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Guide to the A.L. Strand Oral History Collection, 1949-1985

Title

A.L. Strand Oral History Collection (OH 07)

Dates

1949-1985 (inclusive)
1980-1982 (bulk)

Creator

Leman, Nancy Farwell.

Summary

The A.L. Strand Oral History Collection documents an oral history project conducted in the early 1980s to capture recollections and remembrances of A.L. Strand, President of Oregon State from 1942 to 1961. The collection includes recordings and transcripts of 10 oral history interviews, written remembrances and recollections, and extensive project records.

Quantity

0.8 cubic foot, including 10 audiocassettes and 3 photographs (3 boxes)

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

Oregon State University Libraries, University Archives
121 The Valley Library
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-4501
Phone: 541-737-2165
Email: archives@oregonstate.edu
Web: <http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/archives>

Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Nielsen, 2009.

Biographical Note

A.L. (August LeRoy) Strand was appointed as President of Oregon State College in the fall of 1942 and led the College through World War II and the post-war period of extensive growth in students and facilities. Strand retired in 1961 and remained in Corvallis where he served a 4-year term on the Benton County Commission. He died in Corvallis in 1980.

Strand was born in Victoria, Texas, in 1894, but moved to Montana as a young boy soon after the turn of the 20th century. He earned a BS degree in entomology from Montana State College in 1917 and MS and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota in the mid-1920s. He returned to Montana State College in 1931 as Professor and Head of the Entomology Department. Six years later, in 1937, he was appointed the college's President. The student union building at Montana State University was named for A.L. Strand in 1972. As student body president in 1917, he began a long-range student campaign to build the union which became a reality while he was President of Montana State College.

English instructor Nancy Lemman taught at Oregon State University from 1971 until her retirement in 1987. She taught a wide range of writing courses and was active in faculty governance. Lemman earned a BA in English from Tulane University in 1946 and an MA in Humanities from the University of Chicago in 1948. Lemman's son, Christopher, conducted two of the interviews.

Fred M. Shideler began his career at Oregon State in 1929 as a journalism instructor and an assistant in the OSC News Bureau. Shideler was promoted to assistant professor and journalism department head in 1932, to associate professor in 1939, and to professor in 1944. In 1952 he became head of information services and in 1967 was appointed director of university relations. Shideler also served as administrative assistant to Oregon governors Paul L. Patterson and Elmo Smith in 1956. Shideler retired from OSU in 1970. Shideler was born in Girard, Kansas, in 1904. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from Kansas State College in 1927 and an MA in education from Oregon State College in 1941. He died in Corvallis on May 11, 1993.

Most of the interviewees were Oregon State College faculty during the years of Strand's presidency. Margaret Fincke joined the Oregon State College faculty in 1935 to establish the research program in foods and nutrition. She was the first faculty member in the School of Home Economics to have a Ph.D. Fincke became head of the Foods and Nutrition Department in 1944 and served as Acting Dean in 1948-1949 and 1963-1965. She retired in 1969. George W. Gleeson served as Dean of Engineering from 1944 to 1970. Gleeson earned BS, MS, and Ch.E. degrees from Oregon State and joined the faculty in 1932.

C. Warren Hovland was a professor of religious studies at Oregon State from 1949 until his retirement in 1986. Under his leadership as chair, the Oregon State Department of Religious Studies was the first authorized by the Oregon State System of Higher Education to offer an undergraduate degree in religious studies. D. Curtis Mumford was a professor of agricultural economics at Oregon State from 1938 until his retirement in 1988. Milosh Popovich joined the Oregon State mechanical engineering faculty in 1945 and became department chair in 1949. In 1954 he was appointed Assistant Dean of Engineering and in 1959 became Dean (later Vice President) of Administration, a position he held until his retirement in 1979. G. Burton Wood came to Oregon State in 1951 as head of the Agricultural Economics Department, a position he held until 1966 when he became Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. Wood retired in 1975.

C. Richard (Dick) Hoyt was a Corvallis businessman and state legislator from Corvallis and Benton County from 1959 to 1974. Jim (James E.) Lattie earned a BS in Agricultural Economics from Oregon State College in 1956. During his student years he was editor of the *Barometer* campus newspaper. Lattie was a reporter with the *Oregonian* newspaper in the early 1960s. Roberta Nelson, the wife of English Professor Herbert Nelson, knew A.L. Strand primarily through social interactions. Nelson was active in the OSU Folk Club with Strand's wife, Mollie. Russell I. Thackrey was Executive Secretary of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities from 1947 to 1962.

Merrill G. Burlingame joined the faculty of Montana State College in 1929 and became chair of the history department in 1935. Burlingame's research interests were primarily concerned with Montana and the frontier west and he authored the 1968 history of Montana State University, which is included in the reference files of this collection. Louis A. Spain was an entomology student at Montana State College, earned his BS and MS degrees under Strand's guidance, and worked in the Entomology Department for several summers. Spain was a research entomologist at Iowa State College in the 1930s.

Ruth Carter was a staff person in the Oregon State College library and a part-time English instructor from the early 1950s until her retirement in 1968.

Content Description

The A.L. Strand Oral History Collection documents an oral history project conducted in the early 1980s to capture recollections and remembrances of A.L. Strand, Oregon State University president from 1942 to 1961. English instructor Nancy Leman led the project in collaboration with Fred Shideler. The collection includes recordings and transcripts of oral history interviews, written remembrances and recollections, reference materials, extensive project records, and several photographs. The project was funded by grants from the OSU Research Council and the OSU Foundation.

