and other miscellaneous personal photographs are found in this series. Of particular interest are photographs of the 1955 team of National Institute of Health scientists: Bruce Ames, Leon Heppel, and Bill Pricer, among others. Included are a collection of largely unidentified negatives and slides. In addition, there are photo prints of Rabinowitz’s 1987 laboratory team, the 1945 University of Wisconsin Biochemistry Department, and the 1949 Enzyme Research Institute team. A number of the negatives appear to be of the 1963 Barker Hall construction on the University of California, Berkeley campus. Although Rabinowitz was an amateur travel photographer, this collection does not represent these pursuits. Rabinowitz’s extensive personal slide collection may be found at the McHenry Library of University of California, Santa Cruz.

Box 1, Folder 1-5
Photographs 1955-1987, undated

Box 1, Folder 6-9
Negatives undated

Box 2, Folder 1-22
Photographs 1947-1987, undated