Overview of the Collection

**Interviewer**
Davidson, C. Girard (Crowe Girard), 1910-

**Title**
Oral history interview with C. Girard Davidson

**Dates**
1994 December 2-1995 January 24 (inclusive)
1994-12-02 1995-01-24

**Quantity**
.1 cubic feet, (9 audiocassettes (8 hr., 38 min., 51 sec.))

**Collection Number**
SR 1163

**Summary**
Oral history interview with C. Girard Davidson conducted by Thomas Wright as part of the Oregon Legislature Oral History Series. Davidson was a lawyer and businessman, served as assistant secretary of the U. S. Department of the Interior from 1946 to 1950, and was active in the Democratic Party in Oregon.

**Repository**
Oregon Historical Society, Davies Family Research Library

Davies Family Research Library
Oregon Historical Society
1200 SW Park Avenue
Portland, OR
97205
Telephone: 503-306-5240
Fax: 503-219-2040
libreference@ohs.org

**Access Restrictions**
Collection is open for research.

**Languages**
English

**Sponsor**
This project is supported in whole or part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the State Library of Oregon.

Biographical Note

Crowe Girard "Jebbie" Davidson was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, in 1910. He received his bachelor of arts degree from the Southwestern Louisiana Institute (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) in 1930. He earned a law degree from Tulane University in 1933. He served as an attorney for the Tennessee Valley Authority from 1934 to 1937. At the same time, he attended Yale University Law School, earning a juris doctorate in 1936. He subsequently entered private law practice in Lafayette. In 1939, he and Mercedes Hester were married, and in 1940, the couple moved to Oregon, where Davidson worked as a consultant to the Bonneville Power Administration until 1946. He also commuted to Washington, D.C., to serve as Assistant General Counsel of the War Production Board from 1944 to 1945. In 1946, he remained in Washington to serve as assistant secretary of the U. S. Department of the Interior until 1950. He then returned to Portland, Oregon, and practiced law. In 1952, he and Mercedes Hester were divorced, and the next year, he and Joan Kaplan were married. Davidson was active in the Democratic Party, serving as Democratic National Committeeman for Oregon in the 1960s. He and Joan Kaplan divorced in 1967, and later that same year, he and Sylvia Nemer were married.
He was appointed to the Oregon Educational Coordinating Council by Governor Vic Atiyeh in 1972 and served as chair from 1974 to 1975. He was also president of the Alaska Lumber Company from 1958 until his death in 1996.

**Other Descriptive Information**

Forms part of the Oregon Legislature Oral History Series.

**Other Descriptive Information**

Handwritten index (16 pages) is available for in-person use at the Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

**Content Description**

This oral history interview with C. Girard Davidson was conducted by Thomas Wright at Davidson’s home in Portland, Oregon, from December 2, 1994, to January 24, 1995. In this interview, Davidson discusses his family background and early life in Lafayette, Louisiana, including detailed descriptions of the plantations his extended family owned; his ancestors’ involvement in the Confederate Army; his early education; and spending summers in Biloxi, Mississippi. He also briefly addresses the racism he learned in his childhood and confronting his prejudices later in life, and describes segregation in southern Louisiana. He also discusses the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927. He talks about attending the Southwestern Louisiana Institute and studying law at Tulane University and at Yale Law School.

Davidson discusses working as an attorney for the Tennessee Valley Authority. He talks about rural electrification and legal battles with private electrical utilities. He talks about practicing law in Lafayette, Louisiana, and his marriage to Mercedes Hester. He discusses relocating to Portland, Oregon, to work as a consultant to the Bonneville Power Administration. He speaks at length about his work for the War Production Board during World War II. Davidson also talks about his involvement with the Democratic Party; serving as assistant secretary of the interior in the Truman administration; and his efforts toward creating a Columbia Valley Authority.

**Use of the Collection**

**Alternative Forms Available**

Audio available online in OHS Digital Collections.

**Preferred Citation**

Oral history interview with C. Girard Davidson, by Thomas Wright, SR 1163, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

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Administrative Information

Related Materials

C. Girard Davidson papers, Coll 162, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

Related Materials


Detailed Description of the Collection

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Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms :**
- Electric utilities--Oregon
- Floods--Mississippi River--1927
- Lawyers--Oregon--Portland
- Plantations--Louisiana
- Segregation--Louisiana

**Personal Names :**
- Davidson, C. Girard (Crowe Girard), 1910-

**Corporate Names :**
- Democratic Party (Or.)
Oral history interview with C. Girard Davidson, 1994 December 2-1995 January 24
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv177825