Milton Rogovin Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Karen Linn Femia with the assistance of Jeffery Bryson

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

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Finding aid URL: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011062
Collection Summary

Title: Milton Rogovin Papers
Span Dates: 1928-2006
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1960-2003)
ID No.: MSS85262
Creator: Rogovin, Milton, 1909-2011
Extent: 11,000 items; 35 containers; 14 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English with Spanish, Russian, German, Finnish, and Czech
Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Abstract: Social documentary photographer. Correspondence, draft of autobiography and other writings, interviews, printed matter, Federal Bureau of Investigation file, and miscellaneous papers relating to Rogovin’s work as a photographer, especially of working people of the world and the working-class neighborhoods of his home city, Buffalo, New York, and his publications and exhibitions as well as the political activism that underlay his art work.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Burroughs, Margaret Taylor, 1915-2010--Correspondence.
Caudill, Harry M., 1922-1990--Correspondence.
Coles, Robert--Correspondence.
Davis, Ossie--Correspondence.
Dee, Ruby--Correspondence.
Doherty, Robert J., 1924- --Correspondence.
Gould, Stephen Jay--Correspondence.
Hart, Ellen Rogovin--Correspondence.
Mayer, Grace M.--Correspondence.
Neruda, Pablo, 1904-1973--Correspondence.
Rogovin, Anne--Correspondence.
Strand, Paul, 1890-1976--Correspondence.
White, Minor--Correspondence.

Subjects
Documentary photography--New York (State)--Buffalo.
Documentary photography.
Photography--Political aspects.
Photography--Social aspects.

Places
Buffalo (N.Y.)--History.
Buffalo (N.Y.)--Social conditions.
New York (State)--Social conditions.

Occupations
Photographers.
Administrative Information

Provenance
The papers of Milton Rogovin, social documentary photographer, were given to the Library of Congress by Milton Rogovin in 2007-2009.

Transfers
Some photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Related Collections
The photographs of Milton Rogovin are held by the Library's Prints and Photographs Division.

Copyright Status
Copyright in the unpublished writings of Milton Rogovin in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Milton Rogovin are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Milton Rogovin Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1909, Dec. 30</td>
<td>Born, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>B.S. in optometry, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932-1938</td>
<td>Optometrist, New York, N.Y., attended classes at the New School for Social Research, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Moved first to Niagara Falls, N.Y., and then to Buffalo, N.Y.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Charter member, United Optical Workers Local Union</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Member, American League Against War and Fascism, and fund-raiser in support of the Republican forces in Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Opened his own optometry practice, Buffalo, N.Y.</td>
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<td>1942</td>
<td>Married Anne Setters (died 2003)</td>
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<td>1942-1945</td>
<td>Served in the U.S. Army as an optometrist, 1944-1945, stationed in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1962</td>
<td>Anne and Milton Rogovin under Federal Bureau of Investigation surveillance for their political activities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1945  Returned to Buffalo, N.Y., and his optometry practice
1953-1957  Intermittent travels to Mexico, first serious photographic work
1957  Summoned before the House Committee on Un-American Activities
Invited by William Tallmadge, a music professor, Rogovin began photographing
African-American storefront churches, Buffalo, N.Y.
1961  Began photographing Buffalo, N.Y.’s East Side community
1962-1971  Frequent trips to Appalachia to make photographs
1967  Traveled to Chile to make photographs and to collaborate with Pablo Neruda
1972  M.A. in American Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, N.Y.
Began photographic documentation of Lower West Side of Buffalo, N.Y.
Traveled to Soviet Union but was stymied in his attempt at photographic work
1972-1974  Teacher of social documentary photography, State University of New York at
Buffalo, Buffalo, N.Y.
1975  First major exhibition, “Milton Rogovin: Lower West Side, Buffalo, New York,”
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y.
Published Milton Rogovin: Lower West Side, Buffalo, New York / James N.
Wood; with an appreciation by Paul Strand. Buffalo, N.Y.: Albright-Knox
Gallery
1976  Began “Working People” series
1978  Retired from optometry to work full time in photography
1981-1990  Traveled to France, Scotland, Spain, Cuba, China, Germany, Mexico,
Zimbabwe, Czechoslovakia, and Appalachia to make photographs for his
“Family of Miners” series.
1985  Published Milton Rogovin: The Forgotten Ones / interview by Cheryl Brutvan;
with essays by Robert J. Doherty and Fred Licht. Seattle: University of
Washington Press
Published Windows that Open Inward: Images of Chile / photographs by Milton
Rogovin; poems by Pablo Neruda; edited by Dennis Maloney; introduction
1992-1994  Returned to the Lower West Side of Buffalo, N.Y., to complete his “Triptychs,”
images of individuals and families taken over the course of twenty years
1993  Published Portraits in Steel / Photographs by Milton Rogovin; Interviews by
Michael Frisch. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press
1994 Published Triptychs: Buffalo's Lower West Side Revisited / photographs by Milton Rogovin; foreword by Robert Coles; introduction by Stephen Jay Gould; text by JoAnn Wypijewski. New York: W.W. Norton
Honorary doctorate, State University of New York at Buffalo and Buffalo State College, Buffalo, N.Y.

