



Archives and Special Collections Department,  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
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## **Dr. Saul Rosenberg Collection, 1932-1978**

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the University Libraries, AUB  
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## Descriptive Summary

**Call No.:** Ph: SR: 1932-1978:1512

**Bib record:** [b2601421x](#)

**Record Creator:** Saul Rosenberg, 1912-1988.

**Collection Title:** Saul Rosenberg Collection, 1932-1978.

**Collection Dates:** 1932-1978; bulk 1932-1939

**Physical Description:** around 1.6 linear feet (5 boxes)

**Abstract:** The 1930s were a time when people in the Near East, like the rest of the world, suffered from economic depression and recession. Despite the long years of hardship, for people in the region, Beirut remained the most sought destination in the Levant where it came to securing quality education for future generations. Citizens of neighboring countries sent their children to join the University to prepare them, to take over the leadership of their nations at the various political, financial, religious, medical levels. Over nearly eight decades, between 1860 and 1930s, AUB became the hub of international education where future generations were given endless opportunities to gain knowledge and skills needed to bring back prosperity to their countries and communities. AUB was so valued for the education it offered that, despite the economic recession across the globe, governments of countries like Palestine, Iraq, Transjordan, Ethiopia, and Sudan, continued to send young men to study at AUB. The Governor of Cyprus visited the university in the 1930s to discuss the possibility of sending students to Beirut.<sup>1</sup> Beirut was also the destination for other international students. During that time, around 1934, the count of international students was around 1,406 of which 58 were Americans. Saul Rosenberg was one of the students who came all the way from the United States to enroll at AUB, after attempting to join medical schools across the US and Germany.

**Language(s):** Mainly English.

## Administrative Information

**Source:** The Saul Rosenberg collection was donated to the University Libraries Archives by his siblings Hallie, Deborah, and Hiram Rosenberg in 2015.

**Access Restrictions:** The collection can be consulted within the premises of the Archives and Special Collections Department, Jafet Memorial Library, American University of Beirut.

**Photocopying Restriction:** No photocopying restriction except for fragile and handwritten material.

**Preferred Citation:** Saul Rosenberg Collection, 1932-1978, Ph:SR:1932-1978:1512, Box no., File/album no., American University of Beirut/Library Archives

## Scope and Content

The Saul Rosenberg Collection unique collection, 1.6 linear feet, comprises five oil paintings by the record creator, two letters to his family, Rosenberg's passport, three photo albums, some loose photographs and digital copies of colored photos. The albums contain 1,432 photographs taken by Dr. Rosenberg himself mostly during his days at AUB Medical School, between 1932 and 1939, along with forty-nine digital copies of colored photos that portray Saul's later visit to Beirut in 1978. In addition to all these there are to thirty-one loose black and white photos of Saul and his friends. While in Medical School, Rosenberg did not keep a diary in the traditional sense; his photo albums provided a record of his life. He took many photographs of his trips back and forth from New York to Beirut visiting many European and Middle Eastern countries like France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine. He also photographed his professors and classmates,

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<sup>1</sup> Near East College Association (New York, N.Y.), American University of Beirut., American College for Girls (Istanbul, Turkey), Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey), International College, Smyrna., Athens College., & American College of Sofia. (1929). Annual report of the Near East College Association Incorporated. New York, N.Y: Near East College Association.

clinics, operating rooms, as well as campus buildings and grounds. Among the three albums, album III includes most of the photographs chronologically organized. Albums I and II have duplicates of bigger prints from Album III, however album II includes 19 photographs and album I includes 21 photographs that are not available in album III.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Born on February 18, 1912 in Brooklyn, New York, USA, to Hyman Rosenberg and Bella Newman, Saul Rosenberg received his school and college education in his home country and graduated from New York University with a bachelor's degree in 1934. After a trip to Germany, in 1932 he travelled to Lebanon and enrolled at the American University of Beirut to finish his studies, in 1939, as a Doctor of Medicine. He married Cecelia Lois Freedland, in 1942, and had four children, Hannah, Leah, Deborah, and Hiram.<sup>2</sup>

After he graduated from AUB, he went back to the States and worked at Flushing Hospital in New York State. He then tried to enlist in the Army when the USA entered WWII but was rejected for medical reasons. Later he joined the Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1941. While at VA hospitals in Illinois, he was sent to Washington, DC for special training in dermatology.

