

**The Rapaport-Holt correspondence:
The Menninger connection and the history of the *IPBooks* project**

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I begin with a tale of two cities. The first is Rochester, Minnesota, where Dr. William Mayo opened a medical clinic and sent his two sons to medical school. After they graduated, they returned to develop the family Mayo Clinic. The second is Topeka, Kansas, where CF Menninger decided to emulate William Mayo and also started a medical clinic. He sent his two sons, Karl and Will, to Harvard Medical School. Karl returned to Topeka in 1919. However, at Harvard he had become interested in psychiatry, influenced by Edward Southard. Instead of founding a medical clinic like the Mayo, he persuaded his father to establish a psychiatric clinic, the Menninger Clinic. He was then joined by Will Menninger when he returned from Boston. Will raised money from private investors to open the Menninger Sanatorium in 1925.

Karl commuted to Chicago for analytic training at the Chicago Institute, where his analyst was Franz Alexander. Karl became the first graduate of the Chicago Institute, and Will became a psychoanalyst as well. David Rapaport came to the Menninger in Topeka in 1940. He had moved from Mount Sinai in NYC to Osawatomie State Hospital in Osawatomie, Kansas, sent by Gardner Murphy, a City College psychologist who later moved to Topeka with his wife Lois. Karl found Rapaport in Osawatomie and brought him to Topeka.

Karl went on to rescue **Margaret Brenman** in 1941 from Kansas University. She became his second-in-command and began a hypnosis research project. **Merton Gill** came to Topeka as a psychiatric resident, but he was as much a psychological researcher as a psychiatrist. Rapaport recruited Roy Schafer, Sybille Escalona, and Martin Mayman for his research department. Mayman arrived in 1944: like Schafer, he came from CCNY as a psychiatric intern.

The Menninger School of Psychiatry opened in the fall of 1946. There were more than one hundred residents, many returning from the Army, where they had been recruited to work as psychiatrists by Will. Rapaport assembled a very impressive group of psychologists: George Klein came from the New School that same year. Robert Holt also came to Topeka in 1946, after receiving a PhD in psychology from Harvard. Lester Luborksy came in 1947. Phil Holzman and Herbert Schlesinger had both completed their PhDs in a cooperative program that Rapaport set up with KU. **Milton Wexler** came from Winter, VA in 1946 as a clinical psychologist. It should be noted that Holt, Brenman *et al.* were politically active leftists.

Rapaport was attentive, paternalistic, and overbearing. Others described him as a Prussian taskmaster; but he was also a wonderful facilitator and promoted leadership and cooperation within his group. Rapaport announced his resignation in 1948, to the great dismay of everyone in Topeka and especially to the group of psychologists whom he had assembled. His leaving was determined by many factors. First, he was recruited by Bob Knight, who had left earlier for Austen Riggs. Second, he wanted more time to do his research and not have to spend time on clinical tasks for the Foundation. Also, a rift had developed between Rapaport and Karl, probably based in part on the fact that they were very much alike. Holt said both men were “second to nobody.” Rapaport shared Karl’s belief that psychologists could become training analysts, and in fact arranged training analyses for the Menninger School of Psychiatry. Psychiatric Fellows by psychologists on the staff. Rapaport and Schafer transformed the psychological profession with their book on psychological testing *Diagnostic Psychological Testing: The Theory, Statistical Evaluation, and Diagnostic Application of a Battery of Tests, Volumes 1 and 2* published in 1945-46.

At the Menninger Clinic, psychological testing was central to treatment and applicants for the residency were tested as well (I was an exception).

Rapaport was committed to metapsychology and to systematizing Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. His own students, however, rebelled against metapsychology and its systemization. The rebels included Gill, Schafer, Klein, Mayman, Holt and Holzman, all of whom had belonged to the Rapaport group in the 40s. This group began in the 50s and extended into the 70s. Mayman wanted to develop a middle language with Self as the key concept. Most wished and attempted to develop ways to test Freudian theories; but I think Rapaport shared Freud’s skepticism about such efforts. Klein, Holzmann and Schlesinger, as well as Holt, were present for that endeavor.

Rapaport wanted to define internal consistency in Freud’s theory, so it would be compatible with a unified central theory of thinking and learning. Knight invited Rapaport, Gill, Brenman and Schafer to Austen Riggs; Schafer accepted first. Rapaport left because clinical dates in Winter, VA cut into his research time. Schafer began his analysis with Knight shortly after Schafer arrived in Stockbridge. In 1943, Knight started a training analysis with Brenman and Gill; Knight also analyzed Gill’s wife. Knight told Brenman he was leaving while Gill’s wife was in analysis with him. Brenman and Gill were very close: an almost incestuous environment prevailed. Escalona would replace Rapaport as Research Director.

I will stop at this point. Arthur Lynch, who is the co-editor of the ipbooks publication *The Holt-Rapaport Correspondence*, will talk about how the project came about as well as the letters themselves, I am personally grateful to Bob Holt, who made the book which is now in press possible, for his indefatigable effort.