1997 Due to low vision from cataracts, sold his Rolleiflex camera and began writing his autobiography

2000 After successful cataract surgery, bought back his camera and returned to Lower West Side of Buffalo, N.Y., to interview and photograph subjects from his earlier “Triptychs” series

2003 Exhibit of the Lower West Side “Quartets”

2004 Published With Eyes and Soul: Images of Cuba / poems by Nancy Morejón; photographs by Milton Rogovin; edited by Dennis Maloney; translated by Pamela Carmell and David Frye. Buffalo, N.Y.: White Pine Press


2011, Jan. 18 Died, Buffalo, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Milton Rogovin (1909-2011) span the years 1928-2006, with the bulk of the material dating from 1960 to 2003. The papers are primarily in English, with some items in Czech, Finnish, German, Russian, and Spanish. The papers are organized into the following series: Correspondence, Museums and Galleries, Writings and Photographic Projects, and Miscellany.

The Correspondence series is divided into four categories. Drafts of letters sent is a chronological group created by Rogovin and maintained as a separate section of the series. The family correspondence includes letters exchanged with his wife Anne, daughter Ellen, his grandchildren, and a cousin. Additional correspondence with Anne is in the Miscellany series in an international file relating to Chile. The bulk of the Correspondence series is in a general correspondence file. It includes letters received and sent and is primarily professional in nature, including individuals, magazines, publishers, and various organizations. Special correspondence segregated by Rogovin includes files relating to Margaret Taylor Burroughs, Harry M. Caudill, Robert Coles, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, Robert J. Doherty, W. E. B. Du Bois, Stephen Jay Gould, Grace M. Mayer, Pablo Neruda, Paul Strand, and Minor White.

The Museums and Galleries series contains correspondence about exhibits and sales of photographs as well as publicity material, news clippings, museum pamphlets, and other printed matter concerned with exhibits.

The Writings and Photographic Projects series contains Rogovin's draft of his autobiography, his poetry, and material concerning his major photographic series, many of which were published in book form. The file includes material concerning his photographic trips, exhibits, publications, publicity material, awards, correspondence, and drafts of writings from collaborators.
Of special interest in the **Miscellany** is Anne Rogovin's Federal Bureau of Investigation file revealing that she was under surveillance for almost twenty years because of the Rogovins' political activities. A large International File contains items from Anne and Milton Rogovin's many travels for photographic purposes and correspondence with foreign periodicals about publication projects of Rogovin photographs. Files on the Soviet Union indicate that despite the Rogovins' long-held political views, Soviet officials hindered Milton Rogovin's efforts to photograph miners, much to his disappointment. A file on Chile contains material from Rogovin's trip to visit and collaborate with the poet Pablo Neruda. Also important is the biographical material and interviews of Rogovin.

**Arrangement of the Papers**

The collection is arranged in four series:

- **Correspondence, 1955-2004**
- **Museums and Galleries, 1962-2005**
- **Writings and Photographic Projects, 1948-2003**
- **Miscellany, 1928-2006**
Description of Series

**Container**  
**1-14**  
**Series**  
*Correspondence, 1955-2004*  
Letters sent and received organized into drafts of letter sent, family correspondence, general correspondence, and special correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically therein.

