



Rockefeller University records, History of the University, Endowments

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Rockefeller Archive Center

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical/Historical note	3
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
File Plan note	5
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

Deeds, agreements, correspondence, reports, drawings, photographs.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Arranged by subject and in chronological order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

File Plan note

Former Classification: I 415

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

Custodial History

This collection has been made up of material from many sources, some of which was originally kept in the Treasurer's office with other Rockefeller philanthropies and some which was later kept in the business manager's office and passed from Edric Smith, Waldo Flinn and finally reached the archives when Roger Elliot's office was discontinued. The material deals with the acquisition, in stages, of the various parcels of land which make up The Rockefeller University Campus from 63rd Street to 68th Street and from York Avenue to the East River Drive. Also included is material dealing with the various negotiations with the City of New York in order to achieve certain street closings.

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open for research. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Cell and biomolecular sciences
- Medical education
- Biology -- Research
- Medical sciences
- Life sciences
- Medical research
- Operations management

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Endowments, 1868-1985		
Title/Description	Instances	
1868-1903	box 1	folder 1

Photographic reproduction of map of Louvre Farm as of December 1868 made by City Surveyor, 1868-1903	box 1	folder 1
Survey by Geo. C. Hollwith as of May 1, 1903 of 64th to 67th Streets showing elevations above East River from river to Avenue A. Shows also building locations in area, 1868-1903	box 1	folder 1
Six drawings showing elevations and plot plan from 64th to 67th and marking original plot of RIMR, 1868-1903	box 1	folder 1
1904-1940		
Deeds, agreements and indentures covering this period. Item listing in folder, 1904-1940	box 1	folder 2
1903-1939		
Correspondence relating to deeds, 1903-1939	box 1	folder 3
1903-1935; 1950-1954		
Hardenbrook Cemetery in 66th Street, 1903-1935;1950-1954	box 1	

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence, drawings, rubbings and photographs of the grave markers found in 66th St. Correspondence indicates need to avoid desecration; to preserve markers and right of access for family descendents. Extracts from Minutes and legal file on search of precedents for abandoned and neglected cemeteries. Includes correspondence on right-of-way over easterly half of 66th St. Correspondence with Henry C. Levines, a Hardenbrook descendent.

1903-1904

Closing of 66th Street, 1903-1904	box 1
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Scope and Contents note

Dealing with bills introduced in New York Assembly and Senate to insure that no roads are opened from Exterior Street to Avenue A on East 66th and East 67th Streets. Consists of correspondence between Victor J. Dowling, Charles Leopold (Legislators) and Starr J. Murphy. Typescript carbon; holograph; telegrams.

1908-1910

Closing of 65th Street, 1908-1910	box 1
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Scope and Contents note

In building of the Hospital need to clarify ownership and City rights in 65th Street arose. Included in this folder is a letter to Christian Herter from York & Sawyer, architects about the placement of Hospital building on the property. The street was closed from Avenue A on Oct. 8, 1909

but most of the correspondence deals with the sale of the road bed from the City to Mr. Rockefeller and to The RIMR. Letters are from Simon Flexner, Hermann M. Biggs, L. Emmett Holt, Title Guarantee and Trust Co., Commissioners of New York City Sinking Fund, Comptroller of City of New York. Deed to road bed is dated 1910 July 14 but the City included some restrictive clauses.

1911-1912

Title to 65th Street Road bed, 1911-1912

box 1

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence between John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Starr J. Murphy, F.T. Gates, Title Guarantee and Trust Company relating to removal of title restrictions in bed of 65th Street, and sale to the RIMR of additional parcels of the property in terms of the future vision which F.T. Gates has of the Institute needs and growth.

1913-1916

Correspondence with Henry James, 1913-1916

box 1

Scope and Contents note

Concerned with possible use of unused portions of Institute grounds for playground purposes.

1915-1923

Between 67th and 68th Streets. North lot, 1915-1923

box 2

folder 1

Scope and Contents note

1915 correspondence indicates Presbyterian Hospital desired to sell this plot between 67th and 68th Streets. Possible uses were explored as indicated in reports from Haven Emerson, Frank H. Mann, Bailey B. Burritt and Mary E. Wadley. Land was used temporarily for storage of construction materials by Institute which accepted responsibility for an accident to a small boy on the land. In February 1920 The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research acquired the North Lot by gift and leases were arranged with three tenants: Dean, Sheppers, Conlon and plans were made to convert North lot to a playground. Includes photographs of plot before and after Institute improvements. Includes correspondence with heirs of Patrick Dean who served as temporary caretaker on plot.

