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Guide to the Albert Einstein Collection 1921-1954



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.EINSTEINA
Title	Einstein, Albert. Collection
Date	1921-1954
Size	0.25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Albert Einstein (1879-1955) Nobel Prize-winning theoretical physicist The collection includes correspondence and manuscripts written and received by Einstein from 1921 to 1954, the largest portion of which are letters and manuscripts exchanged Einstein and University of Chicago philosopher Charles Wegener in association with the translation and publication of "Physics and Reality,"

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Einstein, Albert. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Albert Einstein was born on March 14, 1879, in Ulm, Germany. His parents were Hermann Einstein, a salesman and engineer, and Pauline Koch. Einstein grew up in Munich, and was educated initially at a Catholic elementary school (though the Einsteins were non-observant Ashkenazi Jews) and continued his education at the Luitpold Gymnasium until he left Germany seven years later. After failing the entrance examinations for the Swiss Federal Polytechnic (though receiving exceptional marks in the physics and mathematics portions of the exam), Einstein completed his secondary schooling at the Argovian cantonal school in Switzerland. He went on to gain entrance into the Zurich Polytechnic at the age of seventeen (1896), and graduated with his teaching diploma in 1900. It was there that Einstein also met his future wife, Mileva Maric.

After his schooling, Einstein worked in a Swiss patent office until 1908. In 1905 Einstein completed his thesis and was awarded a PhD by the University of Zurich, and, that same year, published four groundbreaking papers in the *Annalen der Physik* journal. As a result, 1905 is often referred to as Einstein's "annus mirabilis," or "miracle year." In 1908, he was appointed as a lecturer at the University of Bern, associated professor in 1909, full professor at the Charles-Ferdinand University in 1911, professor of theoretical physics at the ETH Zurich from 1912-1914, and finally the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics and professor at Humboldt University of Berlin in 1914 in his native Germany. In 1916, he became the president of the German Physical Society.

Einstein's genius earned his great admiration around the world, confirmed by his travels abroad in the early 1920s. During that time, he was also awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics, though he was unable to attend the ceremony. In the early 1930s, Einstein travelled to the United States. Upon learning of the Nazi's rise to power in Germany, Einstein knew he would be unable to return to his homeland. After renouncing his German citizenship, he took a position at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. His affiliation with the organization would last until his death in 1955.

Because of his knowledge of physics, Einstein took a particular political interest in the dangers of nuclear weaponry. It is suggested that it was Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt, warning of the dangers of a nuclear-armed Germany, which urged the U.S. to engage in its own nuclear research. Einstein was also a committed antiracist and joined the NAACP in Princeton. As the years progressed, Einstein became involved in a number of political and social issues, writing papers critical of capitalism and becoming involved in Zionist movements. Einstein was granted U.S. citizenship on 1940.

Einstein died on April 17, 1955, from the rupture of an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Scope Note

The Albert Einstein Collection includes correspondence and manuscripts written and received by Einstein.

The largest portion of the collection is Einstein's correspondence with Charles Wegener, a philosopher at the University of Chicago, regarding the translation and publication of the article "Physics and Reality." Included with the letters are two drafts of the article with corrections made by Einstein before its publication.

Also included is placecard for an event Einstein attended in May of 1921, probably in association with the series "Four Lectures on the Theory of Relativity," held at Princeton University during

Einstein's first visits to the U.S. The collection also features a 1946 letter sent by Einstein as Chairman of the Emergency Committee for Atomic Scientists, founded by Einstein and Leo Szilard to warn the public of the dangers associated with the development of nuclear weaponry. The letter is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. John Paul Welling in Chicago and discusses the absence of the Wellings from a conference at Princeton. The letter is typed on stationery of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists and signed by Einstein.

The collection was previously part of the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/topics.php>

Subject Headings

- Einstein, Albert, 1879-1955
- Wegener, Charles
- Urey, Harold Clayton, 1893-1981
- Welling, Paul
-
- Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists
- Atomic bomb -- History
- Physics -- Philosophy
-
- Physicists

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Letters and Documents, 1921-1946

- Place card, May 1921
- Letter: Albert Einstein to Mr. and Mrs. John Paul Welling, Chicago, November 13, 1946

Box 1

Folder 2

Einstein-Wegener Correspondence, 1954

- Albert Einstein to Charles Wegener, University of Chicago, August 17, 1954
- Charles Wegener to Albert Einstein, Princeton, NJ, September 2, 1954
- Charles Wegener to Albert Einstein, Princeton, NJ, September 10, 1954
- Albert Einstein to Charles Wegener, University of Chicago, September 20, 1954
- Manuscript: draft fragment and footnotes, annotated, undated

Box 1

Folder 3

“Physics and Reality,” typescript, translated with notes, undated

Box 1

Folder 4

“Physics and Reality,” typescript (carbon), translated with notes, undated