Overview of the Collection

**Creator**  Montana Historical Society

**Title**  Montana Historical Society Photograph Archives, Lee Metcalf Photograph and Film Project Research Collection

**Dates**  2013-2014 (inclusive)

**1929**

**1970**

**Quantity**  0.8 linear feet

**Collection Number**  MC 414

**Summary**  This collection contains records and writings created or compiled by Montana Historical Society Photograph Archivist Matthew M. Peek. It results from his work on a Council of Library and Information Resources grant project to process and provide access to the Lee Metcalf Photograph and Film Collections. The materials in this collection were used or created by Peek in order to help identify and describe the photograph and film collections of Senator Lee Metcalf, held by the MHS Photograph Archives. Additionally, the materials were used and created in order to, as part of the grant project, promote the role of Senator Lee Metcalf in various events whose fiftieth anniversaries were commemorated in 2014. These events include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (War on Poverty bill), the 1964 Wilderness Act, and the 1964 Montana Territorial Centennial Train.

**Repository**  Montana Historical Society, Research Center Archives

Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives

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Helena MT

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**Access Restrictions**  Collection is open for research

**Languages**  English

Biographical Note

Lee Metcalf was born in 1911 in Stevensville, Montana. He attended Montana State University for one year and transferred to Stanford University where he majored in history and economics. He graduated from Montana State University law school in 1936 and entered private practice. He was elected representative to the 25th Montana Legislative Assembly from Ravalli County in the same year.

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In 1937 Metcalf resigned from the legislature to accept appointment as a Montana assistant attorney general.

During his tenure as an assistant attorney general, Metcalf campaigned extensively for Attorney General Harrison Freebourn who was seeking election to the U.S. Senate in the 1940 primary. During this period Metcalf also represented the Montana State Congress of Industrial Organizations Council from 1938 until 1941. In 1941, following Freebourn's defeat in the primary, Metcalf returned to private practice in Hamilton. Metcalf enlisted in the army in 1942 and was later commissioned. Following the war he served as a military government officer in Germany where he helped set up the civilian court and occupation police system. He also supervised repatriation and drafted the ordinances for and supervised local elections.

Metcalf was elected associate justice of the Montana Supreme Court in 1946, where he served until he was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1952, succeeding Mike Mansfield in Montana's First (Western) Congressional District. After serving four terms in the House, Metcalf was elected to the Senate in 1960, succeeding James E. Murray.

Although Metcalf is best known for his work to protect the natural environment and regulate utilities, he composed and supported a wide variety of legislation. His prodigious legislative accomplishments are testimony to his parliamentary acumen.

Lee Metcalf worked throughout his career to protect the nation's natural resources from both wanton exploitation and destruction. He was an early proponent of water and air pollution control; research on the harmful effects of pesticides, strip mining, and highway construction; regulation of timber cutting and grazing; alternative energy development; and many other conservation issues. His efforts to preserve the nation's wild lands and rivers were productive and lauded by national conservation organizations. As a long-time member of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, Metcalf helped establish many wildlife refuges.

While Lee Metcalf was an ardent protector of the natural environment, he believed in the responsible development of resources. He supported rural cooperative efforts, public power projects, and diverse types of assistance to independent workers in agriculture and minerals.

Metcalf advocated the use of government resources to redress the injustices of an imperfect society and to broaden and strengthen access to information for all individuals. He proposed and worked for legislation concerning Social Security, Medicare, unemployment, and veterans' benefits; aid to libraries, schools and small businesses; minimum wage laws; work safety laws; job training programs; consumer protection; and the return of control over their own lives to Native Americans.

Metcalf's long, adverserial relationship with the Montana Power Company and other utilities stemmed from his belief that the power industry held a monopolistic, unregulated control of an essential product. Lee Metcalf's and Vic Reinemer's book Overcharge delineates their position that the utilities exert tremendous influence throughout American society, yet are not subject to the democratic election process and are controlled by a small group of profiteers.

