



Rockefeller University records, History of the University, Rockefeller Foundation

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Rockefeller Archive Center

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Summary Information

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Biographical/Historical note

The work of The Institute concentrated on basic research. The hope was that the discoveries might, in the long run, be applied to the public welfare, but the basic purpose was to provide an environment for exploratory original research by individuals under no compulsion to produce immediately useful results.

Scientific work of The Institute was first carried on through grants-in-aid made to researchers in scattered laboratories. This program decreased as the Institute's own laboratories developed. July 1, 1904 temporary quarters were rented at 127 East 50th Street, New York and work began there about Nov. 1, 1904. Those recruited for the first staff were Eugene L. Opie, Samuel J. Meltzer, Hideyo Noguchi and Joshua Edwin Sweet. Added to the staff very shortly were Phoebus Aaron Theodor Levene and John Auer. Alexis Carrel joined The Institute in 1906 and Jacques Loeb in 1910. On June 13, 1907 the Board of Directors voted to establish various classes of association with The Institute. The classes were: Member (for an indefinite period); Associate Member (for five year periods; amended in 1911 Rules to "a term of years"); Associate of The Institute; Fellow of The Institute; Scholar of The Institute (which

was dropped in the Rules amended 1928). The first Members of The Institute were Simon Flexner, S.J. Meltzer, E.L. Opie, and P.A.T. Levene.

In April 1906 the Central Laboratory with animal house and power house, located on York Avenue and 66th Street were ready for use. Simon Flexner, the first Director of the laboratories had been unanimously elected Director of The Institute on Oct. 25, 1902. However, not until a meeting on Jan. 17, 1920 did the Board make clear its sense that these were two offices, both held by Simon Flexner. The Office of Director of The Institute was clearly added in amended Rules Oct. 18, 1924. Simon Flexner was Director of The Institute and Director of the laboratories until his retirement in 1935. He was succeeded in both offices by Herbert S. Gasser, 1935-1953.

In 1910, at the York Avenue site a Hospital was opened so that the investigations of the Laboratories could be supplemented by the study of certain diseases as they actually occur in man. The Rules for the Scientific Directors as adopted on Jan. 21, 1911, provided that The Institute be comprised of two coordinate departments, Laboratories and Hospital. Rufus Cole was the first Director of the Department of the Hospital and continued in this post until his retirement in 1937 when he was succeeded by Thomas M. Rivers. The Hospital accepted only a limited number of patients, limited further to classes of diseases under study in the Hospital laboratories. The By-Laws of the Corporation provided that The Institute make no charge to persons treated at the Hospital for professional care rendered or for board and lodging. Classes of appointment to the Hospital were Physician, Assistant Physician, Resident Physician, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. In 1946 an amendment to the Rules provided that the titles be as follows: Physician-in-Chief to the Hospital; Physician to the Hospital; Assistant Physician to the Hospital; Resident Associate Physician; Senior Assistant Physician; Superintendent of the Hospital; Assistant Superintendent of the Hospital.

In 1914, at a location about three miles from Princeton, N.J. with Theobald Smith as Director, a new Department of Animal Pathology was established. In June 1915 the Rules were amended to make this coordinate with the Departments of Laboratories and Hospital. When Theobald Smith retired in 1930 Carl TenBroeck became Director of the Department which in 1931 was expanded by the appointment of Louis O. Kunkel who headed the new division of plant pathology into the Department of Animal and Plant Pathology.

The Director of each Department was appointed by the Board of Scientific Directors, and the Director of The Institute by the Corporation. In the different departments separate laboratories were organized under the guidance of a Member or Associate Member. The broad divisions of scientific fields varied from time to time in accordance with scientific developments and the interests of the Members, but always with consultation, approval and direction of the Board of Scientific Directors.

In 1953, after the retirement of Herbert S. Gasser, an extensive reorganization was undertaken. Thomas M. Rivers, who served for two years as Vice-President of the Corporation and at the same time, Director of the Laboratories, Director of the Department of the Hospital and Physician-in-Chief to the Hospital retired in 1955. The position of Director of The Institute was abolished and also the organization into departments.

On and after November 19, 1954 when the Charter of the Corporation was amended so that the Corporation became part of the University of the State of New York The Institute had the power to confer degrees. On June 27, 1958 by amendment to the Charter the corporate name was changed to The

Rockefeller Institute and on May 27, 1965 the Charter of The Institute was amended in its entirety and the name changed to The Rockefeller University.

