

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ Benjamin L. Hirsch Papers, 1849-1993 ◀

MSS-097

Size: 12 Linear Feet

Provenance: Barbara Gerbie, daughter of Benjamin L. Hirsch, donated his papers to the Ward M. Canaday Center on October 30, 1993.

Access: Open

Collection Summary: The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence, product advertisements, laboratory notebooks, chemistry books/pamphlets, and patents. Also included are toys, cosmetics, and other items produced in the Hirsch Laboratory.

Subject(s): [Medicine and Health](#)

Related Collections:

Processing Note: Some of Hirsch's notes were damaged by fire and placed in protective sleeves; care should be taken when examining these materials.

Copyright: The literary rights to this collection are assumed to rest with the person(s) responsible for the production of the particular items within the collection, or with their heirs or assigns. Researchers bear full legal responsibility for the acquisition to publish from any part of said collection per *Title 17, United States Code*. The **Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections** may reserve the right to intervene as intermediary at its own discretion.

Completed by: Angela E. Clevenger June 1996; converted by Patrick Cook Nov. 2011; Revised by Tamara Jones, June and October 2015

Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993

Biographical Sketch

Benjamin L. Hirsch was born in Newport, Kentucky in 1905. Almost from the beginning, he was a chemist and inventor. In high school, he began experimenting with hair ointments. He later began processing and selling a line of makeup to S. S. Kresge Co. and F. W. Woolworth. Beginning in 1930, he shared a cosmetic business with his brother Henry at 222 Jackson St. in Toledo, but the onset of World War II and the destruction of their lab by a fire (in 1944) limited the materials needed to rebuild. A year after starting the cosmetics lab, Benjamin married Alice Braunschweiger and had one daughter, Barbara. After Alice died in 1974, he married Ruth Hetterbrake; the two remained married until Ruth's death in 1991.

While working at the New Jersey Zinc Company as a chemist, Benjamin perfected the process for making fluorescent Zinc Oxide in 1952. This pigment would eventually be used in signs and various toys. The Hirsch brothers once again collaborated to create one of the most popular rages of their day – novelty toys to be included in cereal boxes. In cooperation with the Kellogg Co. of Battle Creek, Michigan, Benjamin and Henry made a marketing breakthrough. Most of the toys were to be used in water; some of the more popular items were frogmen and boats that contained baking soda to simulate diving. Over his lifetime, Benjamin obtained hundreds of patents for his ideas.

Benjamin Hirsch had other interests besides chemistry and inventing. In 1960, he served as the Committee Chair for the Blue Banner Award, which was presented by the *Toledo Blade* to recognize Good Samaritans of the waterways. He was also very active in the U. S. Coast Guard; in 1966, he became the Vice Commander of Flotilla 10-2 in the Toledo-based auxiliary unit of the Coast Guard. He was very concerned with water safety and gave his service on the waters whenever possible. He died on October 8, 1995.

**Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993**

Scope and Content Note

The materials in this collection consist primarily of correspondence, product advertisements, laboratory notebooks, and patents that Benjamin Hirsch accumulated over his lifetime as a chemist/inventor. The collection also contains actual toys and other materials produced in the Hirsch Laboratory co-owned by Benjamin's brother Henry. The first six boxes contain correspondence, paperwork, notes, and chemistry books and pamphlets. Many of these materials are scattered throughout the collection; several folders contain a mix of correspondence, notes, patent information, etc., depending on the subject matter. Box eight contains microfiche of German notes on Aluminum Hydroxide and Calcium Carbonate. The remainder of the collection contains cosmetic products, cereal novelty toys – as well as the boxes they came in – and sundry fluorescent pigment products. Some of the books in the collection contain notes and annotations written by Hirsch. Very little biographical information is evident in the collection; a few newspaper clippings and a framed photograph of Hirsch are included.

**Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993**

Folder List

Box	Folder	Item
7	1	Advertisements of Products
1	1	Advertisements and Publications – Luminescent Products, 1944-1949
1	2	Advertisements and Publications – True Vac, 1946
1	3	American Phosphor Customer Data, 1977
1	4	Atomic Submarine, 1952-1961
1	5	Baking Powder, 1953-1961
1	6	Batteries, n.d.
1	7	Bubbles, 1963-1974
1	8	Butterfly, 1953-1956
1	9	Carborundum, 1969-1970
1	10	Chalk, n.d.
1	11	Chemical Product Catalogs, 1960
1	12	Correspondence, 1900-1957
1	13	Correspondence, 1941-1965
1	14	Correspondence, 1941-1968
1	15	Correspondence, 1948-1954
1	16	Correspondence, 1952-1963
1	17	Correspondence, 1953-1979
1	18	Correspondence, 1954-1968
1	19	Correspondence, 1956-1989
1	20	Correspondence – Chris Craft Speedboat, 1956-1963
1	21	Correspondence – Damert Company, 1976-1991
1	22	Correspondence – duPont, 1948-1953
1	23	Correspondence – International, 1972-1991
1	24	Correspondence – Kellogg, 1953-1968
1	25	Correspondence – Miniature Submarine, 1954-1955
1	26	Correspondence – Proctor & Gamble, 1966-1967
1	27	Correspondence – Toy Sailboat, 1955-1963
1	28	Correspondence – Zimmerman, Jack, 1955-1980
1	29	Correspondence/Notes, 1950-1959
2	1	Correspondence/Patents, 1946-1982
2	2	Correspondence/Phosphorescent pigment, 1970-1983
2	3	Cosmetics Formulas, 1962-1965, n.d.
2	4	DEGUSSA, Inc. – Pigments Division, 1966
2	5	Dental, 1860-1981
2	6	Dental Patents, 1849-1946
2	7	Dentsply Draft, 1978, 1983
2	8	Dentsply/Hirsch Agreement re: Sales and Purchase of Assets, Inventory, and Services, 1979
2	9	Electro Statics Toner Suspension, 1959-1970

**Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993**

2	10	Environmental Regulations, 1970-1982
2	11	Experimental, 1938-1956
2	12	Financial Documents, 1961-1983
2	13	Fluorescent and Phosphorescent Colors (Experimental), 1907-1953
2	14	Foamed Polystyrene, 1954-1976
2	15	Frogmen/Toy Diver, 1954-1962
2	16	Ice Capades Skaters, 1956-1957
2	17	Instructions for Atomic Sub, Ice Capades Skaters, Magic Gardens of Mars, and Moon Gardens
2	18	Kellogg Co. – Offered Premiums, 1961-1974
2	19	Lab Notes – Luminescent Pigments, 1934-1976
2	20	Lab Notebooks and Patents, 1938-1989
2	21	Leo Burnett Co. Inc., 1955-1972
2	22	Lionel, 1973-1979
2	23	Luminescence, 1945-1946
2	24	Luminescent Pigments 1933-1985
2	25	Magic Smoke, 1949
2	26	Mail Samples, 1975
3	1	Manufacture of Luminescent Zinc Sulphides in Germany
3	2	Miniature Toy Boat, 1956-1957
3	3	Miscellaneous, 1877-1987
3	4	Miscellaneous, 1902-1953
3	5	Miscellaneous, 1910-1958
3	6	Miscellaneous, 1932-1962
3	7	Miscellaneous, 1941-1979
3	8	Miscellaneous, 1941-1992
3	9	Miscellaneous, 1942-1946
3	10	Miscellaneous, 1944-1964
3	11	Miscellaneous, 1955-1961
3	12	Miscellaneous, 1956-1965
3	13	Miscellaneous, 1956-1979
3	14	Miscellaneous, 1964-1990, n.d.
3	15	Moon Gardens, 1949-1973
3	16	Moon Gardens, 1960-1976
3	17	Moon Garden Technical Experiment, 1957-1972
3	18	New Jersey Zinc Company/Miscellaneous Companies, 1945-1956
3	19	Newspaper Clippings, 1952-1965
3	20	Newspaper Clippings/Publications, 1945-1993
4	1	Notes, 1938-1978
4	2	Notes, 1944-1979
4	3	Notes, 1946-1991
4	4	Notes, 1953-1974
4	5	Notes, 1961-1979
4	6	Notes, 1975-1983
4	7	Notes, 1977-1983

**Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993**

4	8	Notes – Zinc Oxide/Magnesium Oxide Complex, 1971-1976
4	9	Notes and Formulas, 1969-1970
4	10	Ohio Art, 1974
4	11	Patents, 1855-1970
4	12	Patents, 1879-1952
4	13	Patents, 1902-1936
4	14	Patents, 1910-1947
4	15	Patents, 1925-1949
4	16	Patents, 1926-1972
4	17	Patents, 1937-1990
4	18	Patents, 1944-1971
4	19	Patents, 1946-1951
4	20	Patents – Fluorescent Glass, 1915-1972
4	21	Patents – Rare Earth Phosphors, 1951-1972
4	22	Patents – Silicates, 1932-1950
4	23	Patents – Silicates, 1951-1972
5	1	Patents – Zinc Sulfide, 1894-1950
5	2	Patents – Zinc Sulfide, 1951-1972
5	3	Patents and Catalogs, 1883-1944, 1961, 1986, 1988
5	4	Pearl Essence/Pigments, 1957-1962
5	5	Perfume Kit, 1965
5	6	Phosphates and Borates, 1942-1959
5	7	Phosphates and Borates, 1960-1972
5	8	Phosphates and Phosphors, 1938-1979
5	9	Photographs, 1923-1986
5	10	Photostats, 1941-1978 (in German)
5	11	Plastic Bubbles, 1947-1958
5	12	Premium Ideas, 1919-1977
5	13	Premium Ideas, 1922-1965
5	14	Processing of Zinc Oxide/Magnesium Oxide Complex; Customer List, 1975-1980
5	15	Propellant for Toys, 1956-1964
5	16	Propellants, 1959
5	17	Publications – Chemical Companies, 1979
5	18	Publications – <i>A Course of Qualitative Analysis of Inorganic Substances</i> , 1915
5	19	Publications – <i>A Handbook of Chemical Warfare Agents</i> , 1931; Datebook, 1946
5	20	Publications – <i>A Laboratory Manual of Organic Chemistry</i> , 1922 (2 copies)
6	1	Publications – Medical and Miscellaneous, 1967, 1991, n.d.
6	2	Publications – Miscellaneous Uranium Publications, 1951, 1953-1955
6	3	Publications – <i>Physical Properties of Dental Materials</i> , 1942
6	4	Publications – <i>Synthetic Resins for Coatings</i> , 1949

**Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993**

6	5	Publications – <i>A Text-Book of Elementary Chemistry</i> , 1922
6	6	Publications – <i>Uranium Magazine</i> , March, April, October, November 1955; February and March 1956
6	7	Research Notes/Formulas, 1941-1946
6	8	Rohm & Haas Company Products, 1950-1968
6	9	Royalties, 1957-1960
6	10	Secret Ink, 1958-1968
6	11	Shadowettes, 1945-1952
6	12	Strip Master, 1956-1977
6	13	Sylcon Lab Data, 1942-1946
6	14	Technical Bulletins, 1947, 1951, n.d.
6	15	Toy Hectograph, 1938-1970
6	16	Toy PT Boat, 1955-1963
6	17	Toy Sailboat – Miscellaneous Data, 1956-1964
6	18	Toy Speed Boat, 1945-1958
6	19	Udylite Horizontal Oscillating Barrel System, 1973, n.d.
6	20	Uranium Deposits of the United States, 1955 (maps)
6	21	Vuepak Samples, 1955
6	22	Zinc Oxide, 1958-1986
6	23	Zinc Sulfide, 1975, 1990, n.d.
8	--	Microfiche (German Notes on Aluminum Hydroxide and Calcium Carbonate)
		ARTIFACTS
6	24	Bookmark, Glow Stars, Misc. stickers, Postcard Thermometers, Star Lights
6	25	Fickle Foam and Magic Tree
6	26	Kaleido Cards, L. L. Bean Summer Catalog (1993), Magic Sun Pictures on Cereal Box, Note from DaMert Company, Reusable Postcard-Sticker
7	2	Glow Shuttle sticker and Rainbow Glasses
9	--	Framed photograph of Ben Hirsch (color)
9	--	Page from Chinese newspaper
9	--	Tagboard Paper pieces (2)
9	--	Yellow Plastic pieces (2)
10	--	Boxed set of Flippy Frogmen
10	--	Boxed set of Flippy Submarines
11	--	Diving Killer Whales (2)
11	--	Doodletop
11	--	Liquid Crystal Lizard
11	--	Rainbow Sparkler Pencils (2)
11	--	Tornado Tube
11	--	Toy train
12	--	Acetate Models
12	--	Bottle of Haines Essential Oil

Benjamin L. Hirsch
Papers, 1849-1993

12	--	Bottle of Smoke Sand
12	--	Chris Craft Speedboat
12	--	Chromatoscope
12	--	Jar of colored chalks
12	--	Jar of Invisible Ink, 4/22/65
12	--	Jar of Invisible Ink, 5/13/68
12	--	Jar of Invisible Ink Na ₂ Co ₃ , 5/20/1968
12	--	Jar of Royal Baking Powder
12	--	Jar of unknown cream
12	--	Large PT Boats
12	--	Miniature Frogmen
12	--	Miniature plastic trains
12	--	Miniature PT Boats
12	--	Miscellaneous parts to presses
12	--	Miscellaneous plastic boats
12	--	Miscellaneous plastic toys
12	--	Package of Royal Brand Baking Powder
12	--	Steel duck
12	--	Toy light bulbs
12	--	Toy submarines
13	--	Box of large Frogmen
13	--	Box of Shadowettes
13	--	Boxes of Hectograph presses (2)
13	--	Boxes of Magic Moon Gardens (2)
13	--	Boxes of Navy Frogmen (3)
13	--	Boxes of Whirl-I-Floats (3)
13	--	PT Boat (boxed)
13	--	U. S. S. Nautilus (2) (boxed)
14	1	Various cereal boxes