

**University of California, Berkeley.
Department of Genetics Collection
1911-1947
Mss.378.794.C12gen**

American Philosophical Society
4/2003
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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Title	University of California, Berkeley. Department of Genetics Collection
Date [inclusive]	1911-1947
Call number	Mss.378.794.C12gen
Extent	0.5 Linear feet
Location	LH-B-30-7
Language	English
Abstract	<p>In 1912, the University of California, Berkeley, became the first university in the nation to form a separate Department of Genetics. The first two appointments in the department went to plant geneticists Ernest Brown Babcock and Roy E. Clausen, and as the department grew slowly, shifting slightly away from its roots in agricultural science, it gained a strong reputation as an important center for research in several areas in genetics and evolutionary biology.</p> <p>The U.C. Berkeley Department of Genetics Collection contains a selective sampling of correspondence relating to the organization and early history of the nation's first Department of Genetics. Centered in the years 1912-1930, the collection consists primarily of correspondence to and from Babcock and Clausen, pertaining to their research, administrative matters, and the genetical community. Prominent among their correspondents are George H. Shull, Thomas Hunt Morgan, A. H. Sturtevant, and H. J. Muller.</p>

Preferred Citation

Cite as: University of California, Berkeley. Department of Genetics Collection, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

In the early days of Mendelian genetics, the University of California, Berkeley, became the first university in the nation to establish a separate Department of Genetics. Ernest B. Babcock, an assistant professor of agricultural education who had pioneered a course in plant and animal breeding in 1912, was selected to head the new department in July 1913, and after receiving his PhD in May 1914, Roy E. Clausen was appointed as his assistant.

Initially, the thrust of research in the department centered on Babcock's interest in plant breeding and the evolution of the genus *Crepis* and Clausen's in the genus *Nicotiana*, however by the 1920s, members of the department were involved in research on biosystematics, the genetics of *Drosophila*, cytogenetics, and radiation genetics. Babcock and Clausen co-authored a volume *Genetics in Relation to Agriculture* (1918, 2nd ed. 1927). Both Babcock and Clausen were elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Five of the 11 faculty members of the department were elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and four were chosen Faculty Research Lecturers. The department was eventually absorbed into the Department of Integrative Biology.

Scope & content

The U.C. Berkeley Department of Genetics Collection contains a selective sampling of correspondence relating to the organization, early history, and research of the nation's first Department of Genetics. Centered in the years 1912-1930, the collection consists primarily of correspondence to and from the founding members of the department, Ernest Brown Babcock and Roy E. Clausen, pertaining to their research interests, administrative matters, and the genetical community. Prominent among their correspondents are George H. Shull, Thomas Hunt Morgan, A. H. Sturtevant, and H. J. Muller.

Babcock appears to have had a particularly close relationship with George H. Shull, and their correspondence forms by far the most extensive part of the collection. Although Babcock was unsuccessful in his attempt to win an appointment for Shull at Berkeley, the two maintained a close scientific correspondence, discussing their work in plant breeding, cytogenetics, and the relative status of botanical and animal genetics. In November 1944, Shull sent a lengthy autobiographical letter to Babcock, who was then considering writing a history of genetics.

Centered largely on *Drosophila*, the correspondence from Morgan, Muller, and Sturtevant is somewhat less extensive, but nevertheless interesting for reconstructing aspects of that research as well as the relations between the department at Berkeley and the groups at Columbia and later Cal Tech. In 1926, Morgan was one of those who intervened with Babcock to secure a position for John Belling, recovering from a bout of "acute melancholia."

Among the interesting miscellaneous items is a letter from the Australian geneticist, W. E. Agar (regarding the largely negative influence of his former advisor, William Bateson), an outline and course notes from Babcock's course in genetics, 1915, and William E. Castle's autobiographical "Memorandum on the beginning of Genetic Studies at Harvard University, 1901-1915." Also of note is a letter from Babcock to A. Franklin Shull, Feb. 6, 1934, in which Babcock makes the prescient suggestion that they organize a symposium to investigate "whether anything can be done in the way of interpreting the paleontological processes in terms of modern genetical concepts," and to discuss the integration of genetics and evolutionary processes in plants and animals.

