

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG1047.AM: Olson, James Clifton, 1917-2005

Papers: ca. 1936-1965

Lincoln, Lancaster County, Neb.: Historian, educator

Size: 12.5 cu.ft.; 24 boxes

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Clifton Olson, son of Arthur Edwin and Abbie Anderson Olson, was born in Bradgate, Iowa, on January 23, 1917. He received his A.B. Degree from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1938, and both his M.A. (1939) and his Ph.D. (1942) from the University of Nebraska. His doctoral dissertation on J. Sterling Morton became the first of many books he published.

On June 6, 1941 he married Vera Blanche Farrington. Their marriage was blessed with two daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah Margaret.

During World War II he served as an expert consultant to the Department of War on the history of the U.S. Army in the war. In addition to these duties, Dr. Olson was instructor of history at Northwest Missouri State Teachers College in the summers of 1940 and 1942 and became Superintendent of the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1946. He held this post until 1956, during which time he was a lecturer at Omaha University (1947-1950), part-time lecturer at the University of Nebraska (1946-1954) and part-time associate professor of history at the University (1954-1956). In 1956 he accepted the position of chairman of the department of history at El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City in 1962. The same year he was named the Bennett S. and Dorothy Martin Professor of History and chairman of the department. Dr. Olson became the director of graduate program development and associate dean of the graduate college in 1965 and was promoted to Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Studies and Research in early 1968. Beginning in the fall semester of the 1968-1969 school year, he held the position of Chancellor of the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Dr. Olson was active in numerous professional and service organizations. He belonged to the Agricultural History Society and served as its vice-president 1961-1962, was a member of the council of the American Association for State and local History from 1948-1956, regional vice-president, 1956-1962 and president, 1962-1964, and was chairman of that organization's research and publications committee. He served as president of the University of Nebraska Chapter of the American Association of University Professors in 1964, served on the board of directors of the Nebraska State Historical Society (1956-1968), and was a member of the Council for Basic Education. Dr. Olson was a member of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and served as its secretary-treasurer (1953-1956), a member of the board of editors, (1960-1963), and served on its executive committee from 1963-1966. He held the post of president of the Nebraska History and Social Studies Teachers Association from 1957-1958 and was president of the Nebraska Writers Guild from 1951-1953.

In addition to his biography of J. Sterling Morton, Dr. Olson is the author of *History of Nebraska*, 1955, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 1965, and was a contributing editor to the *Army Air Force in World War II*, 1951, 1955. With his wife, Vera F. Olson, he published *Nebraska is My Home*, 1956, and *This is Nebraska*, 1960.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of manuscript material and index files arranged in two Subgroups. Subgroup 1: Writings; and Subgroup 2: Correspondence and Subject Files. These materials related to James Olson's time with the Nebraska State Historical Society as well as the University of Nebraska.

The materials in **Subgroup 1** are further divided into series which relate to the publication of *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, *J. Sterling Morton*, the *History of Nebraska* and to various other writings, including articles, book reviews and speeches. Included are correspondence, research notes, and drafts of the manuscripts. **Subgroup 2** consists of correspondence and subject files, much of it relating to his affiliations with various professional organizations.

Note: See the photo component [RG1047.PH] for related images. Official records from Dr. Olson's time as Superintendent of the Nebraska State Historical Society are now part of [RG14](#). The UNL Archives holds additional [James Olson papers](#) relating to his time at the University. See the [NSHS Library catalog](#) and the [Nebraska History index](#) for various published materials by James Olson.

DESCRIPTION

Subgroup 1: Writings

Series 1 - *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 1965

Box 1 (Index cards) Red Cloud notes, 1800-1864
Box 2 (Index cards) Red Cloud notes, 1868-1875
Box 3 (Index cards) Red Cloud notes, 1876-1884
Box 4 (Index cards) Red Cloud notes, 1885-1910, n.d.

Box 5

Folder

1. Newspaper photocopies
2. News articles, typed
3. News articles, typed
4. Archives notes
5. Relative treaties
6. Pamphlets relative to the Sioux
7. Publisher's observations and notes
8. Correspondence, 1957-1964, pt. 1
9. Correspondence, 1957-1964, pt. 2

10. Descriptions of photos and copies of documents
11. Rough draft and notes, Ch. 1 & 2
12. 1st major draft, title page-Ch. 6
13. 1st major draft, Ch. 7-12
14. 1st major draft, Ch. 13-18
15. 1st major draft, Ch. 19-bibliography
16. Originals of retyped pages and inserts
17. Revised Draft, title page-Ch. 3
18. Revised Draft, Ch. 4-6
19. Revised Draft, Ch. 7-9
20. Revised Draft, Ch. 10-12
21. Revised Draft, Ch. 13-16
22. Revised Draft, Ch. 17-19
23. Revised Draft, Ch. 20-22
24. Revised Draft, Ch. 23-bibliography

