Guide to the Katherine Esau Papers

Preliminary arrangement and description by Special Collections staff; latest revision by A. Demeter on September 30, 2008.
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Katherine Esau Papers, 1870-1990 [bulk dates 1935-1987]

Collection number: UArch FacP 23

Department of Special Collections  
Davidson Library  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Processed by:  
Preliminary arrangement and description by Special Collections staff  
Date completed:  
Sept. 30, 2008  
Encoded by:  
A. Demeter  

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Katherine Esau Papers  
Dates: 1870-1990  
Bulk Dates: 1935-1987  
Collection number: UArch FacP 23  
Creator: Esau, Katherine, 1898-1997  
Collection Size: 8 linear feet (16 document boxes and 1 oversize box).  
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library, Dept. of Special Collections  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
Abstract: The collection contains copies of all of Esau's publications and research notebooks. There is also personal and biographical material including her awards, correspondence, and family history.  
Physical location: Del Sur, University Archives, 29A; 30B (oversize).  
Languages: English  
Access Restrictions  
Access to personal recommendations and reviews in Series VII restricted, pending review.  

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Acquisition Information  

Biography  
Katherine Esau (1898-1997), professor of biology at the University of California Santa Barbara, is best known as the author of the textbooks *Plant Anatomy* (1953) and *Anatomy of Seed Plants* (1960) and for her research on plant diseases and viruses, particularly on agricultural crops. In addition to her textbooks, Esau published over 100 articles. She was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1940, was the sixth woman chosen as a member of the National Academy of Sciences (1957), and was awarded the National Medal of Science in 1989 by President George H.W. Bush.  
Esau was born in 1898 to a German Mennonite family in Ekaterinoslav, Russia (now Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine) where her father served as mayor in the years before the Russian Revolution. She studied agricultural science in Moscow, Russia, and, after the Revolution in Berlin, Germany, where her family fled to avoid persecution by the Bolsheviks. Shortly after Katherine's graduation in 1922, the Esau family immigrated to the United States and Katherine continued to study plant
anatomy at the University of California, Davis. Since UC Davis did not yet award doctorates at that time, she was granted her doctorate for her UC Davis-based research through UC Berkeley in 1931, at which point she joined the faculty of the Biology Department at UC Davis.

In 1963, Dr. Esau moved to the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she continued her research with former UC Davis botanist, and later UCSB Chancellor, Dr. Vernon I. Cheadle. Dr. Esau's research centered on the structure of plant tissues and the means by which viruses and other pathogens spread through the phloem. She was one of the first plant biologists to use an electron microscope and in 1969 was given an electron microscope solely for her use. She retired from teaching in 1965, but continued her research and writing until 1994.

Please also see http://www.botany.org/bsa/misc/esau.html for further biographical information.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection contains copies of all of Esau's publications and research notebooks. There is also personal and biographical material including her awards, correspondence, and family history.

Arrangement

Series I contains biographical and bibliographic material, including Esau's awards.

Series II consists of a few academic files relating to teaching and administration.

Series III contains all of Esau's publications.

Series IV contains research notes from 1936 to 1987.

Series V contains professional correspondence.

Series VI contains personal photographs and material related to Esau's family, especially her brother, Paul.

Series VII contains confidential professional recommendations and reviews.

Related Materials

At UCSB:

Cheadle Center for Biodiversity & Ecological Restoration (CCBER)

Additional archival and research material for Katherine Esau. Per their website, http://ccber.lifesci.ucsb.edu/library/, they have "over 2,100 photographic prints, negatives, and lantern slides from light microscope slides; collection data; correspondence; publications, reprints" from her research on phloem structure and notebooks. The collection is 18.25 linear feet, not including reprints. Much of their material is still being used in current research but may still be accessed by patrons. For further information, contact CCBER librarian and archivist Laurie Hannah at hannah@lifesci.ucsb.edu. The collection guide is available online through the Online Archive of California (OAC), at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1s20304s/.

