

Ashley E. Holden papers, 1910-1976

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Holden, Ashley E. (Ashley Elder), 1894-
Title	Ashley E. Holden papers
Dates	1910-1976 (inclusive) 1910 1976
Quantity	6.5 linear feet, (22 containers)
Collection Number	Coll 138
Summary	Ashley Elder Holden (1894-1994) was primarily a journalist but maintained dual careers in journalism and politics, running successfully for a republican seat in the Washington state legislature in 1932. Additionally, Holden published the Brewster Review, The Oriental Outlook, Tonasket Tribune, and, Saga of the Sagebrush.
Repository	University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives. UO Libraries--SCUA 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 spcarref@uoregon.edu
Access Restrictions	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.
Additional Reference Guides	See the Collective Name Index to the Research Collection of Conservative and Libertarian Studies for a cross-referenced index to names of correspondents in this collection, if any, and 37 related University of Oregon collections, including dates of correspondence. See index instructions on use. See the Current Collection Guide for detailed description and requesting options.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Historical Note

Ashley Elder Holden (1894-1994) was born in Rutledge, Missouri on September 13, 1894 to Andrew Franklin Holden and Ella Davis (Henry). Holden spent his earliest boyhood years in Colorado, but by the turn of the century his family had moved to Washington State where they staked out a homestead

claim near Brewster, along the banks of the Columbia River. Having established roots in the Pacific Northwest, Holden devoted most of his life to conservative political causes.

Holden married Ruth Turner in 1915. They raised two children, Ashley Elder, Jr. and Rita Marie. During these years of marriage, Holden published various small town Washington newspapers. After a brief stint in the army in 1918 and 1919 he returned to Washington where he worked as a reporter on the Yakima Daily Republic. In 1920, he became the marine editor for the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, a position he held for two years.

From 1922 to 1932, Holden served as executive secretary for the Japan Society of Seattle, an organization established to improve economic and diplomatic ties between Japan and the United States. His efforts included co-authorship of the book, *Japan: An Interpretation*; drafting resolutions with the purpose of increasing immigration quotas of Japanese into the U.S.; and organizing various goodwill tours to Japan, such as the American Trade Commission Tour. In 1931, he spent three months visiting Japan, Korea and Manchuria. In conjunction with his work in the Pacific relations arena, he went to San Francisco in 1932, where he published a short-lived magazine called *The Oriental Outlook*.

Throughout the rest of his life, Holden maintained dual careers in journalism and politics. He ran unsuccessfully for a Republican seat in the Washington state legislature in 1932. In 1936, he became the political editor for the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, a position he held for 21 years. While serving in this capacity, he covered the organizational meetings in San Francisco that resulted in the drafting of the United Nations charter in 1945. He also reported on the hearings held in 1948 by the Washington state legislature's Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities. It was during these hearings that the initial accusations of participation in communist activities were leveled against Alger Hiss.

Holden's political activities between 1956 and 1973 centered around the issue of compulsory unionism. He organized and worked as Executive Director of the Committee for Voluntary Unionism and he worked with affiliated groups like Job Research, Inc. and the National Right to Work Committee. These organizations coordinated efforts that resulted in placing right-to-work measures on the Washington ballot in 1956 and 1958. In conjunction with the National Right to Work Committee, the Washington organizations worked to prevent the repeal of section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act, which allowed individual states to depart from national uniform labor policies.

For the second time, in 1960, Holden was unsuccessful in his bid for a seat in the Washington legislature. That same year, he served as an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention held in Chicago. On a local level, Holden held the position of president of the Tonasket Chamber of Commerce in 1961 and 1962.

In addition to his political endeavors, Holden published the *Tonasket Tribune*, a joint venture with his son, Ashley, Jr. from 1959 to 1973. In 1962, State Representative John Goldmark filed a libel suit against Holden and three others, including also the *Tonasket Tribune*, for \$225,000, charging that he had been libeled by an editorial, which exposed his left-wing liberal record in the state legislature where he had served three terms. This was 10 days before the state primary election in 1962, in which Goldmark was overwhelmingly defeated by the voters, ending his political career. He was succeeded by a more conservative Democrat. After the longest trial ever held in Okanogan county, Goldmark was awarded a verdict of \$40,000 by the jury, but Judge Theodore S. Turner, before whom the case was tried, granted a motion by the defendants for a judgment notwithstanding the verdict. This was granted by the court and not only did Goldmark receive nothing, but he was required to pay all the costs of the trial. At the same time, a similar case in Alabama, in which a verdict for \$100,000 had been awarded against the *New York Times*, had been reversed by the Supreme Court of the United States because there had been no evidence of malice shown in the trial. There was no evidence of malice in the Goldmark case.

