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Guide to the Isaac Rosenfeld Papers 1926-1983



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Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary	3
Information on Use	3
Access	3
Citation	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope Note	4
Related Resources	5
Subject Headings	5
INVENTORY	5
Series I: Personal	5
Series II: Correspondence	6
Series III: Writings	7
Series IV: Writings by Others	13

Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.ROSENFELDI
Title	Rosenfeld, Isaac. Papers
Date	1926-1983
Size	3 linear feet (6 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Isaac Louis Rosenfeld (1918-1956) was a Chicago-born writer, critic, and university professor. The collection contains diplomas, correspondence, notebooks, notes, manuscripts and typescripts, and published works dating between 1926 and 1983, with the bulk of the material dating between 1937 and 1956. The papers primarily document Rosenfeld's writing career.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

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

Biographical Note

Isaac Louis Rosenfeld, (b. March 10, 1918, d. July 15, 1956), was a Chicago-born writer, critic, and university professor. Rosenfeld's only published novel, *Passage from Home*, echoes his upbringing in a lower-middle class Jewish household on the West Side of Chicago. Following his mother's death during the 1918 flu epidemic, Rosenfeld was largely raised by his stepmother and aunts, Dora and Rae. A sickly but precocious child, Rosenfeld demonstrated a keen intellect and verbal talent from an early age.

He attended the University of Chicago in the 1930s where his brilliance and humor made him the beloved center of a close-knit circle of literary intellectuals that included Saul Bellow and Oliver Tarcov. He studied under Eliseo Vivas and Rudolph Carnap, and in 1937 won the John Billings Fisk Prize for a group of lyrical poems. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1939 and his Master of Arts degree in 1941. That same year he married fellow University of Chicago

student Vasiliki Sarantakis, and moved to New York City where he entered a graduate program in philosophy at New York University.

Rosenfeld left his studies at New York University in 1941 and began writing in earnest. He quickly rose to prominence in the New York literary scene, joining a group of writers that included Saul Bellow, Delmore Schwartz, Alfred Kazin, Irving Howe, Leslie Fiedler, and Robert Warshaw who contributed regularly to the *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *Commentary*, *The Kenyon Review*, and *The New Republic*. Rosenfeld was made assistant literary editor of *The New Republic*, a position he resigned in the spring of 1944 to work on a barge in the New York harbor. His work as a barge captain was short-lived, and he was appointed the first literary editor of *The New Leader* in 1946. Rosenfeld was at his most prolific in the 1940s, publishing numerous short stories, reviews, and essays. Dial Press published his novel, *A Passage From Home*, in 1946. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for fiction in 1947. Rosenfeld and his wife also had two children during this time: a daughter, Eleni, born in 1943 and a son, George, born in 1947.

Rosenfeld's marriage ended in divorce in 1951, and he left New York for a teaching position at the University of Minnesota where he joined a faculty that included Bellow, John Berryman, and Allen Tate. In 1954 he returned to Chicago to teach literature at the University of Chicago. He lived on the Near North Side of the city, and died in his home of a heart attack in 1956. A collection of Rosenfeld's essays and literary criticism, *Age of Enormity: Life and Writing in the Forties and Fifties*, was published posthumously in 1962. A collection of his short stories, *Alpha and Omega*, was published in 1966, and a third anthology of his work, *Preserving the Hunger*, was released in 1988.

Scope Note

The Isaac Rosenfeld Papers are organized into four series: Series I: Personal; Series II: Correspondence; Series III: Writings; and Series IV: Writings by Others. The collection contains diplomas, correspondence, notebooks, notes, manuscripts and typescripts of published and unpublished literary works, and copies of published works dating between 1926 and 1983, with the bulk of the material dating between 1937 and 1956. The papers primarily document Rosenfeld's writing career.

Series I, Personal, contains material related to Rosenfeld's education, as well as bibliographical and biographical information about Rosenfeld, including reviews of his writing and tributes to the writer following his death at the age of thirty-eight.

Series II, Correspondence, contains outgoing, incoming, and third-party mail, arranged chronologically. The third-party correspondence includes letters written by Rosenfeld's editor, Melvin M. McCosh, to various correspondents soliciting endorsements of Rosenfeld's King

Solomon and Other Stories. Other noteworthy correspondents include Oliver Tarcov and William Carlos Williams.

Series III, Writings, consists of material related to the evolution of Isaac Rosenfeld's published and unpublished work from conception to production to publication. The series contains Rosenfeld's notebooks which include a range of diary entries, fragmentary jottings, and complete literary works. The notebooks are arranged chronologically and are followed by holograph manuscripts and typescripts of Rosenfeld's fiction and nonfiction, arranged alphabetically by title. The manuscripts and typescripts range from fragments to complete drafts. Copies of Rosenfeld's published short stories, essays, and reviews fall at the end of the series, and are arranged chronologically by date of publication. They consist primarily of contributions to *The New Leader*, *The New Republic*, and *The Kenyon Review*.

Series IV, Writings by Others, contains an academic paper written by Heinz Juergen Schering, presumably a student of Isaac Rosenfeld.

