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## **Finding aid for the Lionel Menuhin Rolfe papers 0164**

USC Libraries Special Collections  
Doheny Memorial Library 206  
3550 Trousdale Parkway  
Los Angeles, California 90089-0189  
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**Language of Material:** English

**Contributing Institution:** USC Libraries Special Collections

**Title:** Lionel Menuhin Rolfe papers

**creator:** Rolfe, Lionel

**Identifier/Call Number:** 0164

**Physical Description:** 9 Linear Feet9 boxes

**Date (inclusive):** 1960s-2000s

**Abstract:** Articles (some photocopied), ca. 1964 - present, on Southern California literature, politics, entertainment, and Jewish subjects, by journalist Lionel Rolfe (b.1942); includes preliminary studies for Rolfe's Literary L.A., research materials, and related materials by writer Nigey Lennon (b. 1954).

**Storage Unit:** 6

**Storage Unit:** 5

**Storage Unit:** 4

**Storage Unit:** 3

**Storage Unit:** 9

**Storage Unit:** 8

**Storage Unit:** 7

**Storage Unit:** 10

**Storage Unit:** 1

**Storage Unit:** 2

**Preferred Citation**

[Box/folder# or item name], Lionel Menuhin Rolfe papers, Collection no. 0164, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

**Conditions Governing Access**

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. Advance notice required for access.

**Scope and Content**

The Lionel Rolfe Papers contains articles (some photocopied), ca. 1964 - present, on Southern California literature, politics, entertainment, and Jewish subjects, by journalist Lionel Rolfe (b. 1942). The collection also includes preliminary studies for Rolfe's book "Literary L.A.", research materials, and related materials by writer Nigey Lennon (b. 1954).

**Biographical note**

Bearing his famous middle name through a variety of posts and assignments, Lionel Menuhin Rolfe has worked for over thirty years as feature reporter, correspondent, columnist, and editor for an array of Southern California newspapers and magazines, while taking time to write several books that uniquely reflect his interests.

Rolfe was born in 1942 in Medford, Oregon, but grew up in Los Angeles on the West Side and in Long Beach, later attending L.A. City College and L.A. State University. His father, Benjamin Rolfe, was an attorney and Workers' Compensation Appeals Court Judge; his mother Yaltah was a concert pianist and the sister of the famed violinist-prodigy Yehudi Menuhin. Early memories of his musical household were enhanced by extended visits to the home of his maternal grandparents in Los Gatos, California. This led to a preoccupation with the Menuhin dynasty, which became the subject of his first book, *The Menuhins: A Family Odyssey*, in 1978, casting enough light into dark corners to leave behind an estrangement between the nephew and his celebrated uncle which never fully healed.

Meanwhile Rolfe spent his journeyman years writing for outlying papers in Pismo Beach, Turlock, and Newhall, before returning to L.A. and a stint with Los Angeles Free Press when it was still the counterculture paper-of-record. Rolfe's abiding interest in the Bohemian world carries forward from the "Freep" and the residual coffeehouse culture of the 70s.

Of greater permanance was the work Rolfe did at the end of the decade for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner. Writing regular feature articles for the Sunday magazine, he amassed a sizable file on the lives of bygone California authors, which later appeared in book form as his *Literary L.A.*, published by Chronicle Books in 1981. An alternative weekly, the *L.A. Reader*, was also home to lengthy investigative articles on political and cultural figures, as well as such favorite Rolfe topics as railroads and bookstores. Later in the '80s, and "still wrestling with his Jewish identity," Rolfe wrote syndicated articles for *Israel Today* and became editor of the city's second oldest newspaper, the *B'nai B'rith Messenger*.

In the early 90's Rolfe co-researched and co-wrote *Bread and Hyacinths: The Rise and Fall of Utopian Los Angeles*, on turn-of-the-century urban politics and the life of Socialist politician Job Harriman. With his wife Nigey Lennon, he went into

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publishing under the imprint "California Classic Books;" and he works today as Editor at City News Service, also writing the occasional op-ed piece for the San Francisco Chronicle and other papers. In 1998 Rolfe published *Fat Man on the Left*, an anthology of favorite essays and portraits, expanded into a retrospective of his work to date.

Beginning in the 1980s, Lionel Rolfe has placed copies of his journalistic work on an ongoing basis with the American Literature Collection at the University of Southern California.

#### **Conditions Governing Use**

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#### **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Typescripts

Journalism -- California -- Archival resources

American literature -- 20th century -- Archival resources

Clippings

Los Angeles (Calif.) -- History -- Archival resources

Rolfe, Lionel

Rolfe, Lionel -- Archives

Lennon, Nigey -- Archives

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box 1	<b>Articles 1964-1984</b>
box 2	<b>Articles 1985-</b>
box 3	<b>The Jewish Press; newspapers containing article by Rolfe 1985-</b>
box 4	<b>Unpublished typescripts, reviews, and publicity</b>
box 5	<b>Bread and Hyacinths. Research materials</b>
box 6	<b>The Sagebrush Bohemian (by Nigey Lennon). Research materials</b>
box 7	<b>Nigey Lennon miscellany</b>