



Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Records UA.16.84

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Summary Information

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Historical Note

The department officially began as the Department of Bacteriology and Farm Hygiene during the 1900-1901 academic year. Charles Marshall was appointed assistant professor and department head (and only faculty member) that year. Marshall came to Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University) in 1897 as bacteriologist and hygienist in the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. In its earliest years, the bacteriology lab was part of the Veterinary Laboratory building located just west of the present day Agricultural Hall.

In 1902, the first free-standing building devoted to teaching and research in bacteriology in the nation was built. Now named Marshall Hall, it housed the department (renamed the Department of Bacteriology and Hygiene in 1902) for the next 50 years. In its early years,

the focus was on undergraduate teaching and research into farm-related bacteriology. As an example of the impact of the department, in 1916, over 60% of the students at then Michigan Agricultural College took at least one course in bacteriology. In 1914, it was said to have "probably the best equipped laboratory in the United States" due to profits from the sale of the hog cholera vaccine it produced. Marshall left M.A.C. in 1912, with Ward Giltner appointed to head the department. Giltner also became Dean of the Veterinary School in 1923. On his retirement in 1947, he had been department head for 35 years, having also been dean for last the 24 years of that time. The department became heavily involved in teaching veterinary students with the beginning of this college shortly after 1910. The first M.S. was awarded in 1915 and first Ph.D. in 1925. In 1930, Alfred Hershey received his B.S. in bacteriology, followed by a Ph.D. in 1934, working with I.F. Huddleson of this department. Hershey went on to receive the Nobel Prize in 1969 for his later work on bacterial viruses (bacteriophage). In 1926 Giltner began the first B.S. program in medical biology (later to become medical technology) in the U.S. In 1943, the department's name was changed to Bacteriology and Public Health, in part to reflect the heavy involvement of departmental faculty in public health-related diseases such as brucellosis and tuberculosis, along with its teaching commitment in medical biology. In 1954, the name was further changed to Microbiology and Public Health, indicative of the growing interest in parasitology and fungal diseases. In 1993, it dropped "and Public Health" from the name in recognition of the (much earlier) splitting off of the Medical Technology Program and its increased emphasis on basic research in all fields of microbiology.

Having outgrown Marshall Hall, the department moved to the newly built central wing of the veterinary complex, renamed Giltner Hall, in late 1952. After the establishment of the College of Natural Science and, much later, the Colleges of Human and Osteopathic Medicine, the department became a component of each of these units, a unique shared arrangement that allows the department to maintain critical masses of faculty in a number of relevant research areas. As a result, the department has become one of the largest such units in the nation. At some point most of the undergraduate programs were transferred from the College of Veterinary Medicine to the College of Natural Science (as the D.V.M. became purely a professional degree).

In 1989, many departmental faculty were involved in the successful development of the Center for Microbial Ecology, one of the first eleven Science and Technology Centers awarded by the National Science Foundation (only two of which were biology-based). In 1990, the department became home to Bergey's Manual and the Bergey's Manual Trust office. The department celebrated its centennial in 2000, and is relocated in the new Biomedical and Physical Sciences Building connected to the existing Chemistry and Biochemistry Buildings on south campus. The new facilities enhance the already high level of multi-disciplinary research being done in the department and its ability to recruit the best available faculty, students, and postdoctoral staff.

These highlights are based on "The History of Bacteriology in Michigan," compiled by A. S. Schlingman for the 57th annual meeting of the Society of American Bacteriologists (Detroit, 1957), recollections of Frank Peabody, Harold Sadoff and other emeritus faculty, early reports to the State Board of Agriculture from Charles Marshall, and, most of all, the "Recollections of Early Microbiology at Michigan State University" of W. L. Mallmann (1974).

The preceding history was taken from the MSU Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Department website <https://mmg.natsci.msu.edu/about/history/>

The department has undergone several name changes over the years, including:

Bacteriology and Farm Hygiene: 1900-1901. Bacteriology and Hygiene: 1901-1943
Bacteriology and Public Health: 1943-1954 Microbiology and Public Health: 1954-1993
Microbiology: 1993-? Microbiology and Molecular Genetics: ?-present (2012) [name change occurred sometime between 1997 and 2000)

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Scope and Contents

This collection consists of administrative, curricular, and research papers of the Department of Microbiology from its beginnings at the beginning of 1900 through 1987. Administrative files include records from the Advisory Committee (1967–1970), Executive Committee (1965–1969), Curriculum Committee (1964–1970), Graduate Committee (1964–1969), Correspondence (1967–1971), Faculty Meetings (1965–1970), Annual Reports of faculty (1952–1968), and Staff Memorandums (1967–1968). Research papers include Charles E. Marshall's "Bacteriology and the Bacteriological Laboratory" (1904) and Phillip A. Hawkins' "Introduction to Parasitology" (1944). There is also "The History of Bacteriology in Michigan" by A. S. Schlingman (1957).

Annual reports of the department are available for 1901–1938, 1955–1957, and 1959–1971.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Controlled Access Headings

- Microbiology
- Microbiology -- Research
- Public health
- Public health -- Research
- Annual reports
- Correspondence
- Minutes (administrative records)
- Michigan State University. Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
- Michigan State University. Department of Microbiology and Public Health

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Administrative Groups: Notes and Minutes, 1966	box 580	folder 1
Advisory Committee		
Title/Description	Instances	
General Information and Papers, 1969	box 580	folder 2
Memorandums , October 1968- June 1969	box 580	folder 3

Memorandums and Papers, 1969-1970	box 580	folder 4
Minutes and Agendas		
Title/Description	Instances	
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January - June 1969	box 580	folder 6
September 1969 – June 1970	box 580	folder 7
Notes and Correspondence, January- June 1969	box 580	folder 8
Papers and Proposals, undated	box 580	folder 9-10
AIBS Roster, January 1967	box 580	folder 11
Annual Reports of Individual Faculty		
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R.C. Belding, 1953-1968	box 580	folder 12
E.S. Beneke and R.R. Brubaker, 1966-1968	box 580	folder 13
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Ralph N. Costilow, 1952-1968	box 580	folder 15
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Chas H. Cunningham, 1955-1968	box 580	folder 17
Irving Dahljelm, 1957-1968	box 580	folder 18
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R.W. Hinz and Peter Hirsh, 1967-1968	box 580	folder 19
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A. Mallmann, 1960-1968	box 580	folder 21
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"Bacteriology and the Bacteriological Laboratory" by Charles E. Marshall, June 1904	box 581	folder 85
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November – December	box 581	folder 8
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Bacteriology and the Bacteriological Laboratory" by Charles E. Marshall, June 1904	box 581	folder 85
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"A Study of the Methods of Measuring Germicidal Chlorine with Reference to the Oxidation-reduction Potential, Starch-iodide Titration and Ortho-tolidine Titration" by William B. Ardrey, 1939	box 581	folder 77
Symposiums and Workshops, 1983, 1987	box 581	folder 78
"Treatment of Brucellosis in Humans by Means of Sulfonamides and Normal Human Blood" by I. Forest Huddleson, undated	box 581	folder 79
Undergraduate Information, 1966, undated	box 581	folder 80
Photographs. Electron microscopy	box 581	folder 87
History of the Department by W. Mallmann (Copy in MSU Info File under Microbiology) , 1974	drawer F.D.	folder 1

Annual Reports

Title/Description	Instances
Published in State Board Reports	volume Bd. of Ag.
1901	
1902	
1903	
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