

# Elmer Charles Kistler papers, 1917-1996

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	Kistler, Elmer Charles
<b>Title</b>	Elmer Charles Kistler papers
<b>Dates</b>	1917-1996 (inclusive) 1917 1996
<b>Quantity</b>	.84 cubic feet, including textual materials, photographs, artifacts, and a sound cassette (3 boxes)
<b>Collection Number</b>	5347 (Accession No. 5347-001)
<b>Summary</b>	Papers of a Seattle-area communist and labor union activist.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections</a> Special Collections University of Washington Libraries Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-1929 Fax: 206-543-1931 <a href="mailto:speccoll@uw.edu">speccoll@uw.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	The papers are open to all users.
<b>Languages</b>	English, Spanish
<b>Sponsor</b>	Funding for encoding this finding aid was partially provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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## Biographical Note

Elmer Charles Kistler was a long-time Washington State labor unionist and Communist Party activist committed to social justice, labor rights, and racial equality.

Kistler was born on January 17, 1915, in Cleveland, Wisconsin, and in 1926 his family moved to Longview, Washington. After graduating from high school in 1931, Kistler worked in a plywood mill at a time when there was no union organization in the industry. In 1934 he moved to Seattle to attend the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington. As a student, he helped organize a local chapter of the American Student Union, organized peace demonstrations, and picketed in support of union organization.

In 1940 Kistler began working at Boeing Aircraft Company as a union shop steward in the Clipper shop. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, he worked in the shipyards and then entered the army as a volunteer officer candidate in July 1942. Kistler was commissioned in February 1943 and served in anti-aircraft until May 1944, when he was transferred to the infantry. Kistler was sent overseas in August 1944 with the 106th Division as a first lieutenant mortar platoon leader. He earned three battle stars, including the Ardennes for his service during the Battle of the Bulge in 1944.

Kistler left the army in 1946 and returned to the University of Washington, where he helped organize the University District Post and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He served on the state board of Young Democrats from 1946 to 1947. Kistler left school in 1947 and worked in shipyards until 1951, when

he went back to work in lumber mills. Kistler was later blacklisted from sawmill and construction jobs because of his affiliation with the Communist Party.

Kistler appeared at a hearing of the United States Subversive Activities Control Board in 1965. The hearing was part of an effort to prove that Kistler was a member of the Communist Party and in violation of the McCarran Act requirement that Communist Party members register with the attorney general. Robert W. Winsor, a Seattle attorney, served as Kistler's counsel. The Gus Hall-Benjamin J. Davis Defense Committee also assisted Kistler with legal defense.

Kistler ran unsuccessfully for elected office as a Communist Party candidate three times. These races included a run for Washington State's 35th legislative district representative seat in 1976 and again in 1984 for the 37th legislative district representative seat. In 1978 he challenged incumbent United States Representative Jack Cunningham on a platform of Native American land rights.

Elmer Charles Kistler died of cancer on November 28, 1996, at the age of 81.

## Content Description

The Kistler papers contain correspondence, speeches, testimony, hearing notices, clippings, ephemera, pins and buttons, a sound cassette, and photographs regarding Kistler's military experience, work as a labor union activist, and activities as a Communist Party member and candidate for elected office. Correspondence and statements related to Kistler's hearing before the United States Subversive Activities Control Board in 1965 are included. The bulk of the material is from 1964-1984. Represented in the papers is 1985 Seattle Communist mayoral candidate B.J. Mangaoang.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

Literary rights have been transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

## Administrative Information

### Arrangement

Arranged in 4 series:

- Personal papers, 1917-1996
- Activism papers, 1966-1996
- Political campaign papers, 1972-1985
- Memorabilia, 1946-circa 1989

### Acquisition Information

Gift of Marc Brodine and B.J. Mangaoang, 2002.

### Processing Note

Processed by Melinda Snarr in 2006.

# Detailed Description of the Collection

## Personal papers, 1917-1996, (bulk 1943-1964)

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Obituary and memorial service programs	1996
	United States Subversive Activities Control Board subject files	1964-1965
Box/Folder		
1/2	Statement on McCarran Act hearing	1964
1/3	General correspondence	1964-1969
1/4	Gus Hall correspondence	1964-1965
1/5	Clippings	1965
Box/Folder		
1/6	Photographs of childhood, family, and friends 27 photographs Includes a baby portrait and snapshots of Kistler as a child and young adult. Also contains several vacation photographs including trips to Devil's Lake, Wisconsin, Yellowstone National Park, and Mount Rainier National Park.	1917-1976
1/7	Birth and marriage certificates	1917, 1950
1/8	High school and university records	1931, 1965
1/9	Passports	1971-1982
1/10	Ina Mable Kistler estate correspondence	1955-1956
1/11	Cuba trips: ephemera, membership cards, and photograph	1986-1989
	Military service papers	1943-1947

