Guide to the American Institute Science Laboratory Collection

NMAH.AC.1380

Alison Oswald
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: American Institute Science Laboratory Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1380
Date: 1939-2006
Extent: 1 Cubic foot (2 boxes)
Creator: Arias, Irwin M.
American Institute Science Laboratory
Language: English
Summary: The collection documents the American Institute Science Laboratory and the students who conducted research in it.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Collection donated by Irving Arias, 2016.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, 2018.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Collection is open for research. Social Security numbers are present and have been rendered unreadable and redacted. Researchers may use the photocopies in the collection. The remainder of the collection has no restrictions.

Conditions Governing Use
Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical / Historical

The American Institute Science Laboratory, grew out of the Westinghouse Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair, when the "Junior Hall of Science" was moved to an IBM lab on 5th Avenue in New York. Thomas J. Watson of IBM approved it and Dr. Henry Platt ran it. It enabled young aspiring scientists (aged 13-15) to conduct their own laboratory research during after school hours and weekends. Between 30 and 40 students participated, many of them later describing the experience as one of the highlights of their lives. Most went on to have distinguished careers in science and medicine. It closed after 18 months due to World War II. A later iteration of it was started in Boston in 1998, and was named for Henry Platt.

Scope and Contents

The collection includes a written history of the laboratory, photographs of students conducting experiments, lists of students, letters, resumes, descriptions of the students’ research projects, a magazine, articles about the participants, and a report written by one of them on the subject of plastics. Also included are videocassettes of interviews of some former students in a film project titled *Gifted Children*.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

**Subjects:**
- Laboratories
- Science -- Study and teaching

**Types of Materials:**
- Articles
- Correspondence
- Histories
- Magazines (periodicals)
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- 1930-1950
- Reports
- Resumes
- Videocassettes -- 20th century

**Names:**
- Platt, Henry, -1999
- Watson, Thomas J., 1914-1993
### Container Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th>Newspaper clippings, 1939-1941</th>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 2</td>
<td>Laboratory participants (lists), 1981, 1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 3</td>
<td>Laboratory photographs (views of), circa 1940s</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 4</td>
<td>Photographs of students, 1941, 1981</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>Arias, Irwin and Edward Silver, The Light Transmission of Modern Plastics, 1941-05-04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 6</td>
<td>Blumberg, Baruch (newspaper clippings), 1975, 1977, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Conrad, Mat (photograph), circa 1940s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Golub, Seymour and Mat Conrad (photographs), circa 1940s</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 9</td>
<td>Iannone, Anthony (photograph), circa 1940s</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 10</td>
<td>Jastrow, Robert (photographs), circa 1940s</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 11</td>
<td>Lederberg, Joshua, transcript of interview about science laboratory, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 12</td>
<td>Prince, Jordan (photographs), circa 1940s</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 13</td>
<td>Rosenberg, Martin (An Electronic Film Tabulator and Selector), 1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 14</td>
<td>Svaigsen, Eric (photographs), circa 1940s</td>
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<td>Box 2, Folder 1</td>
<td>How Radio Works Exhibit (World's Fair), 1939-1940</td>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 2</td>
<td>Tomorrow's Scientists, New York Electrical Society and American Institute Joint Meeting (photographs), 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 3</td>
<td>Henry Platt Science Laboratory (proposal), 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 4</td>
<td>Gifted Children (interviewee resumes), 1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 2  
*Gifted Children*, Part 1, 1989-11-27  
1 Videocassettes (VHS)  
Includes interviews with Irving Lazar, Anthony Iannone, and Eric Svaigsen.

Box 2  
1 Videocassettes (VHS)  
Includes interviews with Irwin Arias and Roy Glauber.

Box 2  
*Gifted Children*, Part 4, 1989-12-04  
1 Videocassettes (VHS) *(Total Running Time: 56:30.)*  
Includes interviews with Henry Platt and Irwin Arias.

Box 2  
*Gifted Children*, Part 6, 1989-12-04  
1 Videocassettes (VHS) *(Total Running Time: 58:00.)*  
Includes interviews with Joshua Lederberg and Pierre Rinfret.

Box 2  
*Gifted Children*, Part 7, 1989-12-05  
1 Videocassettes (VHS) *(Total Running Time: 25:00)*  
Includes an interview with Baruch Blumberg.

Box 2  
*Gifted Children*, undated  
1 Videocassettes (VHS)  
Includes Irving Lazar uncut interview.