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Guide to the Samuel H. Graf Collection, 1903-1964

Title

Samuel H. Graf Collection (MSS Graf)

Dates

1903-1964 (inclusive)

Creator

Graf, Samuel Herman, 1887-

Summary

The Samuel H. Graf Collection includes letters to family members, a 1909 text co-written by Graf, and a scrapbook of notes and letters sent by Graf's former students and colleagues on the occasion of his retirement in 1954. Graf earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in engineering from Oregon Agricultural College in 1907-1909 and was a faculty member in engineering at Oregon State from 1909 until 1954.

Quantity

0.5 cubic foot, including 2 photographs (2 boxes, including 1 oversize box)

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

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Finding aid prepared by Lawrence A. Landis; updated by Elizabeth Nielsen, 2010.

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Biographical Note

Born at Portland, Oregon, in August 1887, Samuel H. Graf entered Oregon Agricultural College in 1903 to study engineering. He received five engineering degrees from the college - B.S., Electrical Engineering (1907); E.E., Electrical Engineering (1908); B.S., Mechanical Engineering (1908); M.E., Mechanical Engineering (1909); and M.S., Electrical Engineering (1909). Between 1909 and 1954 Graf held several faculty appointments in engineering at Oregon State. From 1909-1912 he was an instructor in mechanical engineering; from 1912-1920 he was the head of experimental engineering; head of the Department of Mechanics and Materials (1920-1934) and of the Department of Mechanical Engineering (1934-1954); director of engineering research (1928-1944); and director of the Engineering Experiment Station (1944-1954).

Graf participated in several professional organizations, including the State Board of Engineering Examiners, the American Society for Metals, the American Society for Testing Materials, and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He also served on the Board of Trustees of Linfield College from 1954 to 1966 and was a member of several honorary societies, including Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi (General Science), Eta Kappa Nu (Electrical Engineering), Sigma Tau (General Engineering), and Tau Beta Pi (General Engineering). Among his publications were Gas Appliance Testing Code, the Gas Engineers' Handbook, and several Engineering Experiment Station research bulletins.

Graf was married three times and had four children. He died in July 1966; Graf Hall on the OSU campus and Graf Hall at Linfield College are named for him.

Arrangement

Organized into 5 series: I. Family Letters, 1903-1920; II. *A Course in Mechanical Drawing*, 1909; III. Typescript, *50 Years of Mechanical Engineering at OSC*, circa 1945; IV. Ephemera, 1933-1961; and V. Scrapbook, 1954-1964.

Content Description

The Samuel H. Graf Collection consists of materials created and assembled by Graf during the course of his years as a student and faculty member at Oregon State College. The materials include letters written to his family during his student years and early years on the faculty from 1903 to 1918; a text in mechanical drawing co-written by Graf; a history of mechanical engineering at Oregon State; and a scrapbook. The scrapbook consists primarily of notes and letters written to Graf by former students and colleagues on the occasion of his retirement in 1954. The collection also includes two photographic prints of Graf receiving an honorary degree from Linfield College in 1959. Also of note is a reprint of a 1933 article in *The Architect and Engineer* on Graf's recently constructed home in Corvallis.

Preferred Citation

Samuel H. Graf Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Custodial History

The family letters were donated to the OSU College of Engineering in 1999 by Samuel Graf's daughter, Therese Graf Tanalski. They were transferred to the University Archives in December 2000.

Related Material

Additional biographical information on Graf can be found in the [Memorabilia Collection](#) (MC-Graf, Samuel H.) and in the biographical files of the News and Communication Services Records (RG 203). Photographs of Graf are located in Harriet's Collection; the OSU Historical Photograph Collection (P 025); the [Faculty and Staff Photograph Collection \(P 046\)](#); and the John Garman Photograph Collection (P 095). The Engineering Experiment Station Records (RG 100) and the Mechanical Engineering Department Records (RG 213) include materials from Graf's tenure with those programs. The Engineering Experiment Station Bulletins (PUB 8-34a) include several reports written by Graf. The [Beulah Gilkey Collection](#) includes correspondence between Graf and others regarding opportunities for engineering faculty with universities in India.

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

Oregon Agricultural College--Students.
Oregon Agricultural College. School of Engineering.
Oregon State College--Alumni and alumnae.
Oregon State College. Dept. of Mechanical Engineering--History.

Topics

College environment--Oregon--Corvallis.
College sports--Oregon--Corvallis.
College students--Oregon--Corvallis--Economic conditions.
College students--Oregon--Corvallis--Social conditions.
College students' writings, American--Oregon--Corvallis.
Engineering students--Oregon--Corvallis.
Engineering--Study and teaching (Higher)--Oregon--Corvallis.
Universities and colleges--Oregon--Corvallis--Faculty.

Forms of Materials in the Collection

Mechanical drawings (tool aided drawings).
Photographic prints.
Scrapbooks.

Other Creators

American Society of Mechanical Engineers.
Phillips, Mark Clyde, 1877-1965.

Series Outline

Series I. Family Letters, 1903-1920

Series II. *A Course in Mechanical Drawing*, 1909

Series III. Typescript, *50 Years of Mechanical Engineering at O.S.C.*, circa 1945

Series IV. Ephemera, 1933-1961

Series V. Scrapbook, 1954-1964

Detailed Description of the Collection

Box

Series I. Family Letters, 1903-1920

The Family Letters consist of letters that Graf wrote to his family between 1903 and 1918 while a student at Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) and later a faculty member. The letters provide a detailed account of student life at OAC. Graf discusses faculty members; his classes; fellow students; athletics; and costs, such as his cadet uniform and room and board. They also provide insight into OAC faculty life in the 1910s. The series also includes an invitation to Graf's 1920 marriage to Blanche Edlefsen. The letters are arranged chronologically.

- 1 Transcripts of letters
- Original letters
 - 1 1903-1904
 - 1 1905-1907
 - 1 1908-1909
 - 1 1910-1918
- 1 Wedding invitation, 1920

Box

Series II. *A Course in Mechanical Drawing*, 1909

Series II is a text and supplemental drawings written by Graf and fellow faculty member M. Clyde Phillips in 1909.

- 1 Text and drawings
- 1 Texts only (2 copies)

Box

1 Series III. *Typescript, 50 Years of Mechanical Engineering at O.S.C., circa 1945 (2 copies)*

Series III consists of a summary of the development of mechanical engineering at Oregon State prepared by Graf in the mid 1940s. It describes department facilities, faculty, curriculum, and degrees awarded.

Box

1 Series IV. *Ephemera, 1933-1961*

Series IV consists of a reprint from the January 1933 issue of *The Architect and Engineer* about the Graf's recently completed residence in Corvallis that includes exterior and interior photographs and an award certificate from the American Society for Testing Materials.

- 1 Graf home, 1933
- 1 Award Certificate, American Society for Testing Materials, June 28, 1961

Box**1 Series V. Scrapbook, 1954-1964**

The scrapbook consists predominantly of notes and letters from former students and colleagues presented to Graf at the banquet given in his honor by the Oregon Section of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in 1954 at the time of Graf's retirement. The scrapbook also includes clippings, brochures, and memorabilia from the dinner as well several items from the late 1950s and early 1960s. These later materials include clippings, correspondence, and photographs pertaining to Linfield College's award of an honorary degree to Graf in 1959.

2 Scrapbook

1 Loose materials removed from scrapbook

1 Photographs of Linfield College honorary degree, 1959