Collection Summary
Title: Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1891-1979
Bulk Dates: 1932-1979
ID No.: MSS59469
Creator: Rosenwald, Lessing J. (Lessing Julius), 1891-1979
Extent: 28,000 items
Extent: 81 containers plus 2 oversize
Extent: 32.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81059469
Summary: Bibliophile, businessman, and philanthropist. Correspondence, subject files, speeches and writings, printed matter, and miscellany relating to Rosenwald's career with Sears, Roebuck & Company; his activities on behalf of various Jewish causes and his opposition to Zionism; his public service work with the National Recovery Administration and the War Production Board; his various charitable, educational, and cultural philanthropies; and his work as a bibliographer and collector of books and prints.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Adler, Cyrus, 1863-1940--Correspondence.
Billikopf, Jacob, 1883-1950--Correspondence.
Bowen, Catherine Drinker, 1897-1973--Correspondence.
Boyd, Julian P. (Julian Parks), 1903-1980--Correspondence.
Clark, Joseph S.--Correspondence.
Dilworth, Richardson, 1898-1974--Correspondence.
Donovan, William J. (William Joseph), 1883-1959--Correspondence.
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969--Correspondence.
Endicott, H. Wendell (Henry Wendell), 1880-1954--Correspondence.
Flexner, Abraham, 1866-1959--Correspondence.
Frankfurter, Felix, 1882-1965--Correspondence.
Gimbel, Ellis A., 1865-1950--Correspondence.
Goff, Frederick Richmond, 1916-1982--Correspondence.
Greenaway, Emerson, 1906--Correspondence.
Kollek, Teddy, 1911-2007--Correspondence.
Lazarus, Morris S. (Morris Samuel), 1888-1979--Correspondence.
Lazarus, Fred, 1884-1973--Correspondence.
Lehman, Herbert H. (Herbert Henry), 1878-1963--Correspondence.
Loeb, Jacob M. (Jacob Moritz), 1875-1944--Correspondence.
Mellon, Paul--Correspondence.
Menninger, William Claire, 1899-1966--Correspondence.
Morgenstern, Julian, 1881-1976--Correspondence.
Niebuhr, Reinhold, 1892-1971--Correspondence.
Ormandy, Eugene, 1899-1985--Correspondence.
Pepper, George Wharton, 1867-1961--Correspondence.
Ravdin, Isidore S. (Isidore Schwaner), 1894-1972--Correspondence.
Rockefeller, David, 1915-2017--Correspondence.
Rockefeller, John D., Jr. (John Davison), 1874-1960--Correspondence.
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962--Correspondence.
Rosenbach, Philip H. (Philip Hyman), 1863-1953--Correspondence.
Rosenwald, Edith Goodkind--Correspondence.
Rosenwald, William, 1903--Correspondence.
Solis-Cohen, D. Hays, -1978--Correspondence.
Stern, Horace, 1878-1969--Correspondence.
Stettinius, Edward R., Jr. (Edward Reilly), 1900-1949--Correspondence.
Strauss, Lewis L.--Correspondence.
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.
Weinberg, Sidney J. (Sidney James) 1891-1969--Correspondence.
Wolf, Edwin, 1911-1991--Correspondence.

Organizations
America First Committee.
American Council for Judaism.
Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons.
International Congress of Bibliophiles.
Julius Rosenwald Fund.
Library of Congress.
National Gallery of Art (U.S.)
Philip H. & A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation.
Sears, Roebuck and Company.
United States. War Production Board.

Subjects
Art museums--Washington (D.C.)
Bibliography.
Book collecting.
Charities.
Education--United States.
Emigration and immigration.
Industrial policy--United States.
Isolationism.
Jews--Charities.
Jews--Societies, etc.
National libraries--United States.
Parks--Pennsylvania--Jenkintown.
Prints--Collectors and collecting.
Refugees.
World War, 1939-1945--Economic aspects--United States.
Zionism.

Occupations
Bibliophiles.
Businessmen.
Philanthropists.