The collection is organized alphabetically by writer, and then alphabetically by correspondent.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 4/2003

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift of the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Genetics, March 1967.

Processing Information

Recatalogued by rsc, April 2003.

Alternative Form Available

The Collection has been microfilmed (Film 1441).

Related Materials

Related Material

Babcock appears as a correspondent in the papers of [Milislav Demerec \(B D394\)](#), and [Albert Blakeslee \(B B585\)](#).

The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, houses an additional 2 feet of papers of Ernest Brown Babcock.

Indexing Terms

Corporate Name(s)

- Harvard University. Department of Genetics
- International Congress of Genetics(7th: 1937 : Moscow)

Personal Name(s)

- Agar, Wilfred Eade, 1882-1951
- Bateson, William, 1861-1926
- Castle, William E., (William Ernest), 1867-1962
- Clausen, Roy Elwood, 1891-1956
- Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945
- Muller, H. J., (Hermann Joseph), 1890-1967
- Navashin, Mikhail S.
- Shull, A. Franklin, (Aaron Franklin), 1881-
- Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954
- Sturtevant, A. H., (Alfred Henry), 1891-1970
- Voorhies, E. C.

Subject(s)

- Drosophila--Genetics
- Genetics
- Plant breeding
- Plant genetics
- Radiogenetics

Other Finding Aids

The U.C. Berkeley Department of Genetics Collection is also described in Bentley Glass's *A Guide to the Genetics Collections of the APS*.

Other Descriptive Information

This collection contains materials which relate to the history of genetics.

Author	Format	Date
Agar, Wilfred Eade	Correspondence (1 item)	1947
Babcock, Ernest Brown	Correspondence (53 items)	1906-1948

Babcock, Ernest Brown -- Genetics I - lecture notes, course outline	Manuscripts (2 items)	1914-1915
Castle, William Ernest -- Memorandum on the beginning of Genetic Studies at Harvard University, 1901-1915	Manuscripts (8 pages)	Circa 1915
Clausen, Roy Elwood	Correspondence (6 items)	1919-1936
Morgan, Thomas Hunt	Correspondence (40 items)	1917-1932
Muller, Hermann Joseph	Correspondence (13 items)	1920-1942
Shull, George Harrison	Correspondence (38 items)	1911-1944
Sturtevant, Alfred Henry	Correspondence (7 items)	1921-1934

Bibliography

Babcock, Ernest Brown and Roy Elwood Clausen, *Genetics in Relation to Agriculture* (N.Y., 1918).

Call no.: 575.13 B11g.

Babcock, Ernest Brown and J. L. Collins, *Genetics Laboratory Manual* (N.Y., 1918). **Call no.:** 575.1

B11s.

Correspondence

Collection Inventory

Correspondence	1911-1947	Box 1
Agar, Wilfred Eade, 1882-1951 Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock, on "Bateson's influence"	1947	1 item
Babcock, Ernest Brown	1906-1948	53 items
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Bibliography	1906-1945	1 item
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Diary of European travel	1919	1 item
Genetics I	1914-1915	2 folders
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Genetics I (course outline)	1914-1915	1 item
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Genetics I (lecture notes)	1914-1915	1 item
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to C. Leonard Huskins	1948	1 item
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to E. D. Merrill	1928	2 items

Correspondence

Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to Thomas Hunt Morgan	1917-1926	11 items
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to H. J. Muller	1920-1936	6 items
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to Mikhail S. Navashin	1927	1 item
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to A. Franklin Shull	1934	2 items
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to George H. Shull	1911-1942	24 items
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to U.S. Secretary of State Re: Mikhail Navashin's visa.	1927	1 item
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Letter to E. C. Voorhies	1923	2 items
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 Translation of W. Johannsen, Elemente des Exakten Erblichkeitslehre	n.d.	1 item
Bateson, William Letter to Thomas Hunt Morgan	1920	1 items

