

Collection Title: Robert O. Fife Papers, 1937-2004, undated

Repository:

The Helsabeck Archives of the Stone-Campbell Movement
Emmanuel Christian Seminary Library at Milligan
1 Walker Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601
Email: archives@milligan.edu
<http://library.milligan.edu/archives/>

Creator:

Fife, Robert O.

Title:

Robert O. Fife Papers, 1937-2004, undated

Collection No.

HSC0014

Extent:

5 cubic feet (5 boxes)

Language:

English

Abstract:

This collection composes the papers of Dr. Robert Oldham Fife, 1918-2003, a long-time professor of history at Milligan and Emmanuel. Fife's papers include his writings, correspondence, and teaching notes, among many other items.

See also C0041 Robert O. Fife Papers, 1958-1975, undated at The Holloway Archives at Milligan University.

Biographical Note:

Robert Oldham Fife was born in 1918 and grew up in California and Washington. He graduated from Johnson Bible College (now Johnson University), Butler School of Religion (now Christian Theological Seminary), and Indiana University. His doctoral dissertation was entitled "Alexander Campbell and the Christian Church in the Slavery Controversy." He was ordained into the ministry at 18 years old. During World War II, he served as a chaplain in the US Army, including being part of the contingent that liberated the Dachau camp in Germany. He served as a minister at multiple churches, including churches in Tennessee, Washington, Nebraska, and Indiana. He taught at Johnson Bible College, Milligan College (now Milligan University), Pepperdine University, and Emmanuel School of Religion (now Emmanuel Christian Seminary at Milligan University) for many years. In the 1980s, Fife helped establish the Westwood Christian Foundation in California. He was known for his interest in unity amongst the Stone-Campbell churches. Fife was a prolific writer, with many books and articles to his name. He was married to LaVada Gilfilen (1921-2000) and had three children, Wayne, Robert, and Gloria. He passed away in 2003.

Arrangement:

The Robert O. Fife Papers were found in several file drawers among the standing files in the Helsabeck Archives. Most items were moved out to form this collection, with only a few remaining behind for a true reference file. Duplicates and blank paper were removed from the collection, as well as several issues of the *Restoration Review* which seemed to have no bearing on the collection.

The papers of Robert O. Fife are arranged into five series: I. Series: Correspondence, 1947-2004, undated; II. Series: Writings, 1937-2000, undated; III. Series: Westwood, 1980-1994, undated; IV. Series: Teaching, 1953-1993, undated; and V. Series: Subject Files, 1940-2001. The Writings series also has a subseries, Sermons, 1937-1974, undated. The Subject Files series is further divided into four subseries: 1. Subseries: Personal, 1940-2001, undated; 2. Subseries: Conventions, 1949-1991, undated; 3. Subseries: Unity, 1941-1990, undated; and 4. Subseries: General, 1943-1994, undated. With the exception of the Correspondence series, all series and subseries are arranged alphabetically. The Correspondence series is arranged first chronologically and then alphabetically as it shifts from by year to by subject.

Scope and Content Note:

The papers of Robert O. Fife are divided into five series: Correspondence, Writings, Westwood, Teaching, and Subject Files. The Writings series also has a subseries, Sermons. The Subject Files series is further divided into four subseries: Personal, Conventions, Unity, and General.

The Correspondence series spans 1947 to 2004 and include undated material. The first part of the series is arranged chronologically by the first date in the span of the folder. This first range includes folders that were marked as "Correspondence" or "General Correspondence" instead of by specific people or subject, which is what the second half includes. Some chronological files were condensed by year, but most were kept in their original grouping, thus resulting in date overlap between some folders. Much of this series contains correspondence from Fife instead of just correspondence to Fife.

The Writings series spans 1937 to 2000 and contains undated material. The first part of the series contains multiple writings, rough drafts, and speeches given by Fife. The second part of the series is Subseries: Sermons, spanning 1937 to 1974 and containing undated material. This part contains Sunday School lessons and sermons by Fife.

The Westwood series spans 1980 to 1994 and contains undated material. This series contains reports, minutes, and information on the Westwood Christian Foundation in California that provided theological education.

The Teaching series spans 1953 to 1993 and contains undated material. This series contains information from Fife's teaching career, including notes for teaching at Emmanuel and Milligan. Also included are materials relevant to Fife's teaching career.