1906-1907, 1926-1927

Closing of 67th Street, 1926-1927

box 2

folder 2

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence with Chauncey Belknap, Thomas M. Debevoise in negotiations with the City of New York in effort to discontinue for public use of 67th Street. Negotiations were protracted and difficult and included are signed typescript letters from Alfred E. Smith, governor and other officials. Closing was finally achieved with reservations regarding vehicular and sewer easements in the road bed. Resulted also in the closing of 300 feet of 66th Street to Avenue A.

Included is 1906-1907 correspondence between L. Emmett Holt Starr J. Murphy, John F. Doyle and James U. Norris about paving of 67th Street to facilitate trucking use by Institute.

1927-1928

Renaming of Avenue A, 1927-1928

box 2

folder 3

Scope and Contents note

Consists of notes on various committee meetings dealing with neighborhood improvement and typescript signed letters from Jerome D. Greene, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., C.R. Stoddard, Trevor Arnett, Francis Blake; telephone message from F.T. Gates, typescript copy of letter from W.H. Welch on a new name for Ave. A. Includes some 1947-1948 items about street numbering and zoning.

1921-1924

Nuisance along Exterior Street, 1921-1924

box 2

folder 4

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence with G.C. and A.E. Wheeler, civil engineers and city surveyors related to removing nuisance of Trinity Coal Co. on Exterior Street.

Includes blueprint of area showing portions under control of Dock Commissioner; typescript signed letter from John D. Rockefeller, 3rd reporting interview with Gov. Smith on dock situation. Matter settled with RIMR bearing costs of moving coal company to new location. Includes 1923 March 30 report from Col Woods to John D. Rockefeller on The Water Front of The Rockefeller Institute. Includes 1928 photograph of Exterior Street.

1904-1934

Exterior Street, 1904-1934

box 2

folder 5

Scope and Contents note

Early correspondence deals with location of retaining wall at East boundary of Institute grounds and possible

encroachment upon John D. Rockefeller land; possible encroachment on city property and completion of work on retaining wall.

Memoranda of meetings arranged by First Ave.
Association on Exterior Street dump at 73rd-74th Streets.

1935-1939

Exterior Street, 1935-1939

box 2

folder 6

Scope and Contents note

Includes regulations and legislation on commercial use of East River bulkheads and changes in regulations in view of road building. Renaming of Exterior Street from 63rd to 80th Street to Marie Curie Avenue.

Correspondence, reports, drawings from G.C. and A.E. Wheeler on changes along Exterior Street, including restrictions on use of bulkheads and removal of coal towers and high derricks. Reports on plans for East River Drive 14th to 32nd Streets; 49th to 54th; 54th to 61st Street segments and tunnel under Sutton Place. Includes drawings, excerpts from The City Record and blue prints. Improvements on 50 feet of Marginal Street from 64th to 70th with trees, sidewalks and benches.

1938 June 23 Memorandum Regarding East River Drive: summaries of meetings on history, building lines, early contractors, and city representatives on problems in laying out drive, sidewalk needs, coal delivery needs. Final decisions of extending East River Drive through portion named Marie Curie Avenue and connecting southerly and northerly portions.

1927-1931

68th Street agreement with New York Hospital, 1927-1931

box 3

folder 1

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence between E. Sheldon, President of Society of New York Hospital, F.T. Gates, Business Manager for RIMR, Wilson Powell for New York Hospital, Arthur Woods, Winthrop Aldrich, Chauncey Belknap and Thomas Debevoise. Includes memoranda of meetings; New York City Board of Estimate and Apportionment Calendars; 1929 agreement between New York Hospital and RIMR which was replaced in 1931. New York Hospital in asking for closing of 69th Street confused arrangements for 68th Street which was finally closed separately.

1928-1930

63rd-64th Street lot, 1928-1930

box 3

folder 2

Scope and Contents note

November 1928-December 1930 dealing with closing of 64th Street and closing of 68th Street. Consists of reports from G.C. Wheeler on City of New York proceedings following transfer at a \$10.00 fee from John D. Rockefeller to RIMR of block 63rd to 64th between York and Exterior Street and offer by John D. Rockefeller to give to city Fort Tryon land, and RIMR offer to cede to City strip of land at Exterior Street between 63rd and 64th for extension of Exterior Street. Includes photographs, blueprints, City Calendar and correspondence with Wm. A. White, real estate management firm for tenants on 63rd-64th Street lots.

1931

64th Street and 68th Street closings, 1931

box 3

folder 3

Scope and Contents note

2 folders and includes scattered items 1933, 1935, 1938-1958. Correspondence between John D. Rockefeller, Jr. or his office, Thomas M. Debevoise, Chauncey Belknap, G.C. and A.E. Wheeler, consulting engineers, and E.B. Smith. Includes blueprints, drawings, Calendars of meetings of New York City Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Includes second agreement dated 1931 August 3 between City of New York, Society of New York Hospital and The Rockefeller Institute cancelling agreement on 68th Street made in 1929 February 20.