Correspondence

Castle, William E., (William Ernest), 1867-1962	Circa 1915	8 pages
Memorandum on the beginning of genetic studies at Harvard, 1901-1915		
Clausen, Roy Elwood	1919-1936	6 items
Clausen, Roy Elwood, 1891-1956 Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock	n.d.	1 item
Clausen, Roy Elwood, 1891-1956 Letter to C. B. Lipman	1941	1 item (with encl.)
Clausen, Roy Elwood, 1891-1956 Letter to Thomas Hunt Morgan	1919, 1927	2 items
Clausen, Roy Elwood, 1891-1956 Letter to H. J. Muller	1936	1 item
Clausen, Roy Elwood, 1891-1956 Letter to A. H. Sturtevant	1932	1 item
Griffiths, F. T. Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock	1911	2 items
Huskins, C. L. Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock	1948	1 item
Hutchinson, C. B. Letter to E. C. Voorhies	1923	1 item
Levit, S. G. Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock	1936	1 item
Miyabe, Knigo Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock	1948-1949	2 items
Morgan, Thomas Hunt	1917-1932	40 items

Correspondence

Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Corrections...	n.d.	1 item
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock	1917-1927	24 items
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letters to Roy E. Clausen	1919-1932	7 items
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letters to J. L. Collins	1918	3 items
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letter to Cullen	1918	1 item
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letter to Ginn and Co.	1917	1 item
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letter to Dr. Haring	1921	1 item
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letter to McGraw Hill Book Co.	1926	1 items
Morgan, Thomas Hunt, 1866-1945 Letter to Merriam	1917	1 item
Muller, Hermann Joseph	1920-1942	13 items
Muller, H. J., (Hermann Joseph), 1890-1967 Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock	1920-1942	9 items
Muller, H. J., (Hermann Joseph), 1890-1967 Letters to Roy E. Clausen	1923-1936	4 items
Muralov, A. and N. I. Vavilov	1937	1 item

Correspondence

Letter to Roy E. Clausen			
Navashin, Mikhail S.	1927-1929	5 items	
Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Sharp, Lester W., (Lester Whyland), b. 1887	1926	1 item	
Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Shull, A. Franklin, (Aaron Franklin), 1881-	1934	1 items	
Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Shull, George Harrison	1911-1944	38 items	
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1911-1944	3 folders	
Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1911-1913	10 items	Folder 1
Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1914-1918	13 items	Folder 2
Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1922-1944	9 items	Folder 3
Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock			
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1922	4 items	
Letters to Roy E. Clausen			
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1923	1 item	
Letter to J. L. Collins			
Shull, George Harrison, 1874-1954	1911	1 item	
Letter to John M. Coulter			
Sturtevant, Alfred Henry	1921-1934	7 items	
Sturtevant, Alfred H.	1930-1931	2 items	

Correspondence

Letters to Ernest Brown Babcock

Sturtevant, Alfred H.	1921-1931	3 items
Letters to Roy E. Clausen		

Sturtevant, Alfred H.	1927	1 item
Letter to J. L. Collins		

Sturtevant, Alfred H.	1934	1 item
Letter to D. F. Jones		

Voorhies, E. C.	1923	1 item
Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock		

Wheeler, Benjamin I. (Benjamin Ide), 1854-1927	1918	1 item
Letter to Ernest Brown Babcock		

Printed material

Printed material	1917-1945	
1822-1922. The Galton and Mendel Memorial Fund...	ca.1922	Broadside
Dedication of Hilgard Hall	1917	Program
Five Lectures on the Hitchcock Foundation [Thomas Hunt Morgan Lectures, April 1916]	1916	Broadside
"Genetics"	n.d.	Galley proof
Babcock, E. B. (Ernest Brown), b. 1877 How I Became a Geneticist, <i>California Monthly</i>	June-July 1945	
McGraw-Hill [Advertisement for Babcock's <i>Genetics in Relation to Agriculture</i>]	1917	Broadside, 2 items