Acquisition Information
The papers of Lessing J. Rosenwald, bibliophile, businessman, and philanthropist, were given to the Library of Congress by the Rosenwald estate between 1980 and 1983. The material was received by the Rare Book and Special Collections Division and subsequently transferred to the Manuscript Division.
Processing History

The papers of Lessing J. Rosenwald were arranged and described by Michael McElderry in 1983. The collection and finding aid were revised by Michael McElderry with the assistance of Thomas Bigley in 2005.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. A recorded tape has been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Rosenwald Papers.

Related Material

An archive of the collection of illustrated books acquired by Lessing J. Rosenwald and now held by the Library of Congress Rare Book and Special Collections Division is described in a finding aid at https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/eadrbc.rb010001.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Lessing J. Rosenwald is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Lessing J. Rosenwald are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891, Feb. 10</td>
<td>Born, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-1911</td>
<td>Attended Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Married Edith Goodkind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-1926</td>
<td>Began collecting prints, drawings, and rare books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Executive vice president, Sears, Roebuck and Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-1932</td>
<td>Vice president, board of directors, and chairman, executive committee, Sears, Roebuck and Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-1939</td>
<td>Chairman, board of directors, Sears, Roebuck and Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-1948</td>
<td>Chairman, board of trustees, Julius Rosenwald Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Retired from Sears, Roebuck and Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1943</td>
<td>Director, Conservation Division, War Production Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Donated print collection to the National Gallery of Art and rare books to the Library of Congress Founder and chairman, American Council for Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Awarded Philadelphia Art Alliance Medal of Achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope and Content Note

The papers of Lessing Julius Rosenwald (1891-1979) span the period 1819-1979, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the years after 1932. The collection documents Rosenwald's activities as a civic leader, influential member of the Jewish community, and well-known collector of prints, drawings, and rare books and is organized in the following series: Correspondence; Subject File; Sears, Roebuck and Company; Speeches and Writings File; Miscellany; and Oversize. The papers reflect Rosenwald's interest in the resettlement of refugees following World War II, the sponsorship of social causes and organizations by the Rosenwald family philanthropies, and the advancement of scholarship through his work as a bibliographer and bookman. Documents collected by Rosenwald from the records of Sears, Roebuck and Company are also included.

Rosenwald's father, Julius, was a philanthropist and president of Sears, Roebuck and Company from 1910 to 1925. Having established a fund in his name in 1917 to further "the well-being of mankind," Julius Rosenwald contributed to the improvement of the educational and living standards of African Americans and was instrumental in establishing more than five thousand rural public schools in the South. Lessing took a similar role and was chairman of the board of trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund from the time of his father's death in 1932 until 1948, when the fund was terminated. The Correspondence series contains a letter to Reinhold Niebuhr, June 4, 1958, outlining Rosenwald's thoughts on the forces that motivated his father's philanthropy as well as correspondence exchanged between Lessing Rosenwald and his father. A small amount of administrative correspondence for the Julius Rosenwald Fund is also in the Subject File.

Rosenwald began his career with Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1911 as a shipping clerk, assumed positions of increasing responsibility while working his way through various departments of the firm, and, in 1920, moved from Chicago to Philadelphia as general manager of the company's first Eastern plant. In 1932 he assumed control of the company upon his father's death and became chairman of the board, retiring from that position in 1939 in favor of the company president, Robert Elkington Wood. Records in the Sears, Roebuck and Company series reflect Rosenwald's personal interest in corporate issues such as labor relations and merchandising. Despite his retirement, Rosenwald actively followed the affairs of the company, and the Correspondence series contains letters exchanged with Wood and other company managers and officers, including Thomas B. McCabe and James M. Barker.

In September 1940 Rosenwald joined the isolationist America First Committee. He soon became disenchanted with the anti-Semitic bias he perceived in several of its members, however, and, while still in accord with its objectives, resigned from the committee the following December. The Subject File contains material concerning Rosenwald's participation in this organization, including correspondence with Robert Elkington Wood, the committee's chairman, as well as reaction to a speech delivered by Charles A. Lindbergh at Des Moines, Iowa, September 11, 1941, in which the American Jewish community was accused of urging the country toward war.