The University is organized into laboratories, each headed by one or two senior scientists rather than into categorical departments. The scientific work of the laboratories is under the direction of the President.

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Biographical / Historical

The Rockefeller Foundation, the largest of Rockefeller philanthropic enterprises was established by a deed of trust in 1910 and chartered by the New York State Legislature and incorporated in 1913. Four members of the Board of Trustees of The Rockefeller Institute, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Frederick T. Gates, Simon Flexner and Starr J. Murphy were among the first trustees of The Foundation. Jerome D. Greene resigned as General Manager of The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in 1912 to join Mr. Rockefeller's personal staff and was named in the act of incorporation as one of the first trustees of The Foundation. He became the first secretary of the Board and carried administrative responsibility for The Foundation until January 1917.

By 1918 John D. Rockefeller's gifts to The Foundation amounted to almost One Hundred and Thirty-Three Million Dollars. Until 1917 John D. Rockefeller reserved the right to designate annually up to Two Million Dollars of the income, to such organizations as he might elect. During the early years, The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research received substantial grants from The Foundation including additional amounts needed to make up budget deficits, grants for work in poliomyelitis, for the establishment of the Department of Animal Pathology, for War Research and Relief Fund, for the War Demonstration Hospital, for extra compensation for Rockefeller Institute employees, for stipends or scholarships to the School of Hygiene and Public Health at Johns Hopkins University and for extra grants for specific projects administered through The Institute.

In 1934, in a letter from Max Mason to Mr. Fosdick for the Board of Trustees of The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, RIMR was informed of a new flexibility in the use of funds given by The Rockefeller Foundation so that funds originally given for endowments could be used for other purposes.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for scholarly research.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Medical sciences
- Medical education
- Life sciences
- Cell and biomolecular sciences
- Biology -- Research
- Operations management
- Medical research
- Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research
- Greene, Jerome D.
- Rockefeller, John D. (John Davison)
- Rockefeller University
- Rockefeller Foundation

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Materials requiring specialized equipment for access (film, audio, video, slides) may be restricted from scholarly research dependent on availability of the applicable equipment.

Brittle or damaged items, or materials otherwise in need of preservation care, may be restricted from scholarly research at the discretion of the RAC Head of Archival Services/RAC Head of Reference.

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Jerome D. Greene - Correspondence, 1912 October 11-1916 February 18	box 1	folder 1

Scope and Contents note

Primarily letters between Henry James and Jerome D. Greene dealing with development of business procedures for The Institute; establishment of an insurance fund for buildings and employees; recommendations to develop annual reports; suggestions for consideration of retiring allowances; matters in connection with aid given Serbian Red Cross (W.W. I) and citation of gratitude to John D. Rockefeller.

Includes some correspondence with T. Mitchell Prudden concerning construction matters and some with Herman Goepper, bursar, during absence of Henry James while on War Relief Commission for The Rockefeller Foundation.

Items of particular interest listed below.

Arrangement note

Arranged in chronological order.

File Plan note

Former Classification: I 410

Letter from J.D. Greene to Herman Goepper explaining manner of utilizing \$20,000 appropriated by Rockefeller Foundation for medical purposes in connection with the war. Appropriation made in the name of the Institute, 1915 February 26

Handwritten report to Jerome D. Greene giving chronology of Garcia case, 1915 March 16

Memorandum on European War Relief work written by Henry James to J.D. Greene and necessary considerations if RF is to engage in this area in a large way, 1915 November 15

Copies of communications of rebuttal from the Austro-Hungarian Government regarding transmission of typhus by its army, 1915 November 16

Memo from Harper D. Topping of proposed account of War Relief activities of The Rockefeller Foundation sent to Henry James for revision, 1915 December 27

Letter from Jerome D. Greene for the Rockefeller Foundation to Henry James notifying him of the appropriation of \$1,000,000 to The Rockefeller Institute to proceed with building and development of staff for the Department of Animal Pathology, 1915 December 30

"The Rockefeller Foundation Story" Collier's, 1951

Exhibit Book, 1915 March 2-1934 May 29, 1940, 1947

box 1

folder 2

Arrangement note

Arranged in chronological order.