Eventually, he was able to transfer to the Army and was sent to Camp Ellis for an assignment to train an entire field hospital staff together and send them out as a unit. Later, just as he was about to board a ship to the Pacific Theater, he suffered a severe gallbladder attack. Upon recovery from a surgery to remove the gallbladder, he was sent back to the Denver, Colorado Veteran Affairs (VA) in 1944 to care for the many soldiers returning from the European Front.

After being demobilized, in 1946, he and his wife settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he established a practice in general medicine. However, his interest in dermatology was strong and he returned to medical school in New York City for post-graduate training. When he passed his Dermatology Boards, he shifted to a full-time practice in that specialty. Rosenberg had several hobbies among them was painting mainly from photographs he had taken in Beirut. Dr. Rosenberg passed away on June 1, 1988.

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged in two series:

### **Series I: Photograph Collection**

- Subseries I: Album I: 130 black and white photographs, 1932-1933.
- Subseries II: Album II: 103 black and white photographs, 1930s.
- Subseries III: Album III: 1,199 black and white photographs, 1934-1938.
- Subseries IV: 31 Loose black and white photographs, 1936-1938
- Subseries V: 49 Digital color photographs, April 18, 1978 - April 20, 1978

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<sup>2</sup> American University of Beirut. (1953). *Directory of alumni, 1870-1952*. Beirut

## **Series II: Archival Collection**

Five oil paintings by Saul Rosenberg, two letters from Saul to his family during his residency in Beirut, Lebanon, in the 1930s, Rosenberg's passport, and one postcard of "Hotel Villa des Pins," Broumana, Lebanon, [1930s].

### **Subject Headings**

American University of Beirut. Faculty of Medicine -- Students.

American University of Beirut -- Buildings -- Photographs.

American University of Beirut -- Photographs.

Universities & colleges -- Lebanon -- Beirut -- 1930-1940.

Educational facilities -- Lebanon -- Beirut -- 1930-1940.

American University of Beirut -- Students -- Photographs.

Medical students -- Lebanon -- Beirut.

Medicine -- Study and teaching -- Lebanon.

Middle East -- Description and travel.

Beirut (Lebanon) -- Pictorial works.

### **Format**

Photographic prints -- 1930-1940.

### **Container List**

The photograph collection is organized as received, mainly chronologically.

## **Series I: Photograph Collection**

### **Subseries I: Album I: 1932-1933**

**Physical Description:** The album contains 130 black and white photographs of sizes that range between 16 cm x 11cm and 15 cm x 9 cm usually pasted one to a page with handwritten captions. The original organization and sequence of the prints has been maintained.

**Scope and Content:** The first 19 photographs in this album were taken by Rosenberg in Germany and France during pre-war period, around 1932-1934. The collection is mounted on 105 pages. The photographs depict Church steeple, a building with arched canopies and covered streets in Münster, Germany, the cathedral and the suspension bridge across the Rhine, sunset along the "Dortmund-Ems" Canal in Westphalia, Germany, as well as a bicycle trip from Cologne to Paris portraying Eiffel Tower and a cabaret music hall, the "Folies Bergere". Saul stayed in Germany for some time, but when Hitler came to power, Rosenberg decided to leave the country and headed to Beirut; two photographs from that time show people saluting Hitler and a street full of Gestapo "Secret State Police." The rest of photos in album I, 111 photographs, consist of a selection of bigger print duplicates of photographs available in album III.

## **Subseries II: Album II: 1930s**

**Physical Description:** The album contains 103 black and white photographs of sizes that range between 16.5 cm x 11.5 cm and 11 cm x 7.5 cm, pasted one on each page with handwritten captions. The original organization and sequence of the prints has been maintained.

**Scope and Content:** In this album, most photographs are bigger prints of photos of album III. Out of the 103 photographs, there are only 21 photographs not included in the above-mentioned album. One of the photos shows the sunrise over Brooklyn, New York, another is of the Battery and the East River Bridges. Other photos reflect his professional life after he left AUB in 1939. Two photos show Dr. Rosenberg as an intern at Flushing Hospital, four photos are of him with nurses, another photo shows him tying the umbilical cord of a newborn baby. Also available in this album, one photo is of Queens General Hospital in Jamaica, New York, and eleven photographs taken in Germany, Los Angeles, Catalina Island, Brooklyn-Prospect Park, Chicago Brookfield Zoo, Syria, and Egypt, that show different animals.