The collection includes oral history interviews with Margaret L. Fincke, George W. Gleeson, C. Warren Hovland, Richard Hoyt, Jim Lattie, D. Curtis Mumford, Roberta Nelson, Milosh Popovich, Fred Shideler, and G. Burton Wood conducted in 1981-1982. Audiocassette sound recordings are available for all of these interviews except for Fred Shideler. A duplicate audiocassette tape for the Gleeson interview is part of the collection. Transcripts are included in the collection for all these interviews. Nancy Leman conducted all of the interviews with the exception of the interview of Jim Lattie which was done by Fred Shideler and the interviews of G. Burton Wood and Fred Shideler, which were done by Christopher Leman.

Written remembrances and recollections prepared by Faith Norris, Martha S. Mumford, and Russell I. Thackrey are also included in the collection.

The collection also includes a draft transcript of a group interview with several College of Liberal Arts faculty conducted in 1985. The transcript includes recollections by Chester Garrison, "Scram Graham", C.C. Harris, Ray Hewitt, Walter Kraft, Edward Smith, Loretta Smith, and Austin Walter. A draft transcript of a speech by Strand to the OSU Alumni Association in 1966 after his retirement from Oregon State is also included. The collection does not include these recordings.

Correspondence and written recollections from Merrill G. Burlingame, Frank Cowan, Ellsworth Hastings, Mildred Leigh, Marjorie Paisley, John Parker, Ruth Pepper, and Louis A. Spain who were affiliated with Strand at Montana State University are also included and document Strand's activities as a student, faculty member, and administrator at Montana State College.

Materials written, received, and assembled by Ruth Carter pertaining to Strand were donated to Nancy Leman for the purposes of this project and included with the collection. The materials include notes and correspondence between Strand and Carter, including poems, and documentation of Carter's efforts to have a campus building named for Strand before his death.

The interviews primarily address Strand's relationships with faculty and other administrators and his personal manner, work habits, and management style. Many of the interviewees discuss the development of degree programs in the humanities and social sciences at Oregon State during Strand's presidency. Of special note is an extensive descriptive by G. Burton Wood of Strand's involvement in the development of the cooperative agreement with the Warm Springs Tribe in the 1950s and 1960s. The faculty also describe their own teaching, research, and administrative activities to varying extents. Hoyt describes Strand's relationships and interactions with the legislature and local Corvallis and Benton County governments. All of the interviews, remembrances, and recollections include anecdotes about Strand.

Reference materials assembled as part of the project include speeches and writings by Strand; materials pertaining to the Ralph Spitzer case; Fred Shideler's file on Strand; and articles, clippings, and related documentation pertaining to Strand. Project files include correspondence with interviewees and with Strand's son and daughter; project notes; oral history resources; and grant proposals and funding documentation.

The photographs consist two portrait prints of Strand and an image of Strand at Mildred Leigh's retirement as director of the Strand Union at Montana State University. All of the images were made in the 1960s.

Preferred Citation

A.L. Strand Oral History Collection (OH 07), Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Acquisition Information

Transcripts for eight interviews were donated to the Archives by Leman in 1984; the remainder of the collection was transferred to the Archives from the Horner Museum collections in 1996.

Related Material

The [Fred M. Shideler Papers](#) include additional materials pertaining to this oral history project and about A.L. Strand as president of Oregon State College. The [President's Office Records \(RG 013\)](#) provide the most extensive documentation of Strand's presidency at Oregon State; a film of Strand is part of the [President's Office Motion Picture Film and Videotapes \(FV P 092\)](#). Photographs of Strand are included with many other collections including the [President's of OSU Photographic Collection \(P 001\)](#) and the President's Office Photographs (P 092). Another oral history interview of Margaret Fincke, conducted in the early 1980s, is part of the [College of Home Economics Oral Histories \(OH 11\)](#). The Archives holdings also include the papers of D. Curtis Mumford and G. Burton Wood.

Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the OSU Libraries Catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog (<http://oasis.oregonstate.edu>) using these headings.

Individuals

Strand, A. L. (August Leroy), 1894-

Organizations

Montana State College--Administration.
 Montana State University (Bozeman, Mont.)--History.
 Oregon State College--Administration.
 Oregon State College--Faculty.
 Oregon State College. Office of the President.
 Oregon State University--Administration.
 Oregon State University--Faculty.

Topics

College presidents--Oregon--Corvallis.
 Humanities--Study and teaching (Higher)--Oregon--Corvallis.
 Social sciences--Study and teaching (Higher)--Oregon--Corvallis.

Forms of Materials in the Collection

Audiocassettes.
 Oral histories (document genres)
 Photographic prints.

Other Creators

Burlingame, Merrill G. (Merrill Gildea), 1901-
 Carter, Ruth Harriet.
 Fincke, Margaret Louise, 1900-
 Gleeson, George Walter, 1905-
 Hovland, Clarence Warren.
 Hoyt, C. R. (C. Richard)
 Lattie, James E.
 Montana State University (Bozeman, Mont.)
 Mumford, D. Curtis (Dwight Curtis), 1900-
 Mumford, Martha Stockwell.
 Nelson, Roberta Orr.
 Norris, Faith G. (Faith Grigsby), d. 1992.
 Popovich, Milosh Nicholas, 1917-

Shideler, Fred Merle.

Spain, Louis A.

Strand, A. L. (August Leroy), 1894-

Thackrey, Russell I., 1904-

Wood, G. B. (Gregory Burton), 1909-