Box 6

Folder

1. Revised Draft, Index
2. Galley Proof
3. Page Proof

Box 7 (Index cards) Red Cloud bibliography notes

Subgroup 1: Writings

Series 2 - *History of Nebraska, 1955*

Box 8 (Index cards) History of Nebraska, bibliography notes

Box 9 (Index cards) History of Nebraska, bibliography notes

Box 10 (Index cards) Notes, 1500-1857

Box 11 (Index cards) Notes, 1857-1950s, misc.

Box 6 (cont.)

Folder

4. Notes, misc.
5. Notes, misc.
6. Manuscript, preface-Ch. 3
7. Manuscript, Ch. 4-6
8. Manuscript, Ch. 7-9
9. Manuscript, Ch. 10-12
10. Manuscript, Ch. 13-14
11. Manuscript, Ch. 15-17
12. Manuscript, Ch. 18-20
13. Manuscript, Ch. 21-23

14. Manuscript, Ch. 24-25, also correspondence, comments and list of illustrations

Subgroup 1: Writings

Series 3 - *J. Sterling Morton, 1942*

15. Typed Manuscript, Ch. 1-8
16. Typed Manuscript, Ch. 9-16
17. Typed Manuscript, Ch. 17-23
18. Typed Manuscript, Ch. 24-bibliography

Subgroup 1: Writings

Series 4 - Articles, Book Reviews, Speeches, etc.

19. Notes on Richardson County
20. Review, Pioneer Preacher, by Opal Berryman
21. A Golden Jubilee -- A Sesquicentennial of History
22. The Platte Valley and Dodge County - Highway and Homesite
23. The Library of the Nebraska State Historical Society
24. Let's teach more local history
25. A Program for the County Historical Society
26. Preserving our heritage
27. Addison Erwin Sheldon

Box 12

Folder

1. Arbor Day after seventy-five years
2. The Historical museum as the historian's source of supply
3. Review, Land of the Dakotahs, by Bruce Nelson
4. There's no State like Nebraska
5. Nebraska. Article for Encyclopedia Americana
6. Review, The Territories and the United States, by E.S. Pomeroy
7. State and local history in the schools
8. Review, Corn Country, by Homer Croy
9. The Humanities in Early Nebraska
10. 1866--a year on the trail
11. Review, The Missouri Valley, by Rufus Terral
12. The interview as a source of Indian history
13. The school paper as seen from the morgue
14. Review, Heaven's Tableland, by Vance Johnson
15. Review, Here Rolled the Covered Wagons, by Albert & Jane Salisbury
16. Edited, Diary of Thomas Alfred Creigh
17. Review, Persimmon Hill, by William Kennerly as told to Elizabeth Russell
18. The first Nebraskans. KFOR, Lincoln
19. The people build a monument. KFOR, Lincoln
20. Your University Speaks. Nebraska Network, Feb. 13, 1949

21. Review, Forty-Niners, by Archer B. Hulbert
22. Fort Atkinson (1819-1827). Written for the National Park Service
23. Nebraska and the spirit of Arbor Day. College, Apr. 19, 1949
24. Review, The 49'ers by Wells & Peterson
25. Review, A Cycle of the West by John G. Neihardt
26. Nebraska -- The Cornhusker State
27. Review, Gold Rush Album, by J.H. Jackson
28. Sidney -- Black Hills Trail
29. Review, The Black Hills, By Robert Casey
30. General John O'Neill
31. Review, Wells Fargo: Advancing the American Frontier, by Edward Hungerford
32. Review, Farming and Democracy, by A.W. Griswold
33. Nebraska in the first half of the 20th century, 1950
34. Arbor Lodge: Monument to a Great Idea
35. Why we behave like Nebraskans
36. Review, This Reckless Breed of Men, by R.G. Clelland
37. The Organization of Old Cheyenne County
38. The Literary tradition in pioneer Nebraska
39. Historical Quiz
40. The historical society--custodian of a great national asset
41. Early pioneer settlements in the Platte River Valley of Nebraska
42. James Lee Sellers
43. Review, The History of Platte County, Nebraska, by Margaret Curry
44. Remarks at Buffalo Bill memorial dedication, North Platte, May 4, 1951
45. Nebraska and the nation
46. Alexander Culbertson
47. Lincoln; notes for J.E. Lawrence
48. Along Nebraska's pioneer trails. Extension service, E.C. 5-165
49. Review, A Journal of the McKinley Years, by Charles G. Dawes
50. Review, Frontier Justice, by Wayne Gard
51. Nebraska's Territorial Centennial (guest editorial), *Lincoln Star*, Oct. 6, 1951
52. Memorial to Mark Morton
53. Omaha a century ago
54. The museum's responsibility to the student and researcher
55. Peter A. Sarpy
56. Teaching guide for University of Nebraska filmstrip, History of Nebraska
57. Statement on L.B. 20, Public Health and Miscellaneous Subjects Committee, Jan. 20, 1953
(on William Jennings Bryan statue)
58. The Sower (prepared 1952 for the 1951 Annual report of the Bureau Of Vital Statistics,
State Department of Health, Lincoln, Nebr.) 1p.
59. Nebraska in 1871
60. Nebraska City a century and more ago
61. Omaha -- A 100 Year Look Back
62. Nebraska State Historical Library and Museum
63. "Notes on a Visit to Historic Spots in Frontier County, Nebraska."
64. Award of Merit to Minden's Pioneer Village

