
Finding Aid to the Paul Radin Papers, 1933-2000(bulk 1934-1935)

Finding aid prepared by Jason Baxter and Wendy Kramer
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Title: Paul Radin Papers

Date (inclusive): 1933-2000

Date (bulk): 1934-1935

Collection Identifier: SFH 23

Creator: Radin, Paul, 1883-1959

Physical Description: 4.0 boxes(4 cu. ft.)

Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

100 Larkin Street

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Abstract: Chiefly surveys from Radin's supervision of over 200 workers who interviewed ethnic groups in the San Francisco Bay Area for the State Emergency Relief Administration of California (SERA) over a period of nine months in 1934-1935. Known as SERA project 2-F2-98 (3-F2-145), its abstract was published in September 1935 as *The Survey of San Francisco's Minorities: Its Purpose and Results*. In addition to records from the WPA project, there is one folder of later correspondence from Jon Lee, a graduate of Oakland Technical High School whom Radin hired to collect and translate Chinese folklore, as well as a small amount of Mary Wolf's research materials on Radin, which includes Wolf's academic papers, a few of Radin's files, and some biographical information. The collection includes a series of index cards containing survey data on Italians in San Francisco, which was received as a separate accession but appears to be from the same SERA survey.

Physical Location: Collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Access

The collection is open for research. Paper is extremely acidic and fragile; please handle with care.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Paul Radin Papers (SFH 23), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance

Donated by Professor Luis S. Kemnitzer of San Francisco State University on behalf of Calvin Fast Wolf and Mary Sacharoff-Fast Wolf, Nov. 2003. Mary Wolf was a would-be biographer of Radin who had acquired original papers from her friend and Radin's widow, Doris Woodward Radin, as well as colleagues, associates, and relatives.

Related Materials

For related materials in the San Francisco History Center, please see the library's online catalog:

Lee, Jon. *Chinese Tales Told in California*, Collected by Jon Lee; revised by Paul Radin. San Francisco: Sutro Branch, California State Library, 1940.

Radin, Paul. *The Italians of San Francisco*, [San Francisco: SERA Headquarters]: August, 1938. SERA project 2-F2-98 (3-F2-145)

Conservation Note

Paper clips and staples were removed; files transferred to acid free folders and boxes.

Processed by

Jason Carson Baxter and Wendy Kramer

Biography

Dr. Paul Radin is considered to be one of the formative influences in contemporary anthropology and ethnography in the United States and Europe. He was born in Lodz (Russian Poland) on April 2, 1883, the son of a reform rabbi and scholar. In 1884, his family moved to Elmira, New York, and then to New York City in 1890. Educated in the public school system, Radin entered the College of the City of New York as a sub-freshman at the age of fourteen, graduating in 1902. After a brief stint in graduate studies at Columbia exploring the zoology of fish, Radin went to study physical anthropology in Munich. This two-year period afforded him time in Germany, Switzerland and Italy, where he began a process of self-cultivation. He returned to Columbia in 1907 with a major in anthropology and a minor in statistics under the famed

professor Franz Boas, the so-called "Father of American Anthropology." Receiving his Ph.D. in 1911, Radin took a series of appointments around North America, first with the Bureau of American Ethnology (1911-12), then a joint fellowship from Columbia and Harvard to study the Zapotec culture (1912-13), followed by four years with the Geological Survey of Canada, studying the Ojibwa of southeast Ontario. His ancillary work on the Winnebago culminated in his *Autobiography of The Winnebago Indian* in 1920.

From 1920-1925, he wrote and did field research at the University of Cambridge, publishing *Primitive Man as Philosopher* in 1927. From 1927 to 1930, while at Fisk University in Nashville, Radin collected oral histories of former slaves' conversion experiences, many of which remain unpublished.

During the Great Depression, Radin moved to Berkeley, where he remained until 1941. From 1930 to 1940, Radin accomplished three major feats: an analysis of the Patwin language of California, his *Survey of San Francisco's Minorities* in 1934-1935 for the State Economic Recovery Act (SERA Project 2-F2-98 (3-F2-145)), and the monumental *Catalogue of Mexican Pamphlets* in the Sutro Collection of the California State Library in 1939 for the Works Progress Administration (WPA project 665-08-3-236). During these trying years of the Depression, Radin still managed to publish *Social Anthropology* (1932), *Method and Theory of Ethnology* (1933), and *Primitive Religion* (1937) at a time when publication--especially in academia--was curtailed.