In 1943, Holden filed a libel suit against Street & Smith, New York publishers of PIC magazine, in which had appeared an article branding Holden as a "pal of the Japs." This was while Holden's son, Ashley, Jr., was in uniform in the Philippines under General Douglas MacArthur. The case was heard by a jury in the federal district court in Spokane which awarded damages of \$15,000 to Holden. In negotiations with the publishers after the trial this sum was reduced to \$12,000 and paid in full when the publishers agreed not to appeal the case.

Further political activities included serving as state coordinator of The Conservative Caucus from 1975 to 1984, and as a delegate to the Washington State Republican Convention in 1978. Then in 1984, he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Dallas, Texas.

In 1975, Holden's wife Ruth, to whom he had been married for 60 years, passed away as the result of a stroke. In 1976, he married Emily E. Wilbanks, a former high school friend, and they lived in Bellevue, Washington. Also in 1976, he published a book entitled *Saga of the Sagebrush*, containing many of his editorials and columns written over a period of more than 50 years. (final four paragraphs supplied by Holden)

Content Description

The Ashley E. Holden Papers consist of materials relating to his personal life, Pacific relations, newspaper editorialship and political activities.

The personal material consists primarily of correspondence (1920-1965), in chronological order. A land claim document and financial materials complete the series.

General correspondence heads the Pacific relations series and is arranged chronologically. Letters from Hiroshi Saito, both prior to and subsequent to his appointment as ambassador to the United States, appear in the correspondence. The remainder of the series is arranged alphabetically by topic. Much of the material pertains to the Japan Society and related activities, but also included is material concerning business dealings with Japanese firms and information relating to the publication of *The Oriental Outlook*.

Files in the newspaper editorialship series are grouped chronologically, beginning with the *Brewster Review* in 1916 and ending with the *Tonasket Tribune* in the 1960s. Under each title, chronologically arranged correspondence appears first, followed by news copy, press releases, research material and newsclippings, where those types of materials exist. Also included in this series are correspondence and documents pertaining to a libel suit brought by Washington State Representative John Goldmark against Holden and others in 1962. Goldmark charged he had been libeled in Holden's newspaper, the *Tonasket Tribune*, when he was portrayed as a communist sympathizer.

"Right-to-work" activities in which Holden was involved are the main thrust of the political activities series. Material concerning Holden's own political campaigns (in 1932 and 1960), Republican Party politics and conservative political organizations are also included in the series, as well as newsletters about related topics.

General correspondence begins the series and is arranged alphabetically by name of the correspondent. Notable correspondents include Senators Henry Jackson, Warren Magnuson, Joseph McCarthy and Barry Goldwater. The subject files which follow are in alphabetical order with most of the related correspondence arranged chronologically. One exception is the correspondence for the Initiative 202 file, which is arranged alphabetically. Organizations and events comprise the subject files.

Significant organizations include the Committee for Voluntary Unionism, the National Right to Work Committee, and the Republican Party.

The collection consists of 32 images, about half of which relate to Japan. There are pictures of passengers on the liner "Lurline," in 1933 including Christopher Morley.

Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

Description

[Guide to the Ashley E. Holden papers](#)

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Aliens--United States
Conservative literature
Conservatives
Editorials
Journalists--United States--Correspondence
Newspaper publishing--Washington (State)
Right to labor

Personal Names :

Goldmark, John
Goldwater, Barry M. (Barry Morris), 1909-1998
Larson, Reed
McCarthy, Joseph, 1908-1957
Oles, Stuart G., 1924-
Saito, Hiroshi, 1886-1939

Corporate Names :

Japan Society of Seattle

Geographical Names :

Japan--Relations--United States
United States--Emigration and immigration
United States--Relations--Japan
Washington (State)--Politics and government

Finding aid prepared by James A. Kenny, Manuscripts Processor
2006



<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>

Ashley E. Holden papers, 1910-1976
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv91666>

About Creative Commons Licenses in Archives West:
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/cc-zero.shtml>