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Guide to the Oregon Fiber Flax Collection, 1940-1969

Title

Oregon Fiber Flax Collection

Dates

1940-1969 (inclusive)

1944-1956 (bulk)

Creator

Hoskins, Nancy Arthur

Summary

The Oregon Fiber Flax Collection documents the processing, marketing, and use of Oregon-grown fiber flax and the research activities of Jesse Harmond and Joan Patterson at Oregon State College from 1945 until 1953.

Quantity

0.7 cubic foot (2 boxes)

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

Oregon State University Libraries, University Archives

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Corvallis, OR 97331-4501

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Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Nielsen, 2006.

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Historical Note

Dating to the middle of 19th century, flax cultivation in Oregon grew steadily until World War II when the industry boomed due to blocked supplies from European growers. Concerns over the prospect of competing sources of flax from Europe after the war lead to efforts by Jesse Harmond and Joan Patterson at Oregon State College to promote the production and use of flax in separate projects from 1945 until 1953.

Sent by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to Oregon State College in 1945 to develop machinery that could quicken the processing of flax, agricultural engineer Jesse Harmond formed the company Oregon Custom Weavers to market linen fabrics made from flax.

Joan Patterson, a Professor of Clothing and Textile Design in the College of Home Economics, developed linen fabrics from flax as a part of a cooperative project between the Agricultural Experiment Station, the College of Home Economics, and the Oregon Flax and Linen Board. Patterson's work also involved the weaving of new patterns and exhibit of them to decorators and the media.

Nancy Hoskins, a weaving instructor and writer on textile topics, assembled these materials in conducting her own research and writing on Oregon flax.

Content Description

The Oregon Fiber Flax Collection consists of materials collected by Nancy Hoskins documenting the processing, marketing, and use of Oregon-grown fiber flax. The materials include USDA annual reports on flax research, correspondence, Oregon State College Extension Service bulletins and circulars, newspaper clippings, textile magazines, a photograph, cloth samples, and spools of fiber flax thread. The clippings primarily document the efforts of USDA Agricultural Engineer Jesse Harmond and Home Economics Professor Joan Patterson in promoting the production and use of flax. The photograph is a portrait of Jesse Harmond.

Preferred Citation

Oregon Fiber Flax Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Processing Note

This collection is not fully processed; this guide is preliminary and does not include a folder or box list.

Related Material

The Bioresource Engineering Department Records (RG 1) include extensive flax research records as well as equipment plans and drawings. The Bioresource Engineering Department Photographs (P 106) and Motion Picture Films (P 106 F/V) include approximately 500 images documenting flax harvesting and processing equipment and facilities and a 1947 film, *Fiber Flax Growing and Processing in the Willamette Valley of Oregon*.

The Apparel, Interiors, Housing, and Merchandising Department Records (RG 28) include records of the flax research conducted by Joan Patterson in 1947-1954. The Oregon Custom Weavers Guild Research Notebook consists of samples of Oregon linen compiled by Jesse Harmond.

Joan Patterson's MFA thesis, *Oregon Flax to Fabrics*, completed at Cranbrook Academy in 1950 is available in the Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections.

Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the OSU Libraries Catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog (<http://oasis.oregonstate.edu/>) using these headings.

Organizations

Topics

Flax industry--Oregon.

Flax--Processing--Oregon--Willamette Valley.

Linen--Oregon.

Textile research--Oregon--Corvallis.

Forms of Materials in the Collection

Photographic prints.

Other Creators

Harmond, Jesse E. (Jesse Edward), 1906-

Oregon State College. Federal Cooperative Extension Service.

Patterson, Joan, 1907-

United States. Dept. of Agriculture.