Related Resources

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

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Bellow, Saul. Papers.

Subject Headings

- Rosenfeld, Isaac, 1918-1956
- Williams, William Carlos, 1883-1963
- Tarcov, Oscar
- University of Chicago
- American literature -- 20th century
- Literature, Modern -- 20th century
- Jewish literature
- Chicago (Ill.)
- New York (N.Y.)

INVENTORY

Series I: Personal

Box 1

Folder 1

University of Chicago Diplomas, 1939, 1941

Box 1

Folder 2

Master's Thesis, "The Conception of Animal Nature in the Philosophy of John Dewey,"
1941

Box 1

Folder 3

Bibliography, 1956

Box 1

Folder 4

Reviews of Isaac Rosenfeld's published works, 1966-1983

Box 1

Folder 5

Tributes to Isaac Rosenfeld, 1956-1977, Undated

Box 1

Folder 6

Greek newspaper articles, Undated

Series II: Correspondence

Box 1

Folder 7

Isaac and Vasiliki Rosenfeld to Family, 1934-1952

Box 1

Folder 8

Isaac Rosenfeld to Oscar Tarcov, 1937-1938

Box 1

Folder 9

Isaac Rosenfeld to Oscar Tarcov, 1939-1940

Box 1

Folder 10

Isaac Rosenfeld to Oscar Tarcov, 1941-1944

Box 1

Folder 11

Isaac Rosenfeld to Oscar Tarcov, 1951-1955

Box 2

Folder 1

Isaac Rosenfeld to Oscar Tarcov, Undated

Box 2

Folder 2

Isaac Rosenfeld to Oscar Tarcov, Undated

Box 2

Folder 3

Alfred Kazin to Isaac Rosenfeld, 1946

Box 2

Folder 4

William Carlos Williams to Isaac Rosenfeld, 1944, Undated

Box 2

Folder 5

Melvin M. McCosh to various correspondents regarding Rosenfeld's King Solomon and Other Stories, 1955, Undated

Box 2

Folder 6

Vasiliki Rosenfeld to Edith and Oscar Tarcov, 1945, Undated

Box 2

Folder 7

Vasiliki Rosenfeld to and from Myra Cholden, 1956

Series III: Writings

Box 2

Folder 8

Notebook, circa 1935-1941

Box 2

Folder 9

Notebook, circa 1941

Box 2

Folder 10

Notebook, circa 1946

Box 2

Folder 11

Notebook, circa 1949-1950

Box 3

Folder 1

Notebook, circa 1947-1948

Box 3

Folder 2

Notebook, circa 1953

Box 3

Folder 3

Notebook, "The Empire," 1954-1955

Box 3

Folder 4

Notebook, 1955-1956

Box 3

Folder 5

Notebook, "The Enemy Part IV," Undated

Box 3

Folder 6

Notebook, Undated

Box 3

Folder 7

Notebooks, Undated (3 items)

Box 3

Folder 8

Manuscript, "The Academic Life"

Box 3

Folder 9

Typescript, "An Age of Enormity, Suggested Table of Contents"

Box 3

Folder 10

Manuscript, "And in the Hour of Our Death"

Box 3

Folder 11

Typescript, "Anna, Emma, and Love in Our Time"

Box 3

Folder 12

Manuscript, "Art and Knowledge; The Problem of Technique as Discovery"

Box 3

Folder 13

Manuscript, "A Barge Captain's Log"

Box 3

Folder 14

Typescript, "Behind the Lion's Back"

Box 3

Folder 15

Typescript, "The Blind Man"

Box 3

Folder 16

Typescript, "Bull Session" or "I'll be Glad When You're Dead"

Box 4

Folder 1

Manuscript and Typescript, "Cold-Water Flat"

Box 4

Folder 2

Manuscript, "The Coalescence of Categories"

Box 4

Folder 3

Manuscript, "Conversations with a Dog"

Box 4

Folder 4

Typescript, "David and Bath-sheba"

Box 4

Folder 5

Manuscript, "A Determination on the People of God's Earth"

Box 4

Folder 6

Manuscript, "The Dogcatcher, His Story"

Box 4

Folder 7

Typescripts, essays on Dostoevsky

Box 4

Folder 8

Manuscript, "Easter Island"

Box 4

Folder 9

Manuscript, "The Enemy"

Box 4

Folder 10

Manuscript, "The Enemy at War with Himself"

Box 4

Folder 11

Manuscript, "The Enlightenment"

Box 4

Folder 12

Manuscript, "Existential Primitivism," Review of James Baird's Ishmael

Box 4

Folder 13

Manuscript, "The Father of Paradise"

Box 4

Folder 14

Manuscript, "The Favorite of the Gods"

Box 4

Folder 15

Manuscript, "Feigenbaum's Dark Night of the Soul"

Box 4

Folder 16

Manuscript, "Halberline"

Box 4

Folder 17

Manuscript, "Have Fun With Your Fate," review of Frances R. Harwich's Have Fun With Your Children

Box 4

Folder 18

Manuscript, "A Hot Time in the Old Town; The Great Chicago Fire, 1871"