Before his retirement from Sears, Rosenwald had already contributed time to public service. In 1934 he was appointed industry representative to the Philadelphia Regional Labor Board of the National Recovery Administration, and in October 1940 he held a position on the local Selective Service Board of Appeals. In August 1941 Rosenwald accepted a government appointment to serve as director of the Conservation Division within the War Production Board, a position he held until his resignation in 1943. Both the Correspondence series and the Subject File contain information on Rosenwald's contribution to labor arbitration and government service.

Julius Rosenwald had set the political and moral examples which his son would follow throughout his life. Lessing became a prominent member of the Jewish community and, like his father, was opposed to the Zionist movement. In 1943 Rosenwald founded the American Council for Judaism, an organization based on the proposition that Judaism was a religion of universal values, not a nationality. The council rejected the nationalist pattern of Zionism and was therefore opposed to the creation in Palestine of a national Jewish state. The Correspondence series contains material relating to activities of the council, including letters exchanged with members such as D. Hays Solis-Cohen, Morris S. Lazarone, Isadore M. Scott, Harry Snellenburg, Jr., and I. Edward Tonkon. Also in the series is correspondence from 1945 with Julian
Morgenstern, president of Hebrew Union College, concerning progressive Judaism and an exchange in 1947 with Felix Frankfurter defining Jewish nationalism.

Simultaneous with his duties as chairman of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, Rosenwald extended the family's tradition of philanthropy with the establishment of his own charitable foundation. Through his fund, Rosenwald continued to support the institutions and social agencies that his father had funded, including the University of Chicago, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (formerly the American Jewish Relief Committee). The Lessing Rosenwald Foundation also donated to a wide variety of other organizations as well as funding individual research projects. The Correspondence series and Subject File contain information on Rosenwald's support of these and other institutions.

In addition to his philanthropy, Rosenwald's sense of civic responsibility led to his involvement on the national and local level as a member or officer of many charitable, educational, and cultural organizations. Material relating to Rosenwald's civic activities can be found in the Correspondence series and the Subject File.

Rosenwald was particularly active in support of refugee relief following World War II and was a leading member of the Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons, an organization whose goal was the liberalization of refugee and immigration legislation. The Subject File contains extensive records on the refugee problem and Rosenwald's participation on the committee. Rosenwald held membership on other committees that also supported refugee programs and immigration reform. Material relating to Rosenwald's involvement in these organizations can be found in the Correspondence series.

In 1958 Rosenwald donated a fifty-four acre tract of his Alverthorpe estate in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, to the local community for use as a recreational park and cultural center. Through further gifts of land, the area was expanded to include over one-hundred acres. A large file detailing the development of Alverthorpe Park is located in the Subject File.

Lessing Rosenwald is perhaps best known as a collector of prints and rare books. In 1943 he donated his print and rare book collections to the National Gallery of Art and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. Having built a repository, Alverthorpe Gallery, at his estate in Jenkintown, Rosenwald retained physical custody of the collections during his lifetime, periodically transferring selections to Washington for exhibition, and ultimately giving 2,600 rare books and 5,000 reference books to the Library, and 22,000 original prints and 500 drawings to the National Gallery. The Subject File contains folders on the Library of Congress and the National Gallery of Art and includes material relating to Rosenwald-sponsored exhibitions, as well as a series of architectural blueprints of the Alverthorpe Gallery. Information regarding Rosenwald's activities with the International Congress of Bibliophiles and the Philip H. & A. S. W. Rosenbach Foundation is also in the Subject File. Further items concerning books and bookmen can be found in the Correspondence series. Other collections of Rosenwald material relating to his activities as a collector are located in the National Gallery of Art, which houses a separate correspondence file, and the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress, which has retained files documenting Rosenwald's rare book acquisitions.