File Plan note

Former Classification: I 411

Copy of Resolution from minutes of meeting signed by J.D. Greene appropriating \$20,000 to The Rockefeller Institute for wartime services in line of practical application of previous work or for medical research, 1915 March 2

box 1

folder 2

Copy of Resolution from minutes of meeting signed by J.D. Greene clarifying terms of \$2,550,000 gift made to Rockefeller Institute as per John D. Rockefeller letter of 1914 June 24, 1915 May 26

box 1

folder 2

Copy of minute making appropriation to Institute to cover budget deficit and additional amount for Hospital remodeling, 1916 June 28

box 1

folder 2

Rockefeller Foundation financial report The Philanthropic Boards established by John D. Rockefeller, 1916 October 1

box 1

folder 2

Copy of docket of Foundation meeting at which \$200,000 is requested by Institute to equip and build 100-bed hospital for teaching of Carrel-Dakin method of surgical treatment of wounds, 1917 March 23

box 1

folder 2

Copy of extract from minute of meeting of Executive Committee of Foundation recommending \$25,000 appropriation to the Institute for War Relief and Research for year 1917, 1917 April 3

box 1

folder 2

Copy of letter from Edwin R. Embree, secretary of Foundation informing Institute of Foundation grant of \$25,000 for War Research and Relief for 1917, \$25,000 for serum production and \$10,000 for teaching supplies, 1917 April 10

box 1

folder 2

Transcript of votes alluded to in Embree's letter 1917 December 1, 1917 December 1

box 1

folder 2

Copy of letter from Embree creating a conference committee on Treasurer's office, 1917 December 7

box 1

folder 2

Copy of letter from Institute to Foundation showing state of finances as regards government war work undertaken on basis of Foundation appropriations, 1917 December 4

box 1

folder 2

Report and statements by the Princeton Improvement Committee, 1917 November 30	box 1	folder 2
Copy of minutes of meeting of Executive Committee of Foundation dealing with special items to be considered for appropriation for RIMR including War Work abroad, poliomyelitis, war work in U.S.; endowment; buildings and equipment; special compensation for employees, budget deficit; serum preparation, military instruction, 1917 December 19	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from George E. Vincent to Henry James asking for budget estimates of requests the Institute expects to make from Foundation for 1918/1919, 1918 January 30	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from Henry James to George E. Vincent covering tentative budget estimates 1918/1919, 1918 February 12	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from Embree listing Resolutions of appropriations to Institute made at Foundation annual meeting including War Demonstration Hospital, Serum production, War Research and Relief, 1918 February 28	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from Embree to Simon Flexner dealing with action of Foundation regarding request for support by New York Academy of Medicine for research project on nutrition of children, 1918 March 22	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from Simon Flexner to Embree acknowledging letter of March 22, 1918 March 28	box 1	folder 2
Letter from L. Emmett Holt to Embree reporting action of Board of Scientific Directors replying to letter March 22 stating RIMR not prepared to enter into nutrition study, 1918 April 29	box 1	folder 2
Includes earlier correspondence between Foundation and Institute regarding appropriation to cover Institute deficit for 1918-1919, 1918 May 23	box 1	folder 2
Letter from Embree to Simon Flexner regarding additional appropriations to meet deficit, 1918 June 6	box 1	folder 2
Letter from Embree to L. Emmett Holt regarding appropriation for instruction of military and naval surgeons, 1918 June 26	box 1	folder 2
to 1919 May 8 correspondence between Foundation and Institute dealing with related additional appropriations, 1918 September 30	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from Board of Scientific Directors to George E. Vincent suggesting that the Foundation not support study of surgical treatment of TB in bones at a French site originally suggested by Alexis Carrel, 1918 October 21	box 1	folder 2
Letter to E.B. Smith from Foundation authorizing portion of appropriation to be used for restoring grounds after removal of War Demonstration Hospital, 1920 May 3	box 1	folder 2
Copy of authorization for studies in animal nutrition, 1920 June 12	box 1	folder 2
Greetings from Rockefeller Foundation to Dr. Wickcliffe Rose on occasion of his resignation from various Boards, 1923 May 23	box 1	folder 2

Docket of meeting on Peking Union Medical College, 1926 April 16	box 1	folder 2
Copy of letter from Rockefeller Foundation to RIMR to inform recipients of Foundation grants and endowments of Foundation's new policy regarding grants and endowments adopted April 13, 1932, 1934 May 29	box 1	folder 2
Pamphlet entitled "Remarks of the retiring chairman, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. at the meeting of the Rockefeller Foundation, April 3, 1940", 1940	box 1	folder 2
Contract between RIMR and the Foundation for space use by the International Health Division, 1947 June 25	box 1	folder 2