## **Subseries II: Album III: 1934-1939**

**Physical Description:** The album includes 1,199 photographs of size 4.5 cm x 3.5 cm each, pasted sixteen per page with brief handwritten captions and/or humorous remarks. The album has 88 pages there are seven photographs at the end of the album of sizes between 7 cm x 10 cm and 13 cm x 8 cm, and five captioned spaces with missing images. The first page of the album shows a colored AUB seal on the lower right side and an Ex-LIBRIS stamp featuring a hand holding a flame over a book and the name of Saul Rosenberg printed in the middle. One page at the end labeled “Finis July 1938”, has drawing of a cedar tree with caption “UT Vitam Habeant” which means “So That They May Have Life”, the first portion of the American University of Beirut Motto adopted by the Founding Fathers of AUB. There are also two meticulously hand drawn maps; one of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan in September 1935, page 12; the other one is titled “Travels in Syria”, page 23b, which documents a seven-day trip to Syria during the Christmas season of 1936.

**Scope and Content:** This album documents the departure of Saul Rosenberg from New York on August 14, 1934 aboard S.S. Leviathan, his arrival to Beirut on August 24, 1934 and his life as a medical student and travels during this period until his graduation in 1939.

Photographs consist of scenes and landmarks of countries Rosenberg visited on his way back and forth from New York to Beirut, such as Le Havre, Le Louvre, Place de la Bastille, and the Panthéon in France. There are also photos he took on his visits to Switzerland and Italy like Saint Mark's Basilica, Jewish Ghettos in Europe, Trieste, the wall of Appian Way, and Mussolini's balcony. In addition to pictures from Greece, namely of the Acropolis, the Parthenon, Propylaea, the Caryatid Porch of the Erechtheion, Sanctuary of Zeus Polieus, Temple of Zeus at Olympia, and the Corinthian Canal.

Rosenberg also visited several cities in the Middle East like Jerusalem where he took photos of important sites like David's Citadel, Wailing Wall, Mosque of Omar, Via Dolorosa, Mount of Olives and War Memorial. The album includes photos of the Majestic Baha'i Gardens in Haifa, Sea of Galilee (Kinneret) and Maimonides' tomb in Tiberius. Furthermore, the photographs of Lebanon by Rosenberg cover images of

downtown Beirut with famous landmarks like Grand Serial, Beirut markets like the clock auction, the Knick Knack market, and the meat market. He was interested to represent local workers of the time, like basket boys, knife grinders and fortunetellers. Also available in this album shots of AUB campus, photos of professors and students during classes, the funeral of Dean Edward Nickoley, March 1937, Easter and Passover celebrations, and other shots taken at the beach. Rosenberg made sure to document his trips with his friends to Broumana, Antelias, Batroun, Dog River, Wadi Chahrour, Baalbek, as well as various parts of Syria.

Rosenberg did not limit his photo diary to documenting his days at AUB; he also took photos when he was on visits to his home in New York. He documented the city's landmarks of the time such as Prometheus Sculpture and RCA, General Electric Building, the Woolworth building, the Empire State Building, and City Hall. Album III also includes family outings like a picnic in Netcong, New Jersey, family visit to Manhattan Beach, in addition to individual and group shots of his parents and siblings on various occasions. There are also eight photographs taken in 1936 that document the wedding of Saul's brother, with him as the best man. Finally, the album also includes portraits of AUB Medical Class of 1939: Rosenberg and his classmates with satiric poem dedicated to each friend. Also available on page 84 a portrait of Dr. Rosenberg in his cap and gown with a note "Wait till next year". Searching minutes of University Senate shows that he graduated in December 1939.

#### **Subseries IV: Loose black and white photographs, 1930s**

**Scope and Content:** Thirty-one loose black and white photographs of varied sizes that show individual and group portraits of Rosenberg and his friends mostly at AUB. There is one graduation portrait of Salim Aghababa by photographer Assad Dakouny with dedication verso in addition to one photo of the façade of Van Dyck Hall and Outpatient Clinic on Bliss Street.