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/12	Photographs 16 photographs Contains portraits of Kistler in military uniform and Kistler's U.S. War Department identification. Also includes snapshots, including one taken at the Battle of the Bulge.	1944-1946
1/13	Certificates and clippings	1943-1947; undated
1/14	Correspondence Contains official correspondence, handwritten letters to Kistler's mother, telegrams, and a V-mail envelope.	1943-1947
1/15	Picture frame	undated
Box/Folder		
1/16	Miscellaneous personal papers Includes cards and certificates relating to Kistler's hobbies and non-professional affiliations.	1934-1996; undated

## Activism papers, 1966-1996

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Photographs	
Box/Folder		
1/17	North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement protest 1 photograph	1993
1/17	March for Urban Aid, Washington, DC 1 photograph Features Jesse Jackson, Jerry Brown, Maxine Waters, and other politicians.	1992
1/17	Unemployment Solidarity March, San Francisco, California 2 photographs	1991
1/17	Rally for Work, New York, New York	1991

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	1 photograph	
1/17	Anti-apartheid rally 1 photograph	1985
1/17	GI Co-ordinating Committee Moratorium march, San Antonio, Texas 7 photographs	1971
1/17	General Electric boycott, Seattle, Washington 2 photographs	1967
1/17	Teamsters Local 743 rally 2 photographs	1964
1/18	Communist Party	
	Communist Party USA, 60th anniversary meeting 1 photograph	1979
	Communist Party of Washington march, Seattle, Washington 1 photograph	1972-1973
	Communist Party USA, 50th anniversary meeting, Seattle, Washington 1 photograph	1969
	Communist Party	
<b>Box/Folder</b>		
1/19	Speeches and statements Contains a statement against the Interstate-90 bridge between Seattle and Bellevue, a hearing before the Industrial Welfare Committee from 1975, an essay on "The Negro Question in the United States," and a statement on "The Killing of John Rodney by Policeman Dennis Falk."	1975, undated
1/20	Notes on communist ideology and issues	undated
1/21	Dues receipts and membership books	1976-1982; 1979
1/22	Convention ticket and agenda	1966-1991, undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/23	Winter Soldier Celebration sound recording Contains a sound cassette recording of a celebration of Elmer Kistler and B.J. Mangoang's work as Communist Party activists.	1991
Puget Sound Council of Senior Citizens		
Box/Folder		
1/24	Award	1994
1/25	Correspondence and invitation	1994, 1996
Membership cards		
Box/Folder		
1/26	District Council of Carpenters	1968-1994
1/27	Various unions Includes membership cards for the United Brothers of Carpenters and Joiners of America from 1956, 1958, and 1969. Also includes membership cards from the King County Area C.O.P.E. of the AFL-CIO from 1962 to 1981 and the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union from 1958 to 1966.	1956-1981
Box/Folder		
1/28	Labor union materials Contains Kistler's certificate of withdrawal from the International Union of the United Automobile Workers of America, cards from Kistler's rank and file membership, wood rank and file statements and materials, handwritten notes, and statements regarding the Unemployment Act of 1971.	1941, 1970-1972, undated
1/29	Miscellaneous ephemera, correspondence, and clippings	1960-1962, 1985, undated

## Political campaign papers, 1972-1985

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2/1	37th Legislative District campaign correspondence	1984
2/2	7th District congressional campaign materials	1978
2/2	35th Legislative District campaign materials	1975-1976
2/3	Democratic convention delegate card	1972

## Memorabilia, 1946-circa 1989

Box3

Consists of 32 pins, with text in Russian, most of which feature Moscow or Vladimir Ilich Lenin. 11 additional pins, including a 1946 pin from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, pins and buttons from the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, a pin from the 1962 Washington State Labor Council Convention, and other military and labor pins, also form part of the series.

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Armies--Officers--Photographs  
 Communism--United States--1917-  
 Communism--Washington (State)  
 Communist trials--United States  
 Communists--Washington (State)--Archives  
 Demonstrations--United States--Photographs  
 Demonstrations--Washington (State)--Photographs  
 Labor leaders--Washington (State)--Archives  
 Political campaigns--Washington (State)  
 Political campaigns--Washington (State)--Photographs  
 Political candidates--Washington (State)--Archives  
 Subversive activities--United States  
 Veterans--Washington (State)--Archives

### Personal Names :

Kistler, Elmer Charles--Archives  
 Kistler, Elmer Charles--Photographs  
 Mangaoang, B. J

### Corporate Names :

United States. Army--Officers--Archives  
 United States. Army--Officers--Photographs  
 United States. Subversive Activities Control Board

### Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)--Politics and government  
 Washington (State)--Politics and government--1951-

### Form or Genre Terms :

buttons (information artifacts)

certificates  
Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)  
correspondence  
ephemera  
lapel pins  
Membership cards  
military records  
Photographs  
Sound recordings  
Speeches, addresses, etc  
testimonies

## Names and Subjects

### **Subject Terms :**

Personal Papers/Corporate Records (University of Washington)

2006 (Last modified: 4/16/2018)



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