Ralph Roger Harkins Collection
(R1407)

Collection Number: R1407

Collection Title: Ralph Roger Harkins Collection

Dates: 1930-1974

Creator: Harkins, Ralph Roger

Abstract: The Ralph Roger Harkins Collection contains the papers of journalist R. Roger Harkins, dealing with his research into the oil shale industry and the United States government’s management of those lands and resources. Much of the research and writings of Harkins focuses on Ralph S. Kelley.

Collection Size: 0.75 cubic foot
(13 folders, 66 photographs)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research, but is stored offsite. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla. If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See Rights & Reproductions on the Society’s website for more information about reproductions and permission to publish.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] Ralph Roger Harkins Collection (R1407); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Dale D. Reed on August 15, 1997 (Accession No. RA1714).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Ralph Roger Harkins Collection can be found in the following collections:

Reed Family Papers (C4065)
Biographical Note:

Ralph Roger Harkins was born April 28, 1935 in Janesville, Wisconsin. He married Kathryn Phyllis Seifert in 1962 and together they had two children. He initially worked as a teacher and basketball coach at St. Mary’s Catholic School. He began working as a reporter at the Kokoma Morning Times in Indiana in 1964. From there he went on to work at the Boulder Daily Camera and as a freelance journalist. He died in 1989 in Pueblo, Colorado.

During his career he worked on many stories regarding government activities and cover ups. He worked on documenting the suspected CIA’s involvement with the Condon Committee. Harkins’ article on the topic, while submitted for publication, never made it to print. He co-authored UFOs? Yes! in 1969 with David R. Saunders relating their findings on the Condon Committee scientific investigation of UFOs. From 1969 to 1973 he worked as a freelance reporter and for the National Asthma Center. In 1970, he earned his master’s degree from University of Colorado in communication arts. In the 1970s, he began investigating the oil shale industry and the story of Ralph S. Kelley.

Ralph S. Kelley was born May 8, 1872 in Nebraska to H. B. Kelley and Sarah Estelle Ong. He worked for the General Land Office as a special agent in 1907 and assigned to the Field Division Office in Denver, Colorado. By 1918, he was assigned the special agent in chief in the field division.

In July 1930 Kelley was ordered to Washington D.C. to take charge of oil shale matters for the Department of the Interior. On September 30, 1930 he sent a letter to the Department of the Interior regarding the administration of government oil shale land in Colorado, also working with the New York World to chronical his story. He submitted his resignation on September 28, 1930. His resignation was rejected and instead he was suspended pending an investigation. An investigation of the claim was instigated on October 1, 1930 by the U.S. Assistant Attorney General, Seth Richardson. The investigation was unable to substantiate any of the claims made by Kelley and Kelley himself refused to assist in the investigation. President Hoover himself made a statement to the press denying Kelley’s allegations. Kelley was then dismissed on October 30, 1930.

Kelley died at his boarding house on March 17, 1964 in Los Angeles, California. He is buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following three series:

Ralph S. Kelley
Research
Ralph Roger Harkins

Scope and Content Note:
Ralph S. Kelley

This series contains materials related to Ralph S. Kelley and his accusations against the Department of the Interior regarding their management and usage of the government oil shale lands. Of note is folder 1 which contains United States Assistant Attorney General Seth Richardson’s report and findings regarding Ralph S. Kelley’s accusations against the Department of the Interior in 1930. This series is arranged in chronological order.

Research

This series consists of materials pertaining to R. Roger Harkins’ research into the oil shale industry. The research includes scientific articles, newspaper articles, government publications, correspondence, and research notes. This series is arranged in chronological order.

Ralph Roger Harkins

This series contains R. Roger Harkins’ writings and photographs regarding his research into the oil shale industry, in particular the accusation made by Ralph S. Kelley against the Department of the Interior and his subsequent fall from grace. The series includes drafts of his work on the story of the Kelley and his “The Great Shale Robbery,” which drew from the investigation of the industry by J.R. Freeman. This series is arranged in chronological order.

Container List:

f. 1-4 Ralph S. Kelley
   f. 1 Department of the Interior investigation, 1930
   f. 2 New York World articles, 1930
   f. 3 Biographical information, 1930, 1968-1974
   f. 4 Oil Shale Lands, “Hearing Before the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys,” 1931

f. 5-9 Research
   f. 5 Bureau of Mines bulletin 611, “Oil Shale Mining, Rifle, CO, 1944-1956,” 1964
   f. 7 Data on oil shale, 1967-1968
   f. 8 Oil shale research, 1967-1974
   f. 9 Ted Brooks, Eagle Oil articles and correspondence, 1968-1970

f. 10-13 Ralph Roger Harkins
   f. 10 “Has Anyone Here Seen Kelley?: The Untold Story of Ralph S. Kelley and the Great Shale Robbery,” no date
   f. 11 “The Great Shale Robbery,” draft, no date
   f. 12 Oil shale photographs, circa 1970s

Index:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index Term</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooks, Ted</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colony Development Operation (Denver, Colo.)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale, Hollis</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis, Louis F.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eagle Oil</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman, J. R.</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French, Stewart</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harkins, Ralph Roger,</td>
<td>8-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelley, Ralph S., 1872-1964</td>
<td>1-5, 10-11, 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York World</td>
<td>2, 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil Shale Corporation</td>
<td>8, 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil-shale industry--Colorado</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil-shale industry--Government policy--Colorado</td>
<td>4-6, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil-shale mines and mining</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuther, Walter P.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson, Seth</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States. Bureau of Mines</td>
<td>5-6, 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States. Department of Interior</td>
<td>1-2, 4-6, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston, Mort</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>