After 1949, Radin lectured in Oxford, Cambridge and Carl Jung's Institute in Zurich. Working from Bollingen Foundation grants, he continued his research on the Winnebago. He joined Brandeis University in 1957, where he worked until his death on February 21, 1959 in New York City.

Scope and Content

The bulk of the collection consists of surveys from Radin's supervision of over 200 workers who interviewed ethnic groups in the San Francisco Bay Area for the State Emergency Relief Administration of California (SERA) over a period of nine months in 1934-1935. Known as SERA project 2-F2-98 (3-F2-145), its abstract was published in September 1935 as *The Survey of San Francisco's Minorities: Its Purpose and Results*. The stated purpose was a cultural survey to find employment for "white collar" unemployed workers on temporary relief. Radin's focus was "to study the steps in the adjustment and assimilation of minority groups in San Francisco and Alameda counties, from the first arrival to the present time, with particular emphasis upon certain aspects of this acculturation such as...making for the acceleration and retardation of this process and specific influence of such major disturbance of the Depression." Bypassing a typical questionnaire method, Radin instead had the amateur interviewers record anything and everything which the interviewees wished to say. The results appear in a narrative format-- sometimes in the form of poetry and short stories-- and encompass all manner of immigrant experience. Survey materials include typed and handwritten interviews and research on ethnic groups; many duplicated and variant versions are found. Some interviewers identify themselves, and their report appears in their own hand. Sometimes the interviewees are named or given pseudonyms or just a form of address and initial ("Mr. X"). Occasionally, the reports take the form of correspondence to "Dr. Radin," and some are written on hotel stationery from San Francisco.

Radin wanted to present the material in two forms: monographic analyses of minorities and illustrative autobiographies. He states: "The information obtained was divided into two groups, that which was definitely autobiographical, and that which consisted of comments on every imaginable topic of contemporary life, in San Francisco and the world in general. Since the survey was made in 1934-35, the General Strike and the effects of the Depression were naturally favorite subjects, and since many of those interviewed had either themselves gone through the Great War or whose fortunes had been specifically affected by it, we meet references to it in almost every account." (p. 6)

In the first series of general files, those on the Italians are also those used in Radin's monograph *The Italians of San Francisco: Their Adjustment and Acculturation*, published in August, 1935. The second series contains the work of Jon Lee of Oakland, a recent graduate of Oakland Technical High School whom Radin hired to collect and translate Chinese folklore. The materials were collected as part of the SERA project that contained the other ethnic surveys but were later published separately as *The Golden Mountain: Chinese Tales Told in California* by the Sutro Branch library in 1940 (WPA no. 666-08-3-236). The collection includes a series of index cards containing survey data on Italians in San Francisco, which was received as a separate accession but appears to be from the same SERA survey. In addition to records from the WPA project, there is one folder of later correspondence from Jon Lee, as well as a small amount of Mary Wolf's research materials on Radin, which includes Wolf's academic papers, a few of Radin's files, and some biographical information.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in five series: Series 1. General Ethnic Surveys; Series 2. Ethnic Surveys on China; Series 3. Letters from Jon Lee; Series 4. Italians Survey Cards; and Series 5. Mary Wolf Papers. Series 2 is subdivided into general ethnic surveys and ethnic surveys and research on China, including Jon Lee's work on folklore and material for *The Golden Mountain*. Since Radin's numbering system reflects several rewrites and rearrangements, his original labeling and

arrangement have been retained. Pages have been re-ordered only when a page was out of order or an ethnic group was misfiled (i.e., Irish in Icelandic). Others have been left as originally filed; i.e., "Italians" includes Sicilians and Swiss. Identifying notes, such as "Lower Class," have been kept in the folder as received. No attempt has been made by the archivist to sort out ethnic groups from nationalities in that confusing era of multi-generational immigration and war-torn geographies. Hence, there is a file called "Jews" in the "Racial Minorities Survey," featuring Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Roumanian and other groups, as well as files on "Roumanians" and "Russians" that include Jewish experiences. "Mexican" sometimes encompasses Central and South America, even though there are separate files for these as well. On a curious note, one will also find a file for "Miqueton," apparently a territory in Northern France.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Radin, Paul, 1883-1959 -- Archives
Wolf, Mary Sacharoff-Fast -- Archives
Chinese Americans--California--San Francisco Bay Area--Folklore
Chinese--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Depressions--1929--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Ethnology--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Immigrants--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Italian Americans--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Italians--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Minorities--California--San Francisco Bay Area
San Francisco (Calif.)--Social conditions
San Francisco (Calif.)--Social life and customs

