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Descriptive Summary

Title: Tolman-Bacher House Recipe Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1925-1991, bulk 1925-1964

Collection number: 10270-MS

Extent: 0.5 linear feet

Repository: California Institute of Technology. Caltech Archives

Pasadena, California 91125

Abstract: A small collection of original and published recipes associated with the Tolman and Bacher families at the California Institute of Technology. The recipes were transferred to the Caltech Archives from the historic Tolman-Bacher House on the Caltech campus in June 2012.

Physical location: Archives, California Institute of Technology.

Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open for research. Researchers must apply in writing for access.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Tolman-Bacher House Recipe Collection, 10270-MS, Caltech Archives, California Institute of Technology.

Acquisition Information

The Tolman-Bacher House Recipe Collection materials were acquired by the Caltech Archives in June 2012 prior to the renovation of the house for use by the Keck Institute for Space Science (KISS). The materials had been saved and labelled by Shirley B. Gray.

Biography

The Tolman-Bacher House Recipe Collection is named for the two families who contributed to it over the decades of the 1920s through the 1960s and possibly beyond. The collection itself was saved, boxed and described by Shirley B. Gray in 1991.

The Tolman-Bacher House, originally at 345 South Michigan Avenue in Pasadena, California, and now owned by Caltech, was built in 1925-1926 for Richard C. Tolman, professor of physical chemistry and mathematical physics, and his wife, Ruth Sherman Tolman, a psychologist. Richard Tolman (1881-1948) was a distinguished scientist in several fields, not least in relativity and cosmology. He was the scientific host to Albert Einstein during the latter's visits to Caltech during the years 1931-1933. Ruth Sherman Tolman (1893-1957) earned a PhD in psychology, worked in a variety of counseling settings and authored a number of articles in her field. In her later years she developed a deep friendship with Jean and Robert Bacher and after her death the Bachers acquired the Tolman House. Robert Fox Bacher (1905-2004) was a distinguished nuclear physicist who had worked in the top echelon of the Manhattan Project during World War II. He came to Caltech from Cornell in 1946 to be the head of the Physics, Math and Astronomy Division and eventually was named Caltech's first provost in 1962. Following his retirement in 1988, the Tolman-Bacher house was sold to Caltech.

Shirley Gray, who collected the recipes from the Tolman-Bacher House kitchen, is Professor of Mathematics at the California State University, Los Angeles, and the wife of Harry Gray, the Arnold O. Beckman Professor of Chemistry at Caltech. In her introduction to the recipe collection, Shirley Gray comments on the importance of hospitality and dining in the social relations of faculty at Caltech.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of handwritten, typed, and printed recipes from multiple sources associated with the Tolman-Bacher House at Caltech. The majority of the recipes were written down, clipped, or otherwise collected by the original owner of the house, Ruth Sherman Tolman, and her mother, Mary Sherman. Additional recipes may have been contributed and collected by Jean Bacher, the second owner of the house. One notebook of handwritten recipes is inscribed by Jean Bacher’s mother-in-law, Byrl Fox Bacher. Another small notebook is attributed to Martha Bacher, Jean’s daughter.
The earliest dated group of recipes is from 1925 and belongs to Byrl Fox Bacher. The latest culinary material is a small
group of menus from the Caltech eating club known as the Athenaeum Apicians, which was started in 1964.
The recipes provide an interesting view of the cooking and eating practices of a small group of faculty families at Caltech
during the period of the 1920s through the 1960s. The recipe collection is well supplied with desserts, especially cakes,
puddings and soufflés; also condiments, including many pickles and relishes. Meat recipes are few except for those using
leftovers, for which a meat grinder was a staple piece of kitchen apparatus. The ground up meat was either mixed with
other leftovers as a casserole or reheated as a loaf with sauce. Whole chickens, not cut up, were the order of the day.
Exotic dishes included fried oysters and sweetbreads. Homemade fig wine figures among the beverages.
The collection contains some fragments of correspondence between Ruth Tolman and her mother, Mary Sherman.
The collection contains an introduction by Shirley B. Gray, PhD, Professor of Mathematics, dated 1991. Professor Gray
attended many dinners at the Tolman-Bacher House and was well acquainted with the Bacher family.

**Related Material**
The Papers of Richard Chace Tolman; The Papers of Robert F. Bacher; Robert F. Bacher oral history

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

**Subjects**
California Institute of Technology
Bacher, Robert F. (Robert Fox), 1905-2004
Tolman, Richard C. (Richard Chace), 1881-1948
Tolman, Ruth Sherman
Cookery
Gastronomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th>Gray, Shirley B.: Introduction to the recipe collection 1991 Jun 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 2</td>
<td>Bacher, Byrl Fox: My Own Recipes 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: Small ring binder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contains handwritten and printed recipes, bound and loose. Byrl Fox Bacher was the mother of Robert Fox Bacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box 1, Folder 3 | Tolman, Ruth: Recipe collection, handwritten and typed undated: ca. 1930s-1940s |
|                | Note                                      |
|                | Some pages fragile, soiled.               |

| Box 1, Folder 4 | Tolman, Ruth: Recipe collection, printed undated: ca. 1930s-1940s |
|                | Sherman, Mary: Recipe collection undated |
|                | Physical Description: Bound notebook.    |
|                | Note                                     |
|                | Contains handwritten entries. Mary Sherman was the mother of Ruth Sherman Tolman. |

| Box 1, Folder 5 | Bacher, Martha: Recipe collection undated |
|                | Physical Description: Handmade notebook, fragile, loose pages. Majority is handwritten mimeographed pages. |
|                | Note                                     |
|                | Contains handwritten attribution to Martha Bacher. Martha was the daughter of Robert and Jean Bacher. |
Box 1, Folder 7  **Recipe notebooks, handwritten, unidentified undated**  
Physical Description: One Standard school series composition book; the other bound with marbled boards.  
Note  
Marbled notebook has handwritten attribution to Mary Sherman and Ruth Tolman. Contains two different hands.

Box 1, Folder 8  **Recipe collection, blue fabric binder, unidentified undated**  
Note  
Mixed collection of loose recipes, a few identified by name.

Box 1, Folder 9  **Athenaeum Apicians' menus 1964**

Box 1, Folder 10  **Miscellaneous recipes, clippings and documents undated: ca. 1950s**  
Note  
Contains signed note by Shirley Gray concerning Chemistry Division picnic budget.