UCSB Oral History Program


University Archives: Public Information Office


University Archives: Faculty Papers


At Other Institutions:

Botanical Society of America: image collection.


UC Berkeley. University Archives. Records of the College of Agriculture, University of California, 1881-1945. One folder in Writings and Speeches, Box 29.

Indexing Terms

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

Esau, Katherine, 1898-1997

Plant anatomy.

Virus diseases of plants.

University of California, Santa Barbara
**Series I: Biographical**

**Subseries A: General**

| Box 1: 1 | Curriculum Vitae and List of Publications, 1985, 1997 |
| Box 1: 2 | Esau's doctoral thesis (original manuscript), c. 1927 |
| Box 1: 3 | Handwritten autobiography of Esau covering period prior to UC Davis, c. 1985 |

**Subseries B: Awards**

| Box 2 | National Academy of Sciences, bronze medal, n.d. |
| Box 2 | Faculty Research Lecturer, bronze medal on a blue and gold ribbon, UC Davis, 1964 |
| Box 2 | **International Botanical Congress, bronze medal, 1969** |
| Box 2 | **National Medal of Science, gold medal in a mahogany box, 1989** |
| Box Oversize | **American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1939** |
| Box Oversize | **American Philosophical Society, membership statement, n.d.** |
| Box Oversize | **Botanical Society, Certificate of Merit, 1956** |
| Box Oversize | **National Academy of Sciences, 1957** |
| Box Oversize | **National Medal of Science, 1989** |
| Box Oversize | **Ph.D. Diploma, U.C. Berkeley, 1931** |
| Box Oversize | **Regia Academia Scientiarum (3 copies), n.d.** |
| Box Oversize | Sigma Xi, 1932 |
| Box 3: 2 | **Ladies Home Journal** article: 75 Most Important Women in America, Jan. 1971 |
| Box 3: 3 | Mills College honorary doctoral diploma, June 10, 1962 |

**Series II: Academic**

| Box 3: 4 | **Biology 118: Final Exam, 1938** |
| Box 3: 5 | **Biology 12hf: Laboratory exercises, ca. 1935** |
| Box 3: 6 | **Botanical Society Fourth Summer Institute for College Teachers of Botany** (Washington State University), 1961 |
| Box 3: 7 | **Summaries of dissertations reviewed by Esau, 1952-1962** |

**Series III: Publications and Lectures**

| Box 3: 8 | Book reviews, 1969-1985 |
| Box 3: 9-12 | Offprints, 1930-1953 |
| Box 4: 1-4 | Offprints, 1954-1986 |
| Box 4: 5 | Photomicrographs, n.d. |
| Box 4: 7 | Slides for a talk presented by Esau at UC Davis in honor of the Davis centennial birthday, 1984 |
| Box 4: 8 | "The Stelar Anatomy of the Lepidodendrales," lecture, c. 1940 |

**Series IV: Research**

| Box 5: 1 | "Advanced Morphology" notes (Professor Bailey, Harvard), 1937-1938 |
| Box 5: 2 | Botany notebook, c. 1953 |
| Box 5: 4-5 | Metcalfe, C. R.: research, 1972-1981 |
| Box 6: 1 | National Science Foundation grant research project: "Normal and Pathological Anatomy of Vascular Tissues in Plants" (4 notebooks) |
| Box 6: 1 | Notebook 1, June 3, 1960-Nov. 18, 1968 |
Box 6: 2  Notebook 2, Sep. 20, 1968-Oct. 25, 1973
Box 6: 4  Notebook 4, Nov. 4, 1978-Feb. 28, 1987
Box 6: 5  "Plant Histology" notes (Professor Bailey, Harvard), 1936
Box 7: 1  Virus book, manuscript, c. 1985

