



Finding Aid for

RALPH GREGORY PAPERS, 1963-1985

Accession 2016.8

Finding Aid Published: January 2017



Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Boulevard · Dearborn, MI 48124-5029 USA
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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
research.center@thehenryford.org

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2016.8

CREATOR: Gregory, Ralph L., 1935-

TITLE: Ralph Gregory Papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1963-1985

QUANTITY: 0.75 cubic ft. (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: The Ralph Gregory Papers include the original code and notes of operation for a unique home accounting personal computer program created by Gregory called HOMAC.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: The collection is open for research.
- COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION: Donated to The Henry Ford, 2016.
- RELATED MATERIAL: Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- Heathkit H88 Computer, 1979, and Peripherals.
Accession 2010.53. Artifacts have been digitized and are available online at
<https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/363696>
- PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 2016.8, Ralph Gregory Papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed by Brian Wilson, December 2016. Material originally housed in vinyl binders was removed and placed in folders retaining the order found in the binders.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Original collection inventory list prepared by Brian Wilson, November 2016.

Finding aid written by Brian Wilson, December 2016, and published in January 2017.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Ralph L. Gregory graduated from Utica (Mich.) High School in 1953, and then went on to the University of Michigan to study chemistry, graduating in June 1957. He was married in January 1957, had 2 children and, after a number of different jobs, took a position with Ford Motor Co. where he worked in Ford's vinyl plant. After sending his wife (Trudy Gregory) to medical school followed by an internship, Gregory returned to college, this time at Wayne State University where he graduated in 1970 with a Ph.D. in Chemistry.

Gregory's field of study at Wayne State was the physical chemistry of polymers, and his interest in computers was sparked by the fact that the chemistry department allowed him to substitute Fortran for one of the two required foreign languages. As soon as the Heath Company made a personal computer kit available, Gregory bought and built one (now in the collections of The Henry Ford, Accession 2010.53). He wrote a program for managing home financial accounts, which he thought he would sell commercially, but being a perfectionist, he withheld while continuing to improve the program, only later discovering that someone else had made a similar application available.

When PC's became commercially available, Gregory was quick to upgrade with every improvement, and was considered a computer expert. While at Ford, he held several computer classes for interested employees after work. Gregory retired from Ford in 1991.

- Adapted from a biography supplied by Gertrude Gregory

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Ralph Gregory Papers, 1963-1985 (0.75 cubic ft.) include the original code and notes of operation for a unique home accounting program created by Gregory called HOMAC (1983). In addition, there are programming documents (WordStar, SuperCalc), information on language compilers, and shortcut sheets (PASCAL, CP/M, BASIC). Programs for Mail-It (a mailing list database), SPELL (a spelling detection program recognizing "almost 50,000 English words"), a "real time clock/calendar," and leisure programs like Computer Chess and instruction for creating computer music are also included.

These documents are an encapsulation of the type of data that was being encountered among home computing enthusiasts in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Handwritten addenda for operation and code adjustments by Gregory lend a personal air to these papers. The documents provide a view into a time when computing was beginning to intersect with digital home management, which led to Gregory's creation of an accounting program to suit his own way of handling home finances.

Researchers should note that The Henry Ford holds Ralph Gregory's Heathkit H88 Computer in its collections under Accession 2010.53. The computer and peripherals have been digitized and

can be found online at <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/363696>.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
Gregory, Ralph L., 1935-
Heath Company

Subjects
Computers
Microcomputers
Communication
Software
Business & finance

Genre and Form
Programs (computer)
Manuals (Instructional materials)

CONTAINER LIST

Box no.	Description
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Box 1

WASPS Basic Manual and Problem Formulation for a Digital Computer, Sections I and II, 1963 and 1966 (1 item; manual and report bound together in single binder; manual and report published by Wayne State University)

Binder, "CPM", 1981-1983 (5 folders; contents removed from original binder to folders and binder retained; binder inscribed by Trudy Gregory; binder sections: General, Basic, Pie, Supercalc, Wordstar, SD directory program, Mail-It, Spell, Music)

Box 2

Binder, 1981-1982 (4 folders; contents removed from original binder to folders; binder sections: Tiny Pascal, Run Off, Renum, Comp Chess, Life, PIE – Programma Improved Editor, FDUMP, HCDVD Screen Printer, Sysmod 2, MSMA-SAP-PHLAGS Dirsort, PC89 Clock, REACH, RT.DVD)

Binder, "HOMAC for H89", 1982-1985 (4 folders; contents removed from original binder to folders; binder sections: Documentation, Help, HOMAC, Menu, Load, Read, ReadSorted, Correct, Sort, SeekRead, Budget, Cheknumbers, Gas (section empty))