



OSU LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES



Guide to the Gerald W. Williams Collection, 1855-2007

Title

Gerald W. Williams Collection (MSS Williams)

Dates

1855-2007 (inclusive)

1910-2005 (bulk)

Creator

Williams, Gerald W.

Summary

The Gerald W. Williams Collection consists of Williams' personal papers, historic photograph collection, and related materials pertaining to the history of the U.S. Forest Service as well as the forestry, environmental history, Native Americans, and geography especially of the Pacific Northwest. Williams assembled and created the materials during his career as sociologist and national historian with the U.S. Forest Service.

Quantity

93 cubic feet, including 24,000 photographs (91 boxes, including 13 oversize 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, 2008.

Biographical Note

Gerald W. Williams worked for the U.S. Forest Service from 1979 until his retirement in 2005. From 1979 to 1993, he was a sociologist with the Umpqua and Willamette National Forests in Oregon; in 1993-1998, he served as the regional sociologist for the Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Portland; and from 1998 until his retirement in 2005 he was the national historian for the U.S. Forest Service in Washington, D.C. Williams designed and implemented a regional and national history program for the Forest Service which culminated in his appointment as national historian and his authorship of the centennial history of the Forest Service, *The USDA Forest Service -- The First Century*, in 2000. He has published more than 75 books, chapters, book reviews, and articles and conference papers exploring a variety of historical topics such as the Native American use of fire to manage environments, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the U.S. Army's Spruce Production Division during World War I.

Williams is a native of Oregon and earned degrees from Southern Oregon University (B.A., Sociology; M.A. General Studies Social Science) and Washington State University (Ph.D., Sociology).

Content Description

The Gerald W. Williams Collection consists of Williams' personal papers; the historic photograph collection that he assembled; photographs taken by Williams and his family; oral histories; maps; moving images and sound recordings; and posters, ephemera, and artifacts pertaining to forestry, environmental history, Native Americans, and geography of the Pacific Northwest.

Williams' personal papers include 35 years of his research notes, manuscripts, and final publications. Included in this component of the collection are copies of more than 6000 documents from the papers of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, which are held at the Library of Congress. The papers also include materials pertaining to Judge John B. Waldo, the first 100 years of the U.S. Forest Service, the geography and place names of the McKenzie River region, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the U.S. Army Spruce Production Division.

The historic photographs collected by Williams include thousands of postcards from the 1900s through 1940s, documenting watersheds, forests, and communities throughout the Pacific Northwest, with a focus on Oregon. Other historic photographs include a large collection of Oregon and California postcards made by photographer Frank Patterson, a Medford photographer and northwest Oregon and southwest Washington logging scenes taken by John Fletcher Ford (circa 1900-1915). There are also photographs documenting the U.S. Army Spruce Production Division in Oregon and Washington during World War I, large format prints of early 20th century forestry scenes in Washington and Oregon made by renowned photographers Darius and Clark Kinsey, and images depicting Native Americans. A variety of formats are represented including photographic prints, postcards, stereographic images, and glass lantern slides.

The photographs taken by Williams consist primarily of color slides, photographic prints, and film negatives. These include images of national parks and forests in Oregon and Washington, the McKenzie River region of Oregon, and vacation photos. Of particular note are slides of Celilo Falls taken by Williams' father, Jack Williams, in September 1956, a few months before the falls were inundated by The Dalles Dam.

The oral histories include sound recordings and transcripts of interviews of U.S. Forest Service employees in preparation for the Forest Service centennial as well as with residents of the McKenzie River region. Several publications of forestry-related oral histories are included.

The maps consist of items assembled by Williams for his research and for their historic value. They include maps and brochures for national forests throughout the United States; framed historic maps; topographic maps; and maps of Civilian Conservation Corps structures.

The moving images include films, VHS videotapes, and DVDs commemorating the centennial of the U.S. Forest Service and pertaining to the Civilian Conservation Corps in Oregon and Washington, heritage resource management, and national forest roads. The sound recordings include cassette tapes of speeches, special events, and radio interviews. A CD of a production on the sounds of the forest is also included.

The collection also includes political posters, a scrapbook documenting the Smoky the Bear anniversary traveling exhibit, and ephemera and artifacts of the Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Preferred Citation

Gerald W. Williams Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Acquisition Information

The collection was acquired by the Oregon State University Libraries in 2007.

Processing Note

This collection is not fully processed; this guide is preliminary.

Additional Reference Guides

[Preliminary container list](#) available online.

Related Material

Williams' personal library of 3,100 books and pamphlets pertaining to ecology, Pacific Northwest history, Native Americans, and other subjects are being cataloged individually into the OSU Libraries' monograph collections. Selected titles from the book collection will be digitized and made available in [ScholarsArchive](#). The OSU Archives' holdings include numerous collections of archival records, personal papers, and visual materials pertaining to forestry and the environmental history of the Pacific Northwest. The [Oregon Multicultural Archives](#) includes a variety of materials pertaining to Native Americans, especially in the Pacific Northwest.

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

Pinchot, Gifford, 1865-1946.

Waldo, John B. (John Breckenridge), 1844-1907.

Organizations

Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S.)

United States. Forest Service--History.

United States. Army. Spruce Production Division.

Topics

Forest reserves--Oregon.

Forests and Forestry--Northwest, Pacific.

Indians of North America--Northwest, Pacific.

Logging--Northwest, Pacific.

Geographical Names

Celilo Falls (Wash.)

McKenzie River (Or.)

Forms of Materials in the Collection

Audiocassettes.

DVDs.

Ephemera.

Film negatives.

Lantern slides.

Maps.

Motion pictures (visual works)

Oral histories (document genres)

Photographic prints.

Postcards.

Scrapbooks.

Silent films.

Slides.

Stereographs.

Videotapes.

Other Creators

Ford, J.F. (John Fletcher)

Kinsey, Clarke.

Kinsey, Darius, 1869-1945.