W.J. Gilstrap Papers, 1897-1950

Overview of the Collection

- **Creator**: Gilstrap, W. J. (William Jasper), 1870-1957.
- **Title**: W.J. Gilstrap Papers
- **Dates**: 1897-1950 (inclusive)
- **Quantity**: 0.05 cubic feet, (1 box)
- **Collection Number**: MSS.Gilstrap
- **Summary**: The W.J. Gilstrap Papers consist of a memoir written by Gilstrap describing his family, education, and career as a physician as well as publications documenting his activities as an Oregon Agricultural College student and alumnus. Gilstrap earned a BS in Agriculture in 1898 from Oregon Agricultural College. After completing his medical degree in 1903, he worked as a physician and druggist in Sheridan and Portland, Oregon.
- **Repository**: Oregon State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives Research Center
  Special Collections and Archives Research Center
  121 The Valley Library
  Oregon State University
  Corvallis OR
  97331-4501
  Telephone: 541-737-2075
  Fax: 541-737-8674
  scarcc@oregonstate.edu
- **Access Restrictions**: Collection is open for research.
- **Languages**: English

Content Description

The W.J. Gilstrap Papers consist of the Memoirs of W.J. Gilstrap and other materials written and assembled by Gilstrap reflecting his association with Oregon State University. The Memoirs were written by Gilstrap in 1947-1950 and edited by his descendants in 2010-2011. Gilstrap describes his childhood in Missouri, student experience at Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) in the 1890s, and his medical practice in various Oregon locales. He also explores his family history extending back to mid-18th century Scotland. Passages related to OAC include descriptions of Gilstrap's participation in college oratorical contests; military training; coursework in agriculture, veterinary science, anatomy, histology, physiology, and chemistry which prepared him for pursuing a medical degree; his work in the Zoology Department and association with Professor Arthur Cordley; and living arrangements in various rental houses adjacent to campus during his student years. Gilstrap provides information about the Oregon communities where he practiced medicine, including St. Johns, Sheridan, and the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation. Gilstrap also devotes chapters to his thoughts on socialization of medicine, medical and
health care in Portland, allergies, early medical education in the Northwest, investing in the stock market, and human nature.

The Memoirs are only available online at: http://hdl.handle.net/1957/19922

The Papers also include publications reflecting Gilstrap's oratorical work as a student, his participation in alumni reunion activities, and his daughter Carlie's graduation from OSU in 1927. These materials include the November 1897 and June 1898 issues of the College Barometer. Gilstrap's commencement address, "Practical Education" was published in the June 1898 issue; an essay "Instinct or Reason, Which? An Interesting Discussion Concerning the Mental Powers of the Lower Animals" was published in the November 1897 issue. The oration given by Gilstrap at the State Oratorical Contest, "Brain and Brawn" was published in the March 1898 issue of the Albany College Student, which is also part of the collection.

Other publications are the 1927 commencement program; the June 5, 1948 issue of the Barometer campus newspaper; Silver Jubilee (25th) reunion booklets for the Class of 1898 (1923) and 1899 (1924); and several issues of the OAC Alumnus (1923 and 1925) and Oregon Stater (1948) alumni magazines.

Historical Note

William Jasper Gilstrap graduated from Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) in 1898 with a BS degree in agriculture and worked as an instructor in the Zoology Department at OAC for one year beginning in the fall of 1898. Gilstrap was employed as a teacher and agricultural worker until he entered medical school in 1901. He earned his medical degree (M.D.) from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in San Francisco in 1903 and returned to Oregon to practice medicine. Gilstrap practiced medicine in Sheridan, Oregon until 1914 and then moved his practice to Portland, Oregon; while in Sheridan, he provided medical services to Native Americans living on the Grand Ronde reservation. He was also a registered druggist and operated a prescription department as part of his medical practice.

Gilstrap was active in alumni activities and organized the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1898 that was held in 1948.

Gilstrap was born in 1870 and died in 1957.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

W.J. Gilstrap Papers, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Administrative Information

Related Materials

The Alumni Association Records (RG 035) include additional information about the Class of 1898. The Archives' holdings include other collections documenting the student experience at Oregon Agricultural College in the 1890s, including the Leroy G. Mattley Papers, the Harvey L. McAlister Collection, and the Abigail and Mattie Wright Collection. The Memorabilia Collection includes programs for oratorical
contests in the 1890s (MC-Oratorical Contests). Other materials pertaining to Native Americans are part of the Oregon Multicultural Archives.

Acquisition Information

The materials were donated to the Archives by William J. Gilstrap's granddaughter, Ruth W. Shearer, in 2011.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
- College orations--Oregon Agricultural College.
- College students--Oregon--Corvallis.
- Indians of North America--Medical care--Oregon.

Personal Names:

Corporate Names:
- Oregon State University--Alumni and alumnae.
- Oregon Agricultural College--Students.

Geographical Names:
- Corvallis (Or.)
- Grand Ronde Indian Reservation (Or.)

Form or Genre Terms:
- PDF.

Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Nielsen
2011

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