Series 1 Radin Ethnic Surveys (General), 1934-1935

Physical Description: 67.0 folders(ca. 2.5 cu. ft.)

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by ethnic group or nationality, with Radin's numbering system noted.

Scope and Contents note

Interviews with members of various ethnic groups in California--mostly from the San Francisco Bay Area--carried out by over 200 SERA workers under the supervision of Paul Radin.

Box 1, Folder 1, Radin_number XI	Africa
Box 1, Folder 2, Radin_number XLII	Albanian
Box 1, Folder 3, Radin_number VB	American
Box 1, Folder 4, Radin_number IX	American Indian
Box 1, Folder 5, Radin_number -	Americans/Autobiographical
Box 1, Folder 6, Radin_number VII	Americans: Frontier Memories
Box 1, Folder 7, Radin_number XLVII	Armenia
Box 1, Folder 8, Radin_number XVI	Australia
Box 1, Folder 9, Radin_number XVII	Austria
Box 1, Folder 10, Radin_number XLIII	Bessarabia

Box 1, Folder 11, Radin_number XLI	Bulgaria
Box 1, Folder 12, Radin_number XLII	Canadian
Box 1, Folder 13, Radin_number XXXV	Central American
Box 1, Folder 14, Radin_number XXII	Danes
Box 1, Folder 15, Radin_number XXV	Dutch
Box 1, Folder 16, Radin_number XIV	English
Box 1, Folder 17, Radin_number XIXA	Finnish
Box 1, Folder 18, Radin_number XIXB	Finns
Box 1, Folder 19, Radin_number LI	Formosa
Box 1, Folder 20, Radin_number -	French
Box 1, Folder 21, Radin_number XXVIIA	German
Box 1, Folder 22, Radin_number XXVIIB	German
Box 1, Folder 23, Radin_number XLVIA	Greek "Lower Class"
Box 1, Folder 24, Radin_number XLVIB	Greek "Upper Class"
Box 1, Folder 25, Radin_number XLVIC	Greek "Professional Class"
Box 2, Folder 1, Radin_number XXIX	Hungary
Box 2, Folder 2, Radin_number XXIV	Iceland
Box 2, Folder 3, Radin_number XVIIIB	Irish
Box 2, Folder 4, Radin_number XVIIC	Irish
Box 2, Folder 5, Radin_number XXXIIA	Italians
Box 2, Folder 6, Radin_number XXXIIB	Italians
Box 2, Folder 7, Radin_number XXXIICA	Italians
Box 2, Folder 8, Radin_number XXXIICB	Italians
Box 2, Folder 9, Radin_number XXXIID	Italians
Box 2, Folder 10, Radin_number XXXIIDa	Italians
Box 2, Folder 11, Radin_number XXXIIDb	Italians
Box 2, Folder 12, Radin_number XXXIIDc	Italians
Box 2, Folder 13, Radin_number XXXIIDe	Italians
Box 2, Folder 14, Radin_number XXXIIDf	Italians