65. Nebraska's One Hundredth Birthday
66. Are We Really Spreading the American Heritage?
67. Review, *The Nebraska Question 1852-1854*, by James C. Malen
68. Review, *Knickerbocker Birthday*, by R.W.G. Vail
69. Dedicatory ceremonies, Museum of the Fur Trade, Chadron, July, 16, 1955
70. Review, *Army Air Forces in World War II* by Wesley Craven and James Lea Cate, ed.
71. Colloquium held in connection with the re-dedication of the building of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison Wisconsin, Oct. 7, 1955
72. Descendents of Platte Valley Pioneers: an address prepared for use of Gov. Anderson at Grand Island, March 9, 1956
73. Two of the Problems of the Plains
74. "Historical Reasons Why North Platte, Nebraska should be selected as the Site of the Cowboy Hall of Fame and Museum."
75. "Cambridge and Southwestern Nebraska"
76. "A New Approach to American History"
77. "Fort Sidney Days"
78. Ned C. Abbott
79. "The early settlement of Phelps and Gosper counties."
80. "Nebraska State Historical Society in 1953."
81. "The New Building"
82. "Founding the Capital City"
83. "Clio in the Field"
84. "Historians and the Teaching of History, 1957"
85. Review, "Politics and Diplomacy from Lincoln to McKinley," by
86. "Omaha--The Beginnings"
87. Political History of Nebraska
88. "Forward Nebraska"
89. Review, "Big Dan," by
90. Introduction of Dr. Howard R. Driggs
91. "Historical Societies in American Historiography"
92. "History of Army Air Force in the Pacific"
93. Review, *Pioneer Railroad: The Story of the Chicago and Northwestern System*
94. Notes for address on "Pioneer Women of Nebraska."
95. Nebraska in 1776
96. Book reviews, 1960 and undated
97. Book reviews, 1961-1965
98. The "Lasting Peace" of Fort Laramie, 1866
99. Speeches and papers read, 1964-1965

Box 13

Folder

1. Pizer-Olson interview, KODY, North Platte, Apr. 5, 1951
2. Diary of James Mason. Ohio to California. 1850 (edited)
3. Nebraska bibliography lists and resources
4. Nebraska notes

Subgroup 2: Correspondence and Subject Files

Box 14 Air Force history bibliography, Pre-WWI to WWI

Box 15 Air Force history bibliography, WWI cont. to between Wars

Box 16 Air Force history bibliography, Books

Box 17 Air Force history bibliography, Periodicals

Box 18 Billington bibliography

Box 19 Billington bibliography

Box 20 Miscellaneous bibliography

Box 21

Folder

1. Air War College, Maxwell AFB
2. American Association for State and Local History, pre-1957 & undated
3. American Association for State and Local History, 1957, Jan.-May
4. American Association for State and Local History, 1957, June-Dec.
5. American Association for State and Local History, 1958
6. American Association for State and Local History, 1959, Jan.-May
7. American Association for State and Local History, 1959, June-Dec.
8. American Association for State and Local History, 1960, Jan.-July
9. American Association for State and Local History, 1960, Aug.-1961
10. American Historical Association, 1958-1965
11. American Historical Association, Service Center
12. American Historical Review
13. Biographical information, James C. Olson
14. Candlelight Club, 1956-1964
15. Certification, 1956-1957, n.d.
16. Certification, misc.
17. Certification, misc.
18. Certification, newspaper clippings
19. Club, The, 1956-1964
20. Coe College, 1956-1957
21. Coe College, undated
22. Commencements, high school, 1957-1965
23. Correspondence, 1945-1950
24. Correspondence, 1951-1965
25. Correspondence, congratulatory, 1956