#### **Subseries V: Digital color photographs, 1978**

**Scope and Content:** The forty-nine digital photographs cover the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg to Lebanon in 1978. His daughter, Hallie Metzger, sent these photos later to be added to the collection.

#### **Series II: Archival Collection**

- Five oil paintings by Saul Rosenberg: Peasants wondering in the woods, Beirut Bay of Saint George, AUB Campus from Saul's room, The Butcher Shop, and a Bedouin woman carrying a jar.
- Two letters from Saul to his family during his residency in Beirut, Lebanon.
- Rosenberg's passport issued by the US Department of State.
- One postcard of "Hotel Villa des Pins," Broumana, Lebanon, [1930s].

#### **Related Material**

##### **Archival material**

- Minutes of Faculty Meetings 1867-1940, AA: 3.4.2 concerning granting Saul Rosenberg the degree of Doctor of Medicine and Surgery.

- Minutes of the Executive Committee, Dec. 12, 1939
- Minutes of University Senate, Dec. 19, 1939
- Minutes of meeting at the School of Medicine at AUB AA: 3.9.2
- Students 1930s, [AA: 4.3.5](#)
- Student Magazines, 1899-1934, [AA: 4.21](#)

## Articles

### [Al Kulliyah Review](#)

- v. 2, no. 9, March 9, 1935, p:5
- v. 4, no. 14, May 29, 1937, p:5
- v. 5, no.1, October 9, 1937, p:5

## Books

- Nassar, M. (2014). *Clinical medicine research history at the American University of Beirut, Faculty of Medicine 1920-1974*. Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press. [CA: 610.72:N265o:2014](#)
- Sayah, E. N. (1997). *The American University of Beirut and its educational activities in Lebanon, 1920-1967*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Information Service. [CA: 378.569S274a](#)

## Periodicals

- [Main Gate. Fall 2015, vol. 14, no.1, p:24](#)
- [Annual report to the Board of Trustees of the American University of Beirut.](#)
- [Annual Reports of the Lebanon Hospital for the Insane at Asfouriyeh, 1934-1939](#)
- Kahlenberg, C. (2019). *The star of David in a cedar tree*. The Middle Eastern Studies v. 55, no.4, pp. 570 – 589. DOI: [10.1080/00263206.2018.1560272](#)

## Photographs

- [Tamir Nassar - articles and albums from expeditions in the 1930s](#)
- Group of Students, 1930s [Ph:AUB:1930s\(07\):1-4:42](#)
- Department of Chemistry faculty and students, 1930s [Ph:AUB:1930s\(05\):01:42](#)
- Students studying in library, 1930s [Ph:AUB:1930s\(02\):01:42](#)
- Astronomy Class, 1930s [Ph:AUB:1930s\(06\):01:42](#)
- Athletics, 1920s-1930s [Ph:AUB:1930s\(09\):1-95:42](#)
- Students from Syrian University at a luncheon on campus, 1936 [Ph:AUB:1936/04/24:1-2:42](#)
- International students, 1937 [Ph:AUB:1937\(04\):1-3:42](#)
- Dedication of Dr. Yaqub Sarruf's bust, 1937 [Ph:AUB:1937/06/20:01:42](#)
- Urwa El-Wuthqa Society, 1938 [Ph:AUB:1938\(04\):01:42](#)
- Soccer game between AUB and Barada Club, 1938 [Ph:AUB:1938/04/03:01:42](#)
- Senior Class of 1938 [Ph:AUB:1938\(01\):01:42](#)
- Aerial views of AUB Campus and Beirut, 1938 [Ph:AUB:1938/03/25:1-21:42](#)
- Graduating Class of Medicine, 1938-1939 [Ph:AUB:1939\(05\):01:42](#)

- Portrait of Jane Van Zandt, 1939 [Ph:AUB:1939\(01\):01:42](#)
- Medical buildings of the American University of Beirut, 1920s-1930s  
[Ph:AUB:1920s-1930s\(03\):1-90:38](#)

### **Postcards**

- 'Isa Iskandar al-Ma'uf Postcard Collection, 1900-1940s [Ph:IIM:1900-1940:783](#)