Exhibits A, B, C, used in presenting proposals of land gifts to New York City from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and agreements between the Rockefeller Institute, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Metropolitan Museum of Art and City of New York

box 3

folder 4

1931-1932

63rd-64th Street lot, 1931 January-1932 April

box 4

folder 1

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence dealing with clauses in the city conveyances in beds of 64th and 68th Streets reserving subsurface easement for possible future transit lines and vehicular traffic. Includes 1931 May 12 Memorandum of E.B. Smith meeting with Consolidated Gas Co. regarding building erected on lot on south side of 63rd Street east of York. Conveyance of 64th Street with understanding that it be kept open and available for public use until Exterior Street extension completed. Surrender of leases on bulkhead.

1932

63rd-64th Street lot, 1932 May-December

box 4

folder 2

Scope and Contents note

Reports by G.C. and A.E. Wheeler (Civil Engineers and City Surveyors) all dealing with improvements along Exterior Street, 64th to 63rd Streets, and 63rd to Exterior Street from York Avenue. Includes working blueprints, diagrams and drawings and photographs as of Oct. 11, 1932.

Reports by G.C. and A.E. Wheeler (Civil Engineers and City Surveyors) all dealing with improvements along Exterior Street, 64th to 63rd Streets, and 63rd to Exterior Street from York Avenue. Includes working blueprints, diagrams and drawings and photographs as of Oct. 11, 1932.

1933-1936

63rd-64th Street lot, 1933-1936

box 4

folder 3

Scope and Contents note

Question of tax levy on unused portion of 63rd-64th Street lot. Use of waterfront at East River and 63rd Street as park for children and mothers. Photograph, correspondence with Robert Moses, Jay Downer, John D. Rockefeller, 3rd Chauncey Belknap to arrange use of lot as park from young children and mothers. Further exchange and agreement for playground use with Park Department. Question of transfer to Park Department of Dock area.

1937-1958

63rd-64th Street lot, 1937-1958

box 4

folder 4

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence with Carter and Jones (Insurance) Commissioner of Parks, Robert Moses, Chauncey Belknap, attorney, E.B. Smith, Business Manager, dealing with use of the area as a playground and final cancellation of agreement in 1957-58. Includes material and plans to extend East River Drive from Sutton Place to north link.

1972-1973

Memorandum from R.H. Sheldon to Dr. C.E. Sunderlin with inventory list of documents (supplied by Rockefeller Family Archives) relating to acquisition, over the years, of Rockefeller University property, 1972/1973

box 4

folder 5

1947 plot plan of The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, 1947 December 24

box 4

folder 6

Scope and Contents note

Plot Plan, Architects: Coolidge Shepley Bulfinch & Abbott, Boston.

Immediate Source of Acquisition:**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Addition as of April 8, 1981. Given to RU Archives on April 7, 1981 by Mr. David J. Lyons, Vice President and Controller, who in turn received it from a Mrs. Marion R. Netter.

1981 November 6

box 4

folder 6

Scope and Contents note

Copy of letter from Orin Lehman, Commissioner, State of New York, Parks and Recreation, 6 November 1981, to President, Rockefeller University, re listing of Founder's Hall on the New York State Register of Historic Places.

Custodial History:**Custodial History**

Addition, November 1981.

Items and legends used in RAC exhibit for the RU Board of Trustees, 5 May 1985, on gifts of land to the University for John D. Rockefeller, Sr. and Jr., circa 1902-1931

box 5

folder 1

Purchase of land from John P. and Virginia M. Grady in Pleasant Valley, contiguous to Field Research Center: W.H. Griesar memo, 15 November 1985, original title policy, original deed, lawyers' closing statement on purchase, 1985

box 5

folder 2

Immediate Source of Acquisition note:**Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Received 19 November 1985 from William H. Griesar.

Deeds, 1904-1961

box 6

folder 1

Correspondence - Gifts and Policies of JDR, 1907-1921

box 6

folder 2

Correspondence - JDR and JDR, Jr., 1914-1916

box 6

folder 3

Correspondence - Real Estate Rights and Privileges, 1906-1910

box 6

folder 4

Loan Agreement and Grant Documents, Alfred E. Mirsky, 1978

box 6

folder 5

Plan for Separation Benefits: Princeton Employees, 1948-1953

box 6

folder 6

RIMR Insurance Policy, 1958

box 6

folder 7

TIAA Agreements, 1923-1931

box 6

folder 8

Employee Bonds, 1958-1964

box 6

folder 9

Performance Bonds, Grants, Deeds, 1966-1974	box 6	folder 10
Burton Maddock Charitable Remainder Unitrust, 1981	box 6	folder 11