**14-22**  
**Museums and Galleries, 1962-2005**  
Correspondence, printed matter, and financial material. Arranged alphabetically by name of museum or gallery.

**22-26**  
**Writings and Photographic Projects, 1948-2003**  
Drafts of writings, correspondence, notebooks, travel material, publicity and exhibit material, contracts, and financial material. Arranged alphabetically by name of project.

**26-35**  
**Miscellany, 1928-2006**  
Correspondence, Federal Bureau of Investigation file, interviews, news clippings, travel files, grant applications, international file, notebooks, items pertaining to Rogovin's optometry practice and his education, and material concerning Buffalo, N.Y. Arranged alphabetically by topic or name of individual or organization.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **BOX 1-14** | **Correspondence, 1955-2004**  
Letters sent and received organized into drafts of letter sent, family correspondence, general correspondence, and special correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and chronologically therein. |
| **BOX 1** | Drafts of letters sent  
1990-1993  
(11 folders) |
| **BOX 2** | 1994-1997  
(10 folders) |
| **BOX 3** | 1998-2002  
(4 folders) |
| **Family** |  
Hart, Ellen Rogovin (daughter) and Aliya and Malaika (grandchildren), 1958, 1969, 1980-1990, undated  
Rogovin, Anne (wife), 1978-1984  
For additional material see Container 28, Chile, Correspondence  
Ross, Rose Rogovin (cousin), 1975-1976 |
| **General** |  
Adams, Peter, 1985-1994  
Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1977-1978  
Agosin, Marjorie, 1985, 1999-2004  
Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes, Ky., 1970-1971  
Aperture (magazine), 1960-2001  
(2 folders) |
| **BOX 4** |  
Art in America (magazine), 1983-1984  
Attenzione (magazine), 1979-1981  
“A” miscellaneous, 1958, 1972-2003  
Bantum Books, 1976-1977  
Becker, Howard S., 1974-1991  
Bellows, James, 1999  
Black & White Magazine, 2001-2002  
Blatti, Jo, 1982-1991  
Blue, James, 1975  
Bookstein, Ezra, 2001  
Buckland, Gail, concerning Albert and Tipper Gore, 2002  
Burchard, Hank, 1992-1995  
“B” miscellaneous, 1967-2001 |
Cahan, Andrew, 1998
Calkins, Evan (personal physician), 1969-1992
Camera 35 (magazine), 1975-1982
Cameron, Angus, 1973-1977
Chairesalkis, Anna, 1986-1987
Choy, Christine, 1987-1988
Ciel Variable (magazine), 1992

BOX 5
Cope-Nydegger, Jola, 1996
Corbis Corp., 1996-1999
Culhane, Chuck, 1988
“C” miscellaneous, 1969-1999
D’Antonio, Nancy, 1999
Dark Room, Chicago, Ill., 1974
Dayer, Roberta and Roger, 1999
Davidson, Basil, 1968
Dubofsky, Melvin, 1994-1998
Duke University, Center for Documentary Photography, Durham, N.C., 1984-2001
D’Youville College, Buffalo, N.Y., 1994-1995
Eastman Kodak, 1980-1997
Farren, Christine, 1993-1994
Finn, David, 1994-2003
Foerstner, Abigail, 1993
Foner, Henry, 2001
Fotofolio, Inc., 1992
Fox, Steven, attorney
  Copyrights, 1998-2003
  Miscellany, 2000-2003
  Nehin v. Rogovin, 1995-1996