Series V:  Professional Correspondence

Subseries A:  Subject Files

Box 7: 2  Borntraeger, 1964-1981
Box 7: 3  Brochure, 1984-1985
Box 7: 4  Encyclopedia Americana, 1983
Box 7: 5  Encyclopedia Britannica, 1965
Box 7: 6  Harvard, 1960-1963
Box 7: 8  Inquiries and replies, 1975-1985
Box 7: 9  Invitations, 1967-1986
Box 8: 1  Loans and research, 1982-1988
Box 8: 2  Magyarosy, A. C., 1978-1985
Box 8: 3  National Academy of Sciences, 1978-1985
Box 8: 4  No response or refusals, 1975-1985
Box 8: 5  Phytomorphology, 1965-1984
Box 8: 7  Requests for the use of Esau's research for articles and lectures, 1965-1982
Box 8: 8  Requests for the use of Esau's research in texts, 1960-1982
Box 8: 9  Shah, J. J., 1981-1982
Box 8: 10  Shepardson, S., 1978-1980
Box 9: 1  Verlag, Fischer, 1963-1968
Box 9: 2  Virus book, 1985-1987
Box 9: 3  Wisconsin, 1973-1981
Box 9: 4  Miscellany, 1973-1988

Subseries B:  Chronological Files

Box 9: 5  Correspondence, 1972
Box 9: 6  Correspondence, 1978-1987
Box 9: 7  Correspondence, 1980-1986
Box 10: 1  Hermans lawsuit, 1978-1980

Series VI:  Family

Subseries A:  Subject Files

Correspondence

Box 11: 1  Esau and her mother, 1954
Box 11: 2  Esau's parents' letters, 1882-1955
Box 11: 3  "Henry-Karbe-Schutte Briefe", c. 1920-1940
Box 11: 4  Personal, 1930-1980
Box 11: 5  Personal, 1980-1990
Box 11: 6  Personal family, 1955
Box 11: 7  Genealogy notes on the Esau family, n.d.
Box 11: 8  Important family documents (i.e. photocopies of naturalization papers, birth certificates, etc.), 1885-1981
Box 11: 9  Information regarding the death of Esau's parents, 1940, 1955
Box 11: 10  Newspaper clippings: Spreckles, 1984
Box 11: 11  Notes on Russia: Mennonites, n.d.
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Series VI: Family

Subseries A: Subject Files

Photos: Esau family, friends
Box 12: 1
1870-1920
Box 12: 2
1920-1952
Box 12: 3
1953-1973
Box 12: 4
1974-1990
Box 12: 5
Postcards, n.d.
Box 12: 6
Russian art memorabilia, n.d.
Box 12: 7
Scrapbook: John Esau (1859-1941, K. Esau's father), n.d.

Subseries B: Paul Esau

Scope and Content Note
1894-1987, Katherine Esau's brother

Box 12: 8
Newspaper clippings, 1986-1989
Box 12: 9
Offprints, 1933, 1956-1966
Photo albums
Box 13: 1
Esau family and friends, c. 1900-1920
World War I
Box 13: 2
German army in Russia
Box 13: 3
German navy
Box 13: 4
German army, "Westfront"
Box 13: 5
Photos: family, colleagues, places, postcards (Paul Esau), c. 1920s

Series VII: Confidential Files: Correspondence

Subseries A: Recommendations and References

Box 14: 1
A, 1953-?
Box 14: 2-3
B, 1951-1975
Box 14: 4-9
C, 1954-1981
Box 14: 10-12
D, 1975-1986
Box 14: 13-14
E, 1959-1988
Box 14: 15
F, 1953-1979
Box 14: 16-17
G, 1955-1984
Box 15: 1-3
H, 1951-1979
Box 15: 4-6
JKL, 1969-1978
Box 15: 7-13
M, 1952-1987
Box 15: 14
N, 1968-1973
Box 15: 15
P, 1955-1976
Box 15: 16-18
R, 1951-1979
Box 15: 19-22
S, 1951-1980
Box 16: 1-4
T, 1953-1985
Box 16: 5
W, 1950-1980

Subseries B: Reviews

Box 16: 6
Journal of Ultrastructure Research reviews, 1984-1987
Box 16: 7
National Science Foundation proposal reviews, 1973-1976
Box 16: 8
Manuscript reviews, 1971-1981