Closely related to Metcalf's efforts to regulate utility companies was his opposition to the growth of "corporate statism." Especially in his capacity as chairman of the Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Budgeting, Management, and Expenditure (later Reports, Accounting, and Management), and in close association with Vic Reinemer, Metcalf worked for disclosure of meaningful information, such as interlocking directorships, regarding corporate activity in regulated industries.

Congressional colleagues respected Lee Metcalf's thorough knowledge of the workings of government, knowledge which he used astutely throughout his career. In 1959 Metcalf helped establish the Democratic Study Group, an organization which instructed, mobilized, and coordinated liberal...
Democrats. As a member of the Government Operations Committee, Metcalf worked for many years, especially after Watergate activities spotlighted such concerns, to reorganize government to improve its efficiency and honesty.

Lee Metcalf enjoyed the cooperation of an able staff. He also provided experience to as many interns, the majority of whom were Montanans, as his time and office space would allow.

Vic Reinemer joined Metcalf's staff in 1961 and worked closely with him until Metcalf's death. Reinemer was born in Circle, Montana, in 1923, and graduated from Montana State University with a B.A. in journalism in 1948. He worked as a newspaper editor in Washington, D.C., for Freedom and Union Magazine in 1950 and 1951, and in North Carolina for the Charlotte News from 1950 until 1955. From 1955 until 1960 Reinemer worked as executive secretary for Senator Murray and then served until 1973 in the same position for Senator Metcalf. From 1973 until Metcalf's death in 1978, Reinemer was staff director of the Senate Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Budgeting, Management, and Expenditures, which changed its name in 1975 to Reports, Accounting, and Management. Reinemer concentrated his energies on utility regulation and corporate ownership reporting.

Other long-time influential staff members include Merrill "Brit" Englund, Metcalf's administrative assistant, who worked for United Press International and the Associated Press in Helena for six years before joining Metcalf's staff in 1953; Peggy McLaughlin, personal secretary, who worked for the Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Montana Attorney General, and for Senator Murray before beginning her years with Metcalf; and Dorothy Tannenbaum, legislative assistant with special knowledge of education and Native American affairs. Ted Roe replaced Vic Reinemer as executive secretary in 1973. These staff members' contribution to Metcalf's work can most easily be noted by the many letters in the collection which they composed.

Lee Metcalf married Donna Hoover in 1938. He died in January 1978 during what he declared would be his last Senate term.

Content Description

The collection is composed of copies of original newspaper articles; records from the Lee Metcalf Papers (MC 172); Peek's papers and articles on various 1964 political events; biographical records of Metcalf's family and detailed histories of the family written by Peek; and print-outs of public presentations on these various topics presented at the Montana Historical Society in 2014.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

Montana Historical Society Photograph Archives, Lee Metcalf Photograph and Film Project Research Collection, 2013-2014
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv05108
Administrative Information

Arrangement

Arranged by series

Location of Collection

MC 414

Acquisition Information

Acquisition information available upon request.

Processing Note

Processed in 2014

Detailed Description of the Collection

Biographical Materials

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<td>Harold E. Metcalf Family Primary Biographical Records</td>
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**Miscellany**

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## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms:
- Legislation--United States.
- Legislators--United States.
- Conservation of natural resources--Montana.
- Conservation of natural resources--United States.
- Elections--Montana.
- Electric utilities--Montana.
- Electric utilities--United States.
- Indians of North America--Montana.
- Political parties--Montana.
- Public utilities--Environmental aspects.
- Public utilities--Montana.
- Public utilities--Rates.
- Public utilities--United States.

### Personal Names:
- Metcalf, Lee, 1911-1978
- Reinemer, Vic, 1923-

### Corporate Names:
- United States. Congress. Senate.

### Geographical Names:
- Montana--Education.
- Montana--Environmental protection.
- Montana--Indians.
- Montana--Natural resources--Conservation.
- Montana--Politics and government.
- Montana--Public utilities.
- United States--Politics and government.

Finding aid prepared by Matthew Peek
2014