BOX 6
Freudenheim, Nina, 1976-1988
Friedlander, Jonathon, 1979-1994
Frisch, Michael, 1983-1995
“F” miscellaneous, 1967-1999
Grinberg, Raul, 2000, undated
Gorey, Mark, 2003
Hager, Michael, 1990-1991
Correspondence, 1955-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Contents</th>
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| BOX 7     | Hallmark Cards, 1993-1999  
              Hansgen, Karen, 1999  
              Hartnet, Tom, 1998-2000  
              Hecker, Carl, 1995-1996  
              Hughes, Jim, 1988-1996  
              “H” miscellaneous, 1962-2003  
              Irizary, Victor M., 2002-2003  
              “I” miscellaneous, 1976-1994  
              Jackson, Bruce, 1971-1976  
              Jeffrey, Ian, 1978-1992  
              John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 1966, 1989  
              Journeyman Press, 1988  
              Just Buffalo Literary Center, Buffalo, N.Y., 1999-2000  
              Kelen, Leslie, 1986-1987  
              Knaus, David, 1984-2002  
              (4 folders) |
| BOX 8     | Korn, Henri, 1978-1983  
              Kozol, Jonathan, 1995  
              “K” miscellaneous  
              Labor's Heritage (magazine)  
              Correspondence and article, 1991-1995  
              Interview for article, 1995  
              Leary, Virginia, 1988-1999  
              Library Trends (magazine), 1971  
              Licht, Fred, 1980-1998  
              Life (magazine), 1978-1985  
              Look (magazine), 1978-1979  
              Luce, Don, 1997  
              “L” miscellaneous, 1966-2000  
              Mallet, Brian J., 1995-2001  
              Marie Claire (magazine), 1995-2001  
              Meltzer, Milton, 1985-1987  
              Metz, Holly, 1995-1998  
              (2 folders) |
<p>| BOX 9     | Modern Photography (magazine), 1974-1985 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 10</td>
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<td>University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Calif., 1993-1998</td>
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<td>BOX 13</td>
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<td>Wood, James, 1983-1993</td>
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<td>Wypijewski, JoAnn, 1991-1997</td>
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Correspondence, 1955-2004

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<th>Container</th>
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<tr>
<th>BOX 14-22</th>
<th>Museums and Galleries, 1962-2005</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 14</td>
<td>Correspondence, printed matter, and financial material. Arranged alphabetically by name of museum or gallery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 15</td>
<td>Adams Art Gallery, Dunkirk, N.Y., 1989</td>
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<tr>
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<td>BOX 15</td>
<td>1977-2000, undated (3 folders)</td>
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<td>Benjamins Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y., 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 16</td>
<td>Brainerd Art Gallery, Potsdam College, Potsdam, N.Y., 1986</td>
</tr>
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<td>Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo, N.Y., 1996-1999</td>
</tr>
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<td>Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo, N.Y., 1998-1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Milton Rogovin Papers 13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | David Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y., 1990-1994, undated  
|           | Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colo., 1998-1999  
|           | Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art, Chicago, Ill., 1962  
|           | Galleria d’Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy, 1975-1976  
|           | Gallery Luisotti, Santa Monica Calif., 2002  
|           | (2 folders)  
|           | Halstead Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan, 1981-1985, undated  
|           | Indiana University Museum, Bloomington, Ind., 1980-1981  
|           | Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Mass., 1980-1981  
|           | International Center of Photography, New York, N.Y.  
|           | 1969-1984  
|           | (2 folders)  
| BOX 19    | 1985-2003, undated  
|           | (5 folders)  
|           | (3 folders)  
|           | Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, Mich., 1997  
| BOX 19    | Lichtbild-Galerie, Worpswede, Germany, 1994-2002, undated  
|           | (2 folders)  
|           | Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Calif., 1976-1980,  
|           | 1988-1999  
|           | Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Chicago, Ill., 1993-1996, undated  
|           | Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minn., 1982-1985  
|           | Miscellaneous museums  
|           | 1966-1995  
|           | (4 folders)  