Box 22

Folder

1. Council for Basic Education, 1953-1959
2. Du Pont, Educators Conference, 1961, pt. 1
3. Du Pont, Educators Conference, 1961, pt. 2

4. Encyclopedia Americana, 1950-1959
5. Encyclopedia, American Oxford and Britannica
6. Encyclopedia, Collier's, 1948-1952
7. Encyclopedia, Collier's, 1953-1954
8. Fort Atkinson Foundation, 1960-1963
9. Great Plains Conference on Education
10. Great Plains Historical Association
11. Hall County Museum
12. Hall of Fame for Great Americans, 1951-1959
13. Hall of Fame for Great Americans, 1960-1962
14. Hall of Fame for Great Americans, 1965
15. Homestead Centennial, 1960-1963
16. Land Grant Centennial, 1957-1962
17. Land Grant Centennial, undated
18. Lexington Group, 1956-1959
19. Lexington Group, 1960-1965
20. Lincoln Centennial, 1957-1958
21. Lincoln Centennial, 1959
22. Lincoln Centennial, undated
23. Lincoln Lore, 1936-1938
24. Maximilian Project, 1964
25. Mexico, 1961-1964, undated

Box 23

Folder

1. Miles, Nelson A., 1958
2. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1952
3. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1953-1954
4. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1964-1965
5. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Committee on the Future of the Association, 1963-1964
6. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Detroit meeting, 1960-1961
7. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Executive Committee, 1963-1965
8. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Local Arrangements Committee, 1954-1956
9. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Local Arrangements Committee, 1957
10. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Manuscript Award, 1956
11. Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Omaha meeting, 1963
12. Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 1957-1964
13. National Cowboy Hall of Fame, 1955-1964
14. National Security Forum, 1956-1958
15. Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, 1957-1963
16. Nebraska Land Study, 1949-1951
17. Nebraska Statistics
18. North Dakota, 75th Anniversary Faculty Conference, 1958
19. Park College, Missouri, 1956-1959

20. Penn State Conference, 1955-1956
21. Penn State Conference, 1957
22. Pony Express Centennial
23. Professors for Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey, 1964
24. River Falls, Wisconsin, 1963
25. Rockefeller Foundation, 1964
26. Round Table, The, 1957-1965
27. Santa Fe Conference on Western History, 1961
28. Social Science Research Council
29. Speaking engagements, 1962-1965

Box 24

Folder

1. St. Paul's Methodist Church Centennial, 1957
2. Taylor, James, 1962
3. Television, 1958-1965
4. Texas Council for the Social Studies, 1957
5. Texas Western, 1962-1964
6. University of Nebraska Press, 1956-1965
7. Western Heritage Center, 1962-1964
8. Western History Association, 1963-1964
9. Western History Association, 1965
10. Western History Association, 1966, Jan.-June
11. Western History Association, 1966, July-1968
12. Westerners, 1962
13. Who's Who in America, 1963

DJR/DHB/cr	03-18-1969
KFK	07-22-1996
kfk/dco	10-23-2003
TMM	01-27-2017

Subject headings:

Abbott, Ned Culbertson, 1874-1960
American Association for State and Local History
American Historical Association
Arbor Day
Cambridge (Neb.) -- History
Cheyenne County (Neb.) -- History
Cook, James Henry, 1857-1942
Creigh, Thomas Alfred, 1840-1909
Culbertson, Alexander, 1809-1879
Dodge County (Neb.) -- History
Fort Atkinson (Neb.)
Gosper County (Neb.) -- History
Hall County (Neb.) -- History
History -- Study and teaching
Lincoln (Neb.) -- Centennial
Mason, James Murray, 1798-1871
Miles, Nelson Appleton, 1839-1925
Minden (Neb.) -- History
Mississippi Valley Historical Association
Morton, Julius Sterling, 1832-1902
Nebraska -- Culture
Nebraska City (Neb.) -- History
Nebraska State Historical Society
North Platte (Neb.) -- History
Olson, James Clifton, 1917-2005
Omaha (Neb.) -- History
O'Neill, John, 1834-1878
Phelps County (Neb.) -- History
Platte County (Neb.) -- History
Platte Valley -- History
Red Cloud, 1822-1909
Richardson County (Neb.) -- History
Sarpy, Peter Abadie, 1805-1865
Sellers, James Lee, 1891-1966
Sheldon, Addison Erwin, 1861-1943
Sidney - Black Hills Trail
St. Paul's Methodist Church (Lincoln, Neb.)
Taylor, James
Teachers -- Certification
Western History Association