Box 4

Folder 19

Manuscript, "Hunimuni and Kanimani Strike it Rich"

Box 4

Folder 20

Manuscript, "The Immortalist"

Box 4

Folder 21

Manuscript, "In Exile"

Box 4

Folder 22

Manuscript, "The Institute; A Novelette, Section 14"

Box 4

Folder 23

Typescript, "The Irrelevance of Orthodoxy"

Box 4

Folder 24

Typescript, "Introduction," ["It is Hard to be a Jew"]

Box 4

Folder 25

Manuscript, "Italy"

Box 4

Folder 26

Manuscript, "Job's Case"

Box 4

Folder 27

Manuscript, "King David"

Box 4

Folder 28

Manuscript and Typescript, "Land of Fire"

Box 4

Folder 29

Manuscript, "Landowner's Castle"

Box 4

Folder 30

Typescript and Manuscript, "The Liars"

Box 4

Folder 31

Typescript, "Life Among the Eskimos"

Box 5

Folder 1

Manuscript, "Life in Chicago"

Box 5

Folder 2

Manuscript, "The Life of Buddha"

Box 5

Folder 3

Manuscript, "A Literary Agent"

Box 5

Folder 4

Manuscript, "The Literature of Mountain Climbing; A Branch of Theology"

Box 5

Folder 5

Manuscript, "The Lover"

Box 5

Folder 6

Manuscript, "Man is an Animal"

Box 5

Folder 7

Typescript, "The Man Who Came to Dinner"

Box 5

Folder 8

Manuscript and Typescript, "The Meeting of Kasturbai and Premilla"

Box 5

Folder 9

Manuscript, "Mother Russia"

Box 5

Folder 10

Typescript, "Mother Russia"

Box 5

Folder 11

Manuscript, "Mrs. Nathan and the Boys"

Box 5

Folder 12

Typescript, "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow"

Box 5

Folder 13

Manuscript, "My Favorite 'Forgotten Novel'"

Box 5

Folder 14

Manuscript, "Negroes"

Box 5

Folder 15

Manuscript, "The New Anna"

Box 5

Folder 16

Manuscript, "The New Socrates" or "Le Nouveau Socrate"

Box 5

Folder 17

Manuscript, "New Year's Eve"

Box 5

Folder 18

Typescript, "On Account of a Hat, by Sholem Aleichem"

Box 5

Folder 19

Typescript, "On the Question of Comprehensive Examinations"

Box 5

Folder 20

Typescript, "Pangloss for Parents," review of Josette Frank's *Your Child's Reading Today*

Box 5

Folder 21

Typescript, "Paper Dolls"

Box 5

Folder 22

Manuscript, "Pierre Lux"

Box 5

Folder 23

Manuscript, "Plot Outline," of Shakespeare's Hamlet

Box 5

Folder 24

Manuscripts and Typescripts, Poetry, 1926, Undated

Box 5

Folder 25

Manuscript, "Poor Nitsa"

Box 5

Folder 26

Manuscript, "Public Figures and the Private Self"

Box 5

Folder 27

Manuscript, "Reflections on Pesach"

Box 5

Folder 28

Typescript, "The Reputation of American Literature"

Box 5

Folder 29

Manuscript, review of George Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*"

Box 5

Folder 30

Typescript, review of Simone Weil's *Waiting for God*

Box 5

Folder 31

Manuscript, review of Christopher Isherwood's *The World in the Evening*

Box 5

Folder 32

Manuscript, "Ruth"

Box 5

Folder 33

Typescript, "The Sacrifice of Benny, Who Learn at Night"

Box 5

Folder 34

Manuscript, "A School Teacher's Xmas"

Box 5

Folder 35

Manuscript, "Shiva and the Christians"

Box 6

Folder 1

Manuscript, "The Spanish Dancer"

Box 6

Folder 2

Manuscript, "The Susanna Melissa"

Box 6

Folder 3

Manuscript, "Testament of a Zoo Man"

Box 6

Folder 4

Manuscripts and Typescripts, essays on Tolstoy

Box 6

Folder 5

Typescript, "A Treasure"

Box 6

Folder 6

Manuscript, "The Troubled Midnight and the Noon's Repose"

Box 6

Folder 7

Manuscript, "Two Friends"

Box 6

Folder 8

Manuscript, "Vermont"

Box 6

Folder 9

Manuscript, "The Village"

Box 6

Folder 10

Manuscript, "Visitors"

Box 6

Folder 11

Manuscript, "Wolfie"

Box 6

Folder 12

Manuscripts and Typescripts, Untitled Fragments

Box 6

Folder 13

Manuscripts and Typescripts, Untitled Fragments and Notes

Box 6

Folder 14

Published works, 1937-1947

Box 6

Folder 15

Published works, 1948-1958

Box 6

Folder 16

Published works, Undated

Series IV: Writings by Others

Box 6

Folder 17

Typescript, "America and the Present Intellectual Situation in Europe; A Contribution to Clear Misconceptions Between Two Continents" by Heinz Juergen Schuering