Milton Rogovin Papers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 20</th>
<th>1962-2003, undated (1 folder)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Museum Berliner Arbeiterleben, Berlin, Germany, 1993-1995, undated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, Ill., 1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Center for Photo Journalism, Moscow, Soviet Union, 1987-1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York State Museum, Albany, N.Y., 1995-1999, undated (2 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nina-Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y., 1975-1976, 1985, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parts Photographic Arts, Minneapolis, Minn., 1996-1997, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pattern Artists, Buffalo, N.Y., 1969-1974</td>
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<td>Photograph, Gallery of Photography, New York, N.Y., 1981</td>
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<td>Potsdam College Brainerd Art Gallery, Potsdam, N.Y., 1986</td>
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<td>Preus Fotomuseum, Horten, Norway, 1980-2001 (2 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rochester Contemporary, Rochester, N.Y., 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose Art Museum, Waltham, Mass., 1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruhrlandmuseum der Stadt Essen, Essen, Germany, 1987-1989, undated</td>
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<td>Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, Calif., 1998</td>
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<td>Schoharie Museum of the Iroquois Indian, Schoharie, N.Y., 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Mo., 1980</td>
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<td>Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 1995-2000, undated</td>
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<td>Susan Spiritus Gallery, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Museums and Galleries, 1962-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, Fla., 1998  
|           | Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, 1982  
|           | University Gallery, University of Delaware, Newark, Del., 2000, undated  
|           | West Side Exhibit, Buffalo, N.Y., 1975  
|           | Western New York Wares, Buffalo, N.Y., 2000-2001  

BOX 22-26  
**Writings and Photographic Projects, 1948-2003**

Drafts of writings, correspondence, notebooks, travel material, publicity and exhibit material, contracts, and financial material. Arranged alphabetically by name of project.

**BOX 22**  
“Appalachia”
- Background material, 1970-1972, undated
- Correspondence, 1962-1971, undated
- Exhibits and publications, 1970-1972

**BOX 23**  

Autobiography
- Background material, 1948, 1961, 1975, 1985, undated
- Drafts
  - First, circa 1997
    (2 folders)
  - Middle, circa 1998-1999
    (2 folders)
  - Final, circa 2000
    (3 folders)
- “Children Having Children,” 1991-1993
- “Family of Miners,” 1981-1984

**BOX 24**  
Lectures and speeches, 1976-1990, 2000, undated

Milton Rogovin: The Forgotten Ones
- Awards and publicity, 1985-1986
- Correspondence, 1985-1989
- Financial material and miscellany, 1985-1989
- Video, 1988

- “Milton's Poems and Photographs,” 1997
  (3 folders)
  (2 folders)

**BOX 25**  
Native American/ Iroquois project, 1971-1977, undated

Portraits in Steel, 1988-2004
  (2 folders)
- “Punk People,” 1991
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 26 | Triptychs: Buffalo's Lower West Side Revisited  
Contract and financial material, 1992-1998  
Correspondence, 1990-1998  
Essay by Joanne Wypejewski, circa 1993  
Miscellany, 1984, undated  
Publicity, 1993-1995  
Releases, 1975-1992  
Veterans project, 1989-1991  
With Eyes and Soul: Images of Chile with Nancy Morejón, 2003  
Women coal miners, 1981-1987  
Yemini community of Lackawanna, N.Y., 1974-1977, undated |
| BOX 26 | Miscellany, 1928-2006  
Correspondence, Federal Bureau of Investigation file, interviews, news clippings, travel files, grant applications, international file, notebooks, items pertaining to Rogovin’s optometry practice and his education, and material concerning Buffalo, N.Y.  
Arranged alphabetically by topic or name of individual or organization. |
| BOX 26 | Addresses, 1975-1977, undated  
Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County, N.Y., 1992-2000  
Attica State Prison, Attica, N.Y.  
  General, 1980, 1991, undated  
  Washington, Jerome, 1980, undated  
Bandung, Ltd., video project, 1992  
Biographical material  
  Interviews, 1991-1995, undated For additional material see Container 8, Labor’s Heritage, and Container 27, Cardinale, Anthony (2 folders) |
| BOX 27 | Résumé and miscellany, 1975-2000, undated  
Cardinale, Anthony, 1975-1997, undated  
Freedom of Information Act request, 1966, 1978 For additional material see Container 34, Rogovin, Anne, Federal Bureau of Investigation file  
General Services Administration, Art in Architecture program, 1992-1994 Grants  
  Creative Artists Public Service Program, 1977-1983  
  Guggenheim Foundation, 1984-1991  
  Nathan-Cummings Foundation, 1989-1990  
  National Endowment for the Arts, 1974-1981  
Herald Square Subway Complex Art Competition, New York, N.Y.  
  General, 1988 |
## Container | Contents
--- | ---
**BOX 28** | Humboldt Rapid Transit Station Art Program, Buffalo, N.Y., 1982-1985, 1994-1995
 | International file
 | Chile
 | Correspondence
 | General, 1966-1972
 | Neruda, Pablo, 1966-1968
 | Rogovin, Anne, 1967
 | (2 folders)
 | Cuba
 | Correspondence, 1977-1999
 | (2 folders)
 | General, 1984-2001
 | Czechoslovakia
 | Correspondence, 1966-1997
 | (2 folders)
**BOX 29** | General, 1977, 1989-1990, undated
 | Egypt, 1981
 | Germany
 | Federal Republic of Germany (West)
 | Conant, Michael, 1983-1985, 2000
 | Einheit, 1983-1985
 | Miscellaneous, 1981-1984
 | Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1982-1995
 | Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen, 1984-1987
 | German Democratic Republic (East)
 | Correspondence, 1967-1979
 | VEB Fotokinoverlag, 1975-1984
 | Greece
 | Correspondence, 1976-1979, 1999-2000
**BOX 30** | Mexico
 | General, 1953, 1988
 | Netherlands, 1981-1988
 | Periodicals
 | Australia, 1975-1977
Bulgaria, 1975-1984
Denmark, 1979-1981
Finland, 1976-1982
France, 1975-1981, undated
Germany, 1977, 1995
Hungary, 1975-1980
India, 1978
Italy, 1974-1979
Japan, 1974-1995
Netherlands, 1975-1980
Norway, 1977-1981
Poland, 1971-1978
Soviet Union, 1972
Spain, 1975-1982
Sweden, 1975-1995
Switzerland, 1968-1981