**Organization of the Papers**

The collection is arranged in six series:

- Correspondence, 1899-1979
- Subject File, 1895-1979
- Sears, Roebuck and Company, 1892-1979
- Speeches and Writings File, 1931-1976
- Miscellany, 1819-1979
- Oversize, 1959-1964
# Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-28</td>
<td><strong>Correspondence, 1899-1979</strong></td>
<td>Letters received and copies of letters sent, correspondence between family members, telegrams, postcards, and miscellaneous enclosures. Arranged chronologically by year and therein alphabetically by name of correspondent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 29-59</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1895-1979</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence, memoranda, notes and working papers, reports, minutes of meetings, printed matter, architectural drafts, administrative papers, financial and legal documents, and miscellaneous enclosures. Arranged alphabetically by subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 60-68</td>
<td><strong>Sears, Roebuck and Company, 1892-1979</strong></td>
<td>Records kept by Rosenwald relating to Sears, Roebuck and Co., including corporate and customer correspondence, memoranda, financial and legal documents, administrative papers, printed matter, and miscellany. Arranged alphabetically by subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 68-74</td>
<td><strong>Speeches and Writings File, 1931-1976</strong></td>
<td>Handwritten and typewritten drafts, correspondence, printed copies, notes and working papers, proofs, and miscellaneous relating to articles, books, and speeches written by Rosenwald. Organized alphabetically by type of material. Articles and books are arranged alphabetically by title; speeches are arranged chronologically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 74-81</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1819-1979</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence between others, address books, appointment calendars, printed matter, notes, cards and invitations, and speeches and writings by others. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</td>
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<td>BOX OV 1-OV 2</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1959-1964</strong></td>
<td>Blueprints, cue cards, and a commemorative scroll. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</td>
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## Container List

<table>
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| BOX 1-28  | **Correspondence, 1899-1979**  
Letters received and copies of letters sent, correspondence between family members, telegrams, postcards, and miscellaneous enclosures.  
Arranged chronologically by year and therein alphabetically by name of correspondent. |

| BOX 1     | 1899-1936  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 2     | 1937-1939  
(4 folders)  
1940  
A-K |
| BOX 3     | L-Z and unidentified  
1941-1942  
(4 folders) |
| BOX 4     | 1943-1944  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 5     | 1945  
(3 folders)  
1946  
A-L  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 6     | M-Z and unidentified  
(2 folders)  
1947  
A-R  
(3 folders) |
| BOX 7     | S-Z and unidentified  
1948  
(4 folders) |
| BOX 8     | 1949  
(4 folders)  
1950  
A-G |
| BOX 9     | H-Z and unidentified  
(2 folders)  
1951  
A-R  
(3 folders) |
| BOX 10    | S-Z and unidentified  
1952  
(4 folders)  
1953  
A-F |
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### Correspondence, 1899-1979

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<td>BOX 27</td>
<td>1974-1976</td>
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<td>1977</td>
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<td>BOX 28</td>
<td>M-Z</td>
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<td>1978-1979, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 29-59</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1895-1979</strong></td>
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<td>Correspondence, memoranda, notes and working papers, reports, minutes of meetings, printed matter, architectural drafts, administrative papers, financial and legal documents, and miscellaneous enclosures.</td>
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<td>BOX 29</td>
<td><em>Alice in Wonderland</em> fund, 1946-1949</td>
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<td>Alverthorpe Gallery, Jenkintown, Pa.</td>
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<td>Architectural blueprints, 1938</td>
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<td>BOX 30</td>
<td>Nos. 59-185</td>
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<td>Bills and receipts, 1959-1962, 1975</td>
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<td>Bicycle trail and house, 1963-1964, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 31</td>
<td>Blueprints and maps, 1959-1964, undated <em>See also Oversize</em></td>
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<td>Construction specifications and contract documents, 1960</td>
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<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>BOX 33</td>
<td>Deed of gift, 1959-1963, 1969</td>
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<td>Miscellany, 1958-1977 <em>See also Oversize</em></td>
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<td>Newspaper clippings</td>
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<td>BOX 34</td>
<td>1967-1978</td>
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<td>Plans and surveys, 1961-1963</td>
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<td>Container</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 35</td>
<td>1948-1976 (18 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 36</td>
<td>1977-1979 (3 folders)</td>
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<td>BOX 37</td>
<td>1961-1966 (6 folders)</td>
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<td>BOX 38</td>
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<td>Committee for the Nation's Health</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1946-1950</td>
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<td>Committee to Defend America, 1940, undated</td>
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<td>Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, 1947-1948</td>
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<td>Crawford, Earl of, 1955-1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 40</td>
<td>Delegation appointed by the secretary of war to inspect Germany (&quot;Dabsowtig&quot;), reunion, 1949-1958, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donald F. Hyde Award, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, Philadelphia, Pa., 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation, 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Early Printed Books of the Low Countries&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arenberg collection, 1955-1960, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, 1959-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance and shipping, 1960-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miscellany, 1955-1960, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library of Congress exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, 1958-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miscellany, 1954-1959, undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subject File, 1895-1979

