



**FINDING AID TO
THE ALBERT HOFMANN CORRESPONDENCE
AND OTHER MATERIALS**

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Processed by: Kristin Leaman, November 17, 2011

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Hofmann, Albert
Title	Albert Hofmann correspondence and other materials
Collection Identifier	MSP 89
Date Span	1948-2006
Abstract	This collection contains correspondence that documents Hofmann's relationship with Ralph Metzner and Rolf von Eckartsberg, as well as clippings and photographs related to Hofmann's professional life. A patent for LSD and a conference brochure are included as well.
Extent	1 folder
Finding Aid Author	Kristin Leaman, 2011
Languages	English and German
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research
Acquisition Information:	Purchase, Flashback Books, June 1, 2011
Accession Number:	20110601
Preferred Citation:	MSP 89, Albert Hofmann correspondence and other materials, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Copyright restrictions may apply. Consult the reference archivist for details.

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Hofmann, Albert, 1906-2008. Einsichten, Ausblicke. English
Metzner, Ralph [he's not in the LC authorities]
Von Eckartsberg, Rolf, 1932-

Topics

LSD
Von Eckartsberg, Rolf, 1932-

Form and Genre Types

Brochures
Clippings
Correspondence
Patents
Photographs

Occupations

Chemistry
Pharmacology
Psychology
Psychiatry

Biography of Albert Hofmann

Albert Hofmann was born on January 11, 1906 in Baden, Switzerland. He began studying science at the University of Zurich when he was twenty years old; four years later, he finished his doctoral thesis in chemistry. Hofmann's thesis concerned vineyard snails and how they produce the carbohydrate, chitin. By the time he earned his Ph.D., Hofmann was already working for Sandoz Laboratories in Basel. He began working on a project at Sandoz, where he was deriving drug compounds from ergot. In the 1930s, he worked to fuse lysergic acid with other compounds in hopes to make the lysergic acid more stable. In November of 1938, Hofmann created that stable synthetic version, naming it "Lyserg-Saure-Diethylamid-25" (LSD-25) or "Lysergic-Acid-Diethylamide-25" in English. The "25" represents that it was Hofmann's 25th compound for this Sandoz project. Eventually, the project finished and nothing further was done with LSD-25.

It was not until April 16, 1943 when Hofmann accidentally handled the substance and then rubbed his eye; he began feeling the effects shortly thereafter. He left the laboratory and rode his bicycle home, which became known as his famous bicycle ride. The following work day, Hofmann deliberately ingested .25 milligrams (about ten times the "normal" amount unbeknownst to him) of LSD-25 and had to be taken home; the effects were too strong and Hoffman experienced some rather frightening hallucinations. Once he was checked by a doctor and told he was not, in fact, dying, Hofmann relaxed and eventually fell asleep. The next morning he felt reborn and his senses renewed. Hofmann reported what had happened to his supervisors at Sandoz, and LSD-25 was tested on three more employees. These results were shared with a researcher at the University of Zurich, where LSD-25 was identified as a non-toxic psychotropic compound. Sandoz began offering LSD-25 to qualified researchers and medical professionals after 1947, and many psychologists and psychiatrists were very excited about the promising effects LSD-25 had on troubled patients, especially those suffering from schizophrenia. The drug was then used by the CIA in a controversial covert project called MKULTRA, where it was used during the interrogation of enemy combatants and captured foreign intelligence agents. It is said that experiments were also conducted on U.S. military personal and civilian subjects in psychiatric hospitals.

Unfortunately, the counterculture of the 1960s helped to demonize the potentially useful LSD-25; and by the late 1960s, LSD was outlawed in most countries, which hindered scientific studies of the drug. Hofmann was disappointed in the casual use of LSD-25 and wrote a book in 1983 titled *LSD, My Problem Child: Reflections on Sacred Drugs, Mysticism and Science*. Hoffman asserted that LSD-25 should be a controlled substance, just as morphine. On April 29, 2008, Hofmann passed away from a heart attack; he was 102 years old.

Source:

"Albert Hofmann." *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. Vol. 30. Detroit: Gale, 2010.
Gale Biography In Context. Web. 1 Dec. 2011.

<http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?displayGroupName=Reference&disableHighlighting=false&prodId=BIC1&action=e&windowstate=normal&catId=&documentId=GALE%7CK1631009425&mode=view>

Collection Description

Scope

The Albert Hofmann correspondence and other materials (1948-2006; 1 folder) contains photographs, a patent for LSD from the U.S. Patent Office, and a brochure from the 1982 UC-Santa Cruz Symposium where Hofmann was the featured speaker, and documents Hofmann's correspondence with Ralph Metzner and Rolf von Eckartsberg.

Descriptive Rules

Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd Edition / Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

Materials have been placed in acid-free housing.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Folder 1 Correspondence, patent for LSD, photographs, brochure, and clipping, 1948-2006

Item

- Correspondence, 1989-2006
1. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Ralph Metzner [in German], 1989
 2. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Ralph Metzner [in German], 1989
 3. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Ralph Metzner [in German], 1990
 4. Letter from Ralph Metzner to Albert Hofmann [in German], 1998
 5. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Ralph Metzner [in German], 1999
 6. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Ralph Metzner [in German], 2003
 7. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Ralph Metzner [in German], 2006
 8. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Rolf von Eckartsberg [in German], 1963
 9. Letter from Rolf von Eckartsberg to Albert Hofmann [in German], 1963
 10. Letter from Albert Hofmann to Rolf von Eckartsberg [in German], 1963
 11. Letter from Rolf von Eckartsberg to Albert Hofman [in German], 1963
12. Patent for d-Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, 1948
- Photographs, undated - 1997
13. Photograph of Albert Hofmann, undated
 14. Photographic light painting of Albert Hofmann, 1997
 15. Photograph of Albert Hofmann, undated
 16. Photograph of Albert Hofmann, undated
 17. Photograph of Albert Hofmann, undated
18. Brochure for U.C. Santa Cruz Symposium, 1982
- Clippings, 1977-2006
19. David Pearlman. "The Father of LSD Describes His 'Trips'." *San Francisco Chronicle*. October 12, 1977.
 20. Müller-Ebeling, Claudia. "Der Entdecker des Steins der Weisen-Einblicke in das Leben von Albert Hofmann." *Gaia Media News*. April 2003.
 21. Grob, Charles. "A Conversation with Albert Hofmann." *MAPS*. Vol. I, No. 3, 1998.
 22. "Von den Pflanzen der Götter zum LSD." *LSD*. January 13, 2006.
 23. "Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Albert Hofmann." *LSD*. undated.
 24. "Erläuterungen zu den drei missverstandenen Buchstaben der Wissenschaftsgeschichte." *LSD*. undated.
 25. "Das ekstatische Abenteuer." *LSD*. January 14, 2006.
 26. "Neue Dimensionene des Bewusstseins." *LSD*. January 15, 2006.