Box 2, Folder 15, Radin_number VIII	Jews
Box 2, Folder 16, Radin_number XLIX	Korean
Box 2, Folder 17, Radin_number XXXIX	Lithuania
Box 2, Folder 18, Radin_number XXXIII	Mexico
Box 2, Folder 19, Radin_number XXXIV	Mexico
Box 2, Folder 20, Radin_number II	Miqueton
Box 2, Folder 21, Radin_number XIII	Norway
Box 2, Folder 22, Radin_number XXVI	Philippines
	General note
	This folder is empty; materials in the file were missing when the San Francisco History Center received the collection.
Box 2, Folder 23, Radin_number XXXI	Portugal
Box 2, Folder 24, Radin_number XLV	Romania No.1
Box 2, Folder 25, Radin_number XLV	Romania No. 2
Box 2, Folder 26, Radin_number XXXVIIA	Russia No. 1
Box 2, Folder 27, Radin_number XXXVIIA	Russia No. 2
Box 3, Folder 1, Radin_number XXXVIIB	Russia No. 1
Box 3, Folder 2, Radin_number XXXVIIB	Russia No. 2
Box 3, Folder 3, Radin_number XVIII A	Scandinavian
Box 3, Folder 4, Radin_number -	Scandinavian Report B
Box 3, Folder 5, Radin_number -	Scandinavian Report C
Box 3, Folder 6, Radin_number XIII	Scots
Box 3, Folder 7, Radin_number XV	South Africa
Box 3, Folder 8, Radin_number XXX	Spanish A
Box 3, Folder 9, Radin_number XXX	Spanish B
Box 3, Folder 10, Radin_number XX	Swedes
Box 3, Folder 11, Radin_number XXIA	Swedes
Box 3, Folder 12, Radin_number XXVI	Switzerland
Box 3, Folder 13, Radin_number XLVII	Syria
Box 3, Folder 14, Radin_number XLIV	Yugoslavia incl. Serbia

Box 3, Folder 15,
Radin_number -

Miscellaneous countries

Series 2 **Radin Ethnic Surveys (Chinese), 1934-1935**

Physical Description: 19.0 folders(1.0 cu. ft.)

Subseries A **Chinese Folklore and autobiographical materials**

Arrangement

Arranged as received, by Radin's folder titles and numbering system.

Box 3, Folder 16,
Radin_number -
Box 3, Folder 17,
Radin_number LIIA
Box 3, Folder 18,
Radin_number LIIB
Box 3, Folder 19,
Radin_number LIIC
Box 3, Folder 20,
Radin_number LIIC
Box 3, Folder 21,
Radin_number LIIE
Box 3, Folder 22,
Radin_number LIIE

Chinese

China

China

China No. 1

China No. 2

China No. 1

China No. 2

Subseries B **SERA worker Jon Lee's papers, including material for "The Golden Mountain"**

Arrangement

Divided into Lee's Chinese survey files and his files for The Golden Mountain, each arranged numerically.

Box 4, Folder 1,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 2,
Radin_number LIID
Box 4, Folder 3,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 4,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 5,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 6,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 7,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 8,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 9,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 10,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 11,
Radin_number -
Box 4, Folder 12,
Radin_number -

Jon Lee China

J. Lee China

Jon Lee- China No. 1

Jon Lee- China No. 2

Jon Lee- China No. 3

Jon Lee- China No. 4

Jon Lee- China No. 5

Jon Lee- China No. 6

Material for "The Golden Mountain" No. 1

Material for "The Golden Mountain" No. 2

Material for "The Golden Mountain" No. 3

Material for "The Golden Mountain" No. 4

Box 4, Folder 13

Series 3 **Letters from Jon Lee, 1943-1945**

Physical Description: 1.0 folder

Scope and Contents note

Letters to Radin from Jon Lee while he was in the Army during World War II, stationed in India and China.

Box 4,
Folder 14-15

Series 4 **Italians survey cards, [1934-1935]**

Physical Description: 2.0 folders

Scope and Contents note

Index cards containing data from interviews with Italian Americans, apparently compiled as part of Radin's research for the portion of the SERA project later published as *The Italians of San Francisco: Their Adjustment and Acculturation*. Includes a few cards about Chinese Americans.

Series 5 **Mary Sacharoff-Fast Wolf papers, [193?]-2000**

Physical Description: 7.0 folders

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

Box 4, Folder 16
Box 4, Folder 17
Box 4, Folder 18
Box 4, Folder 19
Box 4, Folder 20

Miscellaneous Radin WPA Project documents, 1936

Anthropology Term Paper, 1988

Master's Thesis, 1989

Biographical Material on Radin (photocopies), 2000

"Survey of San Francisco's Minorities" and SERA political cartoon (color photocopies), undated

Box 4, Folder 21

WPA Project Master Control List, undated