Robert W. O'Brien papers and oral history interview, 1975-1998

Overview of the Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creator</th>
<th>O'Brien, Robert W. (Robert William), 1907-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Robert W. O'Brien papers and oral history interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>1975-1998 (inclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975 1998</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>circa .03 cubic foot (including 2 sound cassettes, 1 transcript, 2 computer disks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Number</td>
<td>2420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Interview discussing events during and after World War Two, including Japanese Relocation, the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council, Seattle Race Relations, and his work with the Civic Unity Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repository</td>
<td>University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections</td>
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<td>Special Collections</td>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Washington Libraries</td>
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<td>Box 352900</td>
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<td>Seattle, WA</td>
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<td>98195-2900</td>
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<td>Telephone: 206-543-1929</td>
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<td>Fax: 206-543-1931</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:speccoll@uw.edu">speccoll@uw.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Restrictions</td>
<td>Consult the access restrictions information for each of the accessions listed below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>English</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Biographical Note

O'Brien served as assistant to the UW Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and as advisor to the Japanese Student Club in early 1942. O'Brien completed his dissertation in sociology at the UW in 1945. Titled "The Changing Role of the College Nisei during the Crisis Period", it was published by Pacific Books as "The College Nisei", in 1949, and was reprinted by Ayer Company in 1979.

Content Description

Consult the scope and content information for each of the accessions listed below.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Robert W. O'Brien papers and oral history interview, 1975-1998
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv11260
Consult the restrictions governing reproduction and use for each of the accessions listed below.

**Administrative Information**

**Arrangement**

Organized into 3 accessions.

- Accession No. 2420-001, Robert W. O'Brien oral history interview, 1975
- Accession No. 2420-003, Robert W. O'Brien oral history interview, 1998

**Detailed Description of the Collection**

**Accession No. 2420-001: Robert W. O'Brien oral history interview, 1975**

1 sound cassette (60 minutes)

**Scope and Content:** O'Brien discusses events during and after World War Two, including Japanese Relocation, the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council, Seattle Race Relations, and his work with the Civic Unity Committee.

O'Brien describes UW President Sieg's role in assisting Japanese-American students during the Relocation. Sieg wrote to Midwestern and East Coast colleges urging them to take Japanese-American students from the UW, arranged for Japanese-American seniors to receive their degrees despite not completing their final quarter, and traveled to the relocation camps to award degrees to these students. The UW also brought its Extension Program to the relocation centers. O'Brien was Assistant to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and advisor to the Japanese Student Club. He was involved in founding the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council, a national organization based in Philadelphia that worked to help Nisei get out of the relocation camps. In 1942 he was asked to become its National Executive and asked for leave from the UW in order to do this. President Sieg insisted that he arrange to be on War Leave through the War Relocation Authority; this status allowed Sieg to protect O'Brien's job when people questioned his loyalty because of his work on behalf of Japanese-Americans. The Relocation Council placed six thousand Japanese-American students in nearly 600 colleges during the war.

**Restrictions on Access:** Open to all users.

May be used for research, publication, instruction and similar educational purposes.

**Restrictions on Use:** May be used for publication, instruction and similar educational purposes.

**Acquisition Info:** Donated by Robert W. O'Brien, 4/24/1975.

**Description**

Robert W. O'Brien oral history interview

circa 150 pages.
Scope and Content: Book, "The College Nisei", written by O'Brien, including chapters 1-7 and outline of revision (copy).

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users.

Restrictions on Use: Creator's literary rights retained. Contact repository for details.

Acquisition Info: Donated by Dr. O'Brien, 1/1/1980.

Description

Accession No. 2420-003: Robert W. O'Brien oral history interview, 1998

.03 cubic feet (1 folder including 1 sound cassette; 1 transcript: 26 leaves; 2 3.5" computer disks)
Scope and Content: Copy of 1975 interview (cassette), transcript, and computer disks with transcript.

O'Brien discusses events during and after World War Two, including Japanese Relocation, the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council, Seattle Race Relations, and his work with the Civic Unity Committee.

O'Brien describes UW President Sieg's role in assisting Japanese-American students during the Relocation. Sieg wrote to Midwestern and East Coast colleges urging them to take Japanese-American students from the UW, arranged for Japanese-American seniors to receive their degrees despite not completing their final quarter, and traveled to the relocation camps to award degrees to these students. The UW also brought its Extension Program to the relocation centers. O'Brien was Assistant to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and advisor to the Japanese Student Club. He was involved in founding the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council, a national organization based in Philadelphia that worked to help Nisei get out of the relocation camps. In 1942 he was asked to become its National Executive and asked for leave from the UW in order to do this. President Sieg insisted that he arrange to be on War Leave through the War Relocation Authority; this status allowed Sieg to protect O'Brien's job when people questioned his loyalty because of his work on behalf of Japanese-Americans. The Relocation Council placed six thousand Japanese-American students in nearly 600 colleges during the war.

Digital Content/Other Formats: Listen to the audio recording and view the transcript of this interview on the Libraries Digital Collections site.

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users.

May be used for research, publication, instruction and similar educational purposes.

Restrictions on Use: May be used for publication, instruction and similar educational purposes.


Robert W. O'Brien papers and oral history interview, 1975-1998
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv11260
Description

Robert W. O'Brien oral history interview

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
Japanese American college students--Washington (State)--Seattle
Japanese Americans--Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945

Personal Names:
O'Brien, Robert W. (Robert William), 1907- --Archives

Corporate Names:
Civic Unity Committee (Seattle, Wash.)

Other Creators:
  Personal Names:
  Droker, Howard
  (interviewer)

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
Personal Papers/Corporate Records (University of Washington)

2007 (Last modified: 4/18/2018)

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