

# Melvin Leroy Merritt papers, 1870-1952

## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Creator</b>                     | Merritt, Melvin Leroy, 1879-1961  |
| <b>Title</b>                       | <a href="#">Melvin Leroy Merritt papers</a>   |
| <b>Dates</b>                       | 1870-1952 (inclusive)<br>1870 1952  |
| <b>Quantity</b>                    | 3 linear feet, (6 containers, 1 volume)   |
| <b>Collection Number</b>           | Ax 066  |
| <b>Summary</b>                     | The Melvin Leroy Merritt papers comprise family and professional material. The majority of the material focuses on Merritt's profession with the Forest Service, both in the United States and the Philippine Islands. The collection contains correspondence, private journals, as well as professional field diaries. In addition to Merritt's field journals, the collection also contains numerous field diaries of Juan Guthrie. |
| <b>Repository</b>                  | <a href="#">University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.</a><br>UO Libraries--SCUA<br>1299 University of Oregon<br>Eugene OR<br>97403-1299<br>Telephone: 541-346-3068<br><a href="mailto:spcarref@uoregon.edu">spcarref@uoregon.edu</a>   |
| <b>Access Restrictions</b>         | Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room. Collection or parts of collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives in advance of your visit to allow for transportation time.   |
| <b>Additional Reference Guides</b> | <a href="#">See the Current Collection Guide for detailed description and requesting options.</a>   |
| <b>Languages</b>                   | English   |
| <b>Sponsor</b>                     | Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.  |

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## Historical Note

Melvin Leroy Merritt born October 19, 1879 near West Union, Iowa was the son of Morris Merritt and Jennie Allnat Merritt. He was the fourth of six children who were raised on a farm outside of Grundy Center, Iowa. Raised on a farm, Merritt was used to hard work. Upon graduating high school in 1898, Merritt attended Iowa State College in Ames, where he graduated in 1903 with a degree from the Horticulture department. After his graduation from college, he remained in Ames for two years as in instructor in the Horticulture department.

In 1905, Merritt left his teaching position at Iowa State for a position with the Bureau of Forestry in Manila, the Philippines. He remained in the Philippines for three years, originally settling in Calapan on

Mindoro but later moving back to the headquarters in Manila. Merritt was one of the few men from his small Iowa town who had traveled around the world when he returned to the United States in 1909.

Once Merritt returned to the United States, he gained a position with the United States Forestry Service, residing in Oregon. On September 30, 1913, he married Nellie I. Brown amongst all his family in Iowa. Nellie was also a graduate of Iowa State College. With Nellie, Merritt would have three children: Alice Gertrude born September 12, 1914, Melvin Leroy born November 12, 1921 and Morris Jr., born October 27, 1923. At the time of his marriage (1913), Merritt was a supervisor of the Deschutes National Forest at Bend. In 1921, the Merritt family moved to Juneau, Alaska, where Melvin received a promotion as the Assistant District Forester of National Forests of Alaska. He was the second man in charge at the headquarters in Juneau. Melvin Merritt remained in Alaska for thirteen years before being promoted once and again and returning to Oregon. That return took place in 1934, when Merritt took up the position of Assistant Regional Forester of the North Pacific Region of the Forest Service in charge of operation and fire control. Melvin Merritt remained in this position until his death in 1961.

## Content Description

The collection concerns numerous aspects of forester Melvin Leroy Merritt's life but focuses primarily on his career with the Forest Service. The forestry material concerns Oregon, Alaska and the Philippines, where Merritt lived for three years. The collection contains correspondence, personal and professional journals/diaries, pictures, memos and professional reports for the various wildernesses under the supervision of Merritt. A good part of the collection is contained in the field diaries of Merritt and Juan Guthrie. These journals take up two complete boxes.

In addition to professional material, the Merritt papers contain personal and biographical information. A scrapbook in box 1 contains a brief family history of dates as well as newspaper clippings highlighting significant events relating to Merritt, including his wedding announcement, anniversaries, deaths, etc. The loose volume also contains family history. It was written by Merritt's grandmother in 1909. The Melvin Leroy Papers contain a wealth of information about the histories of the forests and the Forest Service of Alaska, Oregon and the Philippines.

## Administrative Information

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Description

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[Guide to the Melvin Leroy Merritt papers](#)

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## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Forest reserves--Alaska--Management  
Forest reserves--Oregon--Management

Melvin Leroy Merritt papers, 1870-1952  
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv36942>

Forest reserves--Philippines--Management

Foresters

**Personal Names :**

Merritt, Melvin Leroy, 1879-1961

**Corporate Names :**

United States. Forest Service

**Family Names :**

Merritt family

**Form or Genre Terms :**

Correspondence

Diaries

Finding aid prepared by University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections  
2004



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