The Subject Files series spans 1940 to 2001 and contains undated material. The series is further divided into four series. The Personal subseries spans 1940 to 2001 and contains undated material. This subseries contains documents related to Fife's personal life, including his academic records and newspaper clippings about his involvement in the liberation of Dachau. The Conventions subseries spans 1949 to 1991 and contains undated material. This subseries contains information on various conventions, including the North American Christian Convention and the World Convention. The Unity subseries spans 1941 to 1990 and contains undated material. This subseries contains information related to Fife's interest in unity among the branches of the Stone-Campbell Movement. The General subseries spans 1943 to 1994 and contains undated material. This subseries contains files that did not fit into other series or subseries.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Accession 2024-001

Note: There was no accession year available when this collection was processed, therefore the year when processing started is used for the accession record.

Access Restrictions:

Collection is open for research. A few folders have restricted material, which is designated in red and indicated below.

The archivist reserves the right to determine on a case-by-case basis if certain folders within the collection that have been requested for viewing cannot be made available due to various restriction compliance, including but not limited to student information, private personal information, and organizational information of a restricted nature.

Preferred Citation

[Item], Robert O. Fife Papers, Collection HSC0014, The Helsabeck Archives of the Stone-Campbell Movement, Emmanuel Christian Seminary at Milligan Library, Johnson City, TN.

Processing Information

Processed by Katherine N. Banks

Completed in 2024

Folder List

Box 1 I. Series: Correspondence, 1947-2004, undated

Correspondence, 1947-1956
Correspondence, 1959-2004
General, 1960-1963
Correspondence, 1963-1965
Correspondence, 1964
Correspondence, 1964-1967
Correspondence, 1965
Correspondence, 1966
Neglected Alternative (Not Replied), 1965-1966
Neglected Alternative (Replies), 1965-1966
Correspondence, 1967-1968
General, 1968
Correspondence, 1969
Correspondence, 1970
Correspondence in Process, 1970-1972
General, 1970-1972
Pending Correspondence, 1970-1971
Correspondence, 1971
Correspondence, 1971-1984
Correspondence, 1973-1974
General, 1973
General 1974
Correspondence, 1989-1990

Box 2

Achtemeier, 1992
Senator Howard H. Baker, 1973
Mr. Jack Ballard, 1974
James L. Barnes, 1974
David Bayless, 1971
Dr. Wayne Bell, 1974
Benjamin – Short, 1964-1965
Dr. W. B. Blakemore, Dean, 1974-1975
Bobo, David, 1974
Book Correspondence, 1971-1972
Books, 1971-1972
John Boyle, 1971
Brazil Correspondence, 1971-1972
Challenge Unlimited, 1973
CMF Correspondence, 1955-1962, undated
Christian Missionary Fellowship file, 1973
Christian Theological Seminary, 1973
Church in the World, 1969-1972
J. Lynn Cleaveland, 1971-1972
Lynn Cooper, 1971-1972
Cover Letters: *Teeth on Edge*, 1971-1972
Cover Letters: *Under the Chapel Spire*, 1972
Mr. Fred Craddock, 1974
Emmanuel Correspondence, 1967-1968
Robert Fife, 1963-1964
Leroy Garrett, 1971-1974
Kaneko, 1988
Kentucky Christian College, 1974
Lemmons, 1989
Letters of Recommendation, 1970-1975
Milligan Correspondence (While at Pepperdine), 1970-1971
Mr. John Mills, 1974
Steve and Toni Moss, 1987
North American Christian Convention, 1973-1975
Grady Nutt, 1973
Open, 1969-1970
Personal Correspondence, 1949-1956
Plainfield Christian Church (Warren Robbins, Minister), 1971-1974
Project Challenge (Darrell Terry), 1971-1973
References, 1967-1974
Restoration Roots Conference – Chico, CA, 1981
Robert C. Ross, 1973
Tennessee State Library and Archives, 1971-1972
Dr. Lucius M. Tobin, 1972
George Walker (FOCI), 1971
Western Correspondence, 1969-1970
Larry Wigal, 1971
Yuma, 1987

II. Series: Writings, 1937-2000, undated

Alexander Campbell, 1988

“Beazley Buzz,” 1964-1968, undated
Book Reviews, 1972
Campbell as Social Thinker, 1938-1988, undated
Church in the World, 1985-1993
Communion Meditations, undated
In Quest of the Limits Symposium, April 1974
Jesus as God, undated
Lectures, 1965-1985
Lessons from COCU, 1974
Lord’s Supper, 1986-1990, undated
Membership, 1990-1992, undated
“Our Future – As the Only Christians?” undated
PCC 1979 Staley Lectures, 1979
Papers: Others,
 Folder 1, 1965-2000, undated

Box 3

 Folder 2, 1963-1996, undated
 Folder 3, 1962-1998, undated
Periodical Article, 1957-1999, undated
“The Politics of Hysteria,” 1970
Salute to the Class of 1966 (for *Buffalo*), undated
“Where Are We Going? A Call for Cooperative Excellence,” 1980-1987, undated