Container  Contents

Seventh International Congress of Bibliophiles, catalogue, Rosenwald exhibit See also Containers 44-45, International Congress of Bibliophiles, 1971

Drafts, 1971, undated

BOX 41
Notes and working papers, 1971, undated
Printed copy, 1971
Proofs, 1971
Eye operation, 1961
Goff, Frederick Richmond, dinner, 1972
Government service
Federal Advisory Council to Social Security Board, 1940-1942
Selective Service Board of Appeals, 1941-1942

BOX 42
Textile Industry Committee, 1941, undated
War Production Board
Correspondence, 1941-1944
Miscellany, 1941-1943, undated
Printed matter, 1941-1946
(2 folders)
Reports, 1943-1944
Resignation, 1942-1943

BOX 43
Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., gift, 1956
Honorary degrees
Beaver College, Glenside, Pa., 1966
Colby College, Waterville, Maine, 1966
La Salle College, Philadelphia, Pa., 1965-1966
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa., 1947
International Bibliophiles Association, 1972-1975, undated

BOX 44
International Congress of Bibliophiles See also Containers 40-41, Seventh International Congress of Bibliophiles
1965-1969
(3 folders)
1971
Correspondence

BOX 45
Miscellany
Printed matter
1979
Jenks, Donald, analysis of higher education, 1950, undated
Labor
Arbitration board for contract between Philadelphia, Pa., and the Municipal Workers Union, 1940
Hosiery industry arbitration, 1935
Mount Sinai Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa., arbitration, 1937-1938, undated
Subject File, 1895-1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 46    | Correspondence, 1933-1941  
           | Miscellany, 1933-1934, 1940-1941, undated |
|           | Library of Congress  
           | Birthday dinner, 1973  
           | Correspondence, 1945-1979 |
|           | "The Library of Congress; A Portrait of an American Institution," BBC film, 1979, undated  
           | Miscellany, 1948, 1975-1976 |
|           | Lions Club, dinner, 1961 |
|           | Medic Alert Foundation, 1962-1966, undated |
|           | Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kan., trip, 1957 |
|           | National Citizens for Eisenhower Congressional Committee, 1954 |
|           | National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
           | Cain, J. Frederic, 1975  
           | Correspondence, 1945-1974  
           | (2 folders) |
|           | Finance committee, 1974  
           | Minutes of meetings, 1972-1974 |
| BOX 48    | Miscellany, 1936, 1966-1974, undated |
|           | Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1954, undated |
|           | Ording, Aake, 1949-1951 |
| BOX 49    | Philip H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach Foundation |
|           | Accounts, 1953, 1974 |
|           | Correspondence, 1946-1979, undated  
           | (4 folders) |
| BOX 50    | Financial statements, 1952-1978  
           | (2 folders) |
|           | Inventories, 1964, undated |
|           | Legal documents, 1950-1954, 1979 |
|           | Minutes of meetings  
           | 1953-1970 |
| BOX 51    | 1971-1979  
           | (2 folders) |
|           | Philobiblon Club, Philadelphia, Pa., 1961-1979 |
| BOX 52    | Ravdin, Isidore S.  
           | Birthday celebration, 1964  
           | I. S. Ravdin Institute, Philadelphia, Pa., 1949-1959 |
|           | Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, Pa., 1947-1948, 1968, undated |
|           | Refugees  
           | Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons  
           | Bernard, William S., 1947-1950 |

Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers 13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 53    | Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land, 1948, undated  
            Contributions, 1947-1950  
            (2 folders)  
| BOX 54    | Correspondence, 1946-1951  
            (4 folders)  
|           | Financial data, 1946-1947, undated  
|           | Gottlieb, Leo, 1947  
|           | Harrison, Earl G., 1946-1951, undated  
| BOX 55    | Legislation  
            Emergency Displaced Persons Admission Act (H.R. 6163, Frank Fellows bill), 1947-1948, undated  
|           | Minutes of meetings  
|           | 1946-1947  
|           | 1948-1950  
| BOX 56    | Miscellany, 1947-1950, undated  
|           | Organization and personnel, 1946-1947, undated  
|           | Printed matter, 1938-1951, undated  
|           | (3 folders)  
| BOX 57    | Public relations, 1947-1950, undated  
|           | (2 folders)  
|           | Services for displaced persons, 1946-1948  
|           | United States Chamber of Commerce, 1948, undated  
|           | International Rescue Committee (IRC), 1951  
|           | Zellerbach Commission on the European Refugee Situation, 1958  
| BOX 58    | Rosenwald, Julius  
|           | Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1930-1948  
|           | One-hundredth birthday commemoration, 1962  
|           | Saturday Review advertisement, 1968  
|           | Secrest, Meryle, "Lessing Rosenwald, Collector of Great Prints, Rare Books," Smithsonian Magazine, 1972  
|           | Snellenburg, Harry, Jr., bookplate, 1964  
|           | Standata, computer microfilm systems, 1966, undated  
|           | Testimonial dinner, 1965  
|           | Correspondence  
|           | (2 folders)  
|           | Miscellany  
|           | Speeches  
|           | Traffic light request, 1977  
| BOX 58    | Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Ala., tribute to Julius Rosenwald, 1928-1932, 1963-1964, undated  
|           | United Jewish Appeal's Study Mission to Israel and Paris, 1970  

Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers
Subject File, 1895-1979

Container | Contents
---|---
| University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1947, 1964
| Valturio, Roberto, *De Re Militari*
| Correspondence, 1921, 1929-1940
| Miscellany, 1918, 1943, undated
| Research notes, 1923, 1930, undated
| (3 folders)
| Wedding anniversaries, 1973-1978
| (2 folders)
| Wistar Association
| 1953-1963
| 1964-1979
| (7 folders)
| Zinser, Richard H., 1938-1940

BOX 59

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sears, Roebuck and Company, 1892-1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Records kept by Rosenwald relating to Sears, Roebuck and Co., including corporate and customer correspondence, memoranda, financial and legal documents, administrative papers, printed matter, and miscellany.
| Arranged alphabetically by subject.

BOX 60-68

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Circulars, 1892-1902, 1908, 1931
| Contest, undated
| American Retail Federation, 1935-1938, undated
| "And the Pursuit of Happiness"
| Correspondence, 1936
| (2 folders)

BOX 60

| Miscellany, 1936, undated
| Chain stores, 1933, undated
| Consumer Cooperative Movement, 1935-1938, undated
| Correspondence
| 1928-1963, Jan.
| (3 folders)

BOX 61

| 1963, Feb.-1978, undated

| Customer mail, "freak file"
| 1896-1939
| (4 folders)

BOX 62

| 1940-1950, undated
| (2 folders)
| Emmet, Boris, and John E. Jeuck, *Catalogues and Counters*, 1950
| Finance
| Credit policies, 1934-1937
| Financial planning, 1937, undated
| Foreign stockholders, 1937

BOX 64

| Profit sharing, 1934-1940, 1951-1953, undated
| Stock offerings, 1936-1938
| Taxes, 1934-1937
| German merchandise, 1935-1939

Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers
Hawaii, 1935-1936, undated
Hercules Life Insurance Co., 1936-1938
Labor
  Labor Relations Associates
    Correspondence, 1938-1939
BOX 65
  Dinner, 1938
  Miscellany, 1938, undated
  Wood, Robert Elkington, dinner, 1938
  National Labor Relations Board
    Correspondence, 1935-1937, undated
    Miscellany, 1933-1935
    Union, 1933-1937, undated
Legal papers
  Dobie v. Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1935
  Jamaica Truck Tire Service v. Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1934
BOX 66
Macy's, 1930, 1938
Mail order, 1929, 1938-1939
Management and organization, 1929-1931, undated
Miscellany, 1897-1908, 1933-1942, 1952-1978, undated
  (2 folders)
BOX 67
  Modern Homes Department, 1932-1935
  New York, N.Y., office, 1935-1937, undated
  Newspaper clippings, 1906, 1928-1941. 1968, 1979, undated
  Personnel, 1931-1939
  Reports, 1946-1947, undated
  Rosenwald, Lessing J., retirement, 1938-1939
  Sachs, Josef, and Albin Johansson, dinner, 1938
    Correspondence
    Invitations
    Acceptances
BOX 68
  Regrets
  Miscellany
"Sears: A National Institution Serving the Nation," 1934
Sears International, 1936-1937
Securities and Exchange Commission, 1934-1938, undated
Woodward (author), history of Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1936
BOX 68-74  Speeches and Writings File, 1931-1976
  Handwritten and typewritten drafts, correspondence, printed copies, notes and working papers, proofs, and miscellany relating to articles, books, and speeches written by Rosenwald.
  Organized alphabetically by type of material. Articles and books are arranged alphabetically by title; speeches are arranged chronologically.
BOX 68
  Articles and other writings
    Annual report, extract, 1933


"Reminiscences of a Print Collector," *American Scholar*, 1973

Rosenbach, A. S. W., seventieth birthday, 1946

Scrap metal, untitled article, 1942

Terence, *Comoediae*

Correspondence, 1940-1942, 1949, 1963

Drafts, undated

Notes and working papers, 1940-1941, 1963, undated

Books

*The Florentine Fior di Virtu of 1491*, 1953

Book reviews, 1954

Correspondence, 1951-1954, undated

Distribution

Letters of acknowledgment, 1953-1954

(2 folders)

Mailing lists, 1953-1954, undated

Drafts, 1953, undated

Miscellany, 1947-1954, undated

Notes and work sheets, undated

Production material, undated

Proofs, undated

*The Nineteenth Book*, 1961

Correspondence, 1957-1961, 1975

Drafts, 1959, undated

(4 folders)

Miscellany, undated

Notes and working papers, undated

(2 folders)

Proofs, 1960

(4 folders)

*Recollections of a Collector*, 1976

Speeces, 1931-1971, undated

(2 folders)

Miscellany, 1819-1979

Correspondence between others, address books, appointment calendars, printed matter, notes, cards and invitations, and speeches and writings by others.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Address book and notes, undated

Appointment books, 1978-1979

(2 folders)

Appointment calendars
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 76    | 1940-1963 (3 folders)  
Awards and certificates, 1940-1945, 1974-1975, undated  
Biographical data, undated  
Cards and invitations, 1913, 1921, 1930-1979, undated (1 folder) |
| BOX 77    | 1964-1977 (3 folders)  
Correspondence between others, 1894-1972, undated  
Get-well cards and letters, 1968, 1978 (2 folders) |
| BOX 78    | Guest books, 1928-1939, 1979 (2 folders)  
Military records and discharge papers, 1918-1924, undated  
Newspaper clippings, 1915, 1921, 1928-1979, undated (2 folders) |
| BOX 79    | Notes and other items, 1929-1978 (2 folders)  
Photograph copy of *Doctrina Christiana*, undated  
Poems, 1938-1951, 1972, undated |
| BOX 80    | Printed matter, 1918, 1930-1979, undated (5 folders) |
Stock certificate of the Belmont and Easton Turnpike Road Co., 1819  
Travel calendars and itineraries, 1939-1940, 1956-1959, undated  
Writings by others, 1925, 1941, 1962-1970, undated |
| BOX OV 1-OV 2 | **Oversize, 1959-1964**  
Blueprints, cue cards, and a commemorative scroll.  
Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed. |
| BOX OV 1  | Subject File  
Alverthorpe Park, Jenkintown, Pa.  
Blueprints and maps, 1959-1964, undated ([Container 31](#)) |
| BOX OV 2  | Miscellany, 1964 ([Container 33](#)) |