Scotland

Correspondence, 1982-1988
General, 1982-1989, undated

Soviet Union See also Container 9, National Council of American-Soviet Friendship

Correspondence, 1971-1983
(3 folders)
Travel file, 1972
Spain, 1983
Sweden, 1977, 1990
Zimbabwe

Correspondence, 1987-1993
General, 1987-1991

Interviews of others, 1972, 1987, undated
Inventory project sign-out sheets, 2004-2006
(3 folders)
Media Study/ Buffalo, 1976-1984
Miscellaneous, 1976-1990, undated
New York State Council on the Arts, Governor’s Art Award, 2000
News clippings
   Buffalo Courier-Express, 1959, 1968, 1974-1982, undated
   Buffalo News

   Bannon, Anthony, 1975-1985, undated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | General, 1959, 1975-2001, undated  
|           | Reeves, Jean, 1966-1970, undated  
|           | Democratic Journalist, 1987  
|           | Einheit, 1984-1985  
|           | Ethos, 1972-1975  
|           | Niagara Gazette, 1975-1985  
|           | Notebook of magazine articles, 1970-1989  
|           | Record, 1975, 1982  
|           | Spectrum/Prodigal Sun, 1975, 1982-1985, 1994  
|           | Village Voice, 1985  
|           | Niagara Street monument, Buffalo, N.Y., 1997  
|           | Notebooks, 1982, undated  
|           | Optometry practice, 1945, 1970, undated  
|           | Palestinian rights, 1980, undated  
|           | Paul Robeson festival, Philadelphia, Pa., 1987-1990  
| BOX 34    | Quotations collection, undated  
|           | (2 folders)  
|           | Rice, Shelley, 1976, undated  
|           | Rogovin Anne  
|           | Federal Bureau of Investigation file (Freedom of Information Act request), 1944-1962  
|           | (4 folders)  
| BOX 35    | Miscellany, 1982-1990, undated  
|           | Paula, biographical book proposal  
|           | Binder of background material, 1965-1989  
|           | (2 folders)  
|           | Correspondence and outlines, circa 1990- circa 1995  
|           | Sanchez, Sonia, 2000-2001  
|           | State University College at Buffalo | See also Container 11, same heading |
|           | American Studies Department, 1971-1993  
|           | Art Conservation Department, 1990-1991  
|           | State University of New York, University at Buffalo | See also Container 11, same heading |
|           | General, 1968-1993, undated  
|           | Honorary doctorate, 1993  
|           | WBFO radio, 1970-1975  
|           | Unpublished reviews, 1978-1984, undated  

Milton Rogovin Papers 20