1. Subseries: Sermons, 1937-1974, undated

Bible School Lessons, 1968-1974, undated
Bible School Lessons – Apr Quarts 1968, 1966, undated
Bible School Lessons – Working Drafts and Lesson Carbons, undated
Carbon Copies: Lessons for Standard Publishing, January 1972
Collegiate Church – Sermons, 1972-1973
Sermon Outlines, undated
Sermon Rough Drafts, 1972-1973
Sermons,
 Folder 1, 1937-1959, undated
 Folder 2, 1937-1963, undated
 Folder 3, 1938-1960
 Folder 4, 1963
 Folder 5, 1963
 Folder 6, 1969-1970

Box 4

III. Series: Westwood, 1980-1994, undated

Foundation – 1991, 1990-1991
Foundation – 1992-1993, 1992-1994, undated
Report to the Trustees, 1984-1992
To Westwood – September 1991, 1990-1991, undated
Trustees – 1990 on, 1989-1994, undated
Westwood,
 Folder 1, 1980-1993, undated
 Folder 2, 1985-1990, undated
 Folder 3, 1988-1989, undated
Westwood 1990, 1990-1991, undated
Westwood 1992, 1991-1992, undated

Westwood Minutes, 1987-1991, undated

IV. Series: Teaching, 1953-1993, undated

American Church History, 1977, undated [RESTRICTED]

Australia, 1983-1993, undated

Curriculum – History, Historiography, 1953-1968, undated

Directed Readings, 1970, undated

Emmanuel Library, 1966-1968

Emmanuel School of Religion, 1964-1986, undated

ESR Faculty Minutes, 1969-1972

Europe 1870-19--, 1949-1967, undated [RESTRICTED]

Historical Readings, 1962-1963, undated

Historiography, 1967, undated

Johnson Bible College, 1960-1985, undated

Milligan Lectures, 1984-1986, undated

Preaching in the Restoration Movement – CH619/CMP619, 1982, undated

Restoration Movement, 1974-1993, undated

Seminar: Restoration of the 19th Century, 1975-1983, undated

Walker Citation, 1970

V. Series: Subject Files, 1940-2001, undated

1. Subseries: Personal, 1940-2001, undated

Academic Records Ph.D., 1954-1960, undated

Fife, Robert Oldham, 1943-2001, undated

Fife, Robert: File from President Wetzel's Office 8/2005, 1966-2001, undated

Fife, Robert O. – General, 1940-1965, undated

Box 5

Library of Dr. Robert O. Fife, 1966-1992, undated

Newspaper Clippings, 1995

Personal Documents, 1948-1967, undated

Reading Notes – History, undated

2. Subseries: Conventions, 1949-1991, undated

Christian Church Conventions, 1949-1963, undated

Cincinnati Conference, 1987, 1986-1987, undated

North American Christian Convention 1974, 1972-1975, undated

North American Christian Convention Detroit – 1975, 1974-1980, undated

North American Christian Convention 1984, 1984-1991, undated

R. O. Fife and the World Convention, 1967-1983

World Convention,

Folder 1, 1964, undated

Folder 2, 1965, undated

Folder 3, 1965-1970, undated

3. Subseries: Unity, 1941-1990, undated

Consultation on Unity, 1960-1964, undated

Contemporary Brotherhood Sessions – 1967, 1967, undated

Open Forum – Anderson 1990, 1980-1990, undated

Papers Re: Unity, 1964-1965, undated

Unity Documents, 1941-1962, undated

4. Subseries: General, 1943-1994, undated

Bible Study – Bishop Newbigin, 1964
Brazil Papers, 1971, undated
Church Growth, undated
Conference on African and African-American Studies, 1969-1970
Dube, Kingsley Dinga, undated
Fifty Years of Digression and Disturbance, 1954
Institute of World Studies, 1972-1976, undated
Interfaith Committees, 1970-1971
Johnson Bible College Council of 70, 1991-1992, undated
Johnson Bible College Homecoming 1991, 1990-1991, undated
Johnson Bible College Reunion, 1989-1990
Lindsay, Vachel, undated
Ministry, 1943-1989
Mt. Gilead Church, 1958
O'Dempsey, undated
Project Challenge, 1965, undated
Reformation in British Isles Wycliffe – Haldames, 1977, undated
Restoration/California Ministers, 1976, undated
Restoration Monographs,
 Folder 1, 1961-1989, undated
 Folder 2, 1975-1994, undated
Urban Communities, 1971-1972, undated
Vatican II Blakemore Reports, 1964, undated
Wilson Thompson, undated