

Weisburd (Mel) Papers

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California State University, Los Angeles

5151 State University Drive

Los Angeles, California 90032-8300

<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/>

2019

Descriptive Summary

Title: Weisburd (Mel) Papers

Dates: 1952-2002

Collection Number: 2017.004

Creator/Collector: Melvin Irving Weisburd

Extent: 8.92 linear ft.

Repository: California State University, Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California 90032-8300

Abstract: Melvin Irving Weisburd (1927-2015) was a prominent environmentalist, magazine editor, writer and poet. Aside from his work with the Los Angeles County Air Pollution Control District, Weisburd is well known for his contribution to the Los Angeles beatnik poetry movement of the 50's.

Language of Material: English

Access

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Preferred Citation

Weisburd (Mel) Papers . California State University, Los Angeles

Biography/Administrative History

Melvin Irving Weisburd (1927-2015) was a prominent environmentalist, magazine editor, writer and poet. Aside from his work with the Los Angeles County Air Pollution Control District, Weisburd is well known for his contribution to the Los Angeles beatnik poetry movement of the 50's. As a student at Los Angeles State College (known today as California State University, Los Angeles), Weisburd met Thomas McGrath, a highly-regarded poet and English professor who influenced Weisburd's passion for poetry. Weisburd went on to become a member of McGrath's "Marsh Street Irregulars", a group of poets who met every Wednesday night at McGrath's Marsh Street home in the Elysian Valley, which was later demolished to make way for the I-5 and SR-2 highway interchange. At the same time, Weisburd served as the editor of Statement magazine, a still-running university publication founded by McGrath. By 1955, Weisburd and fellow Marsh Street Irregular, Gene Frumkin, founded Coastlines magazine, a literary journal dedicated to poetry in Los Angeles. While operating as the editor for Coastlines, and while continuing his work with the county of Los Angeles as an Environmental Pollution Specialist, Weisburd was actively documenting the Los Angeles poetry scene, recording a number of prominent poetry readings and events throughout the city. Poets in California at the time increasingly identified with the group associated with Coastlines as a significant alternative to the more prominent beatnik communities of San Francisco and Venice Beach. In the 1970s, Weisburd became the founder and president (where he served for 17 years) of Pacific Environmental Services, Inc., a prominent environmental engineering firm, and went on to write technical books and articles in the field of air pollution (examples of which can be found in this collection). Once retired, Weisburd returned his attention to writing. Weisburd's work has been published in various literary magazines, including California Quarterly, Poet Lore and the Transatlantic Review. His work can also be found in poetry anthologies by Walter Lowenfel and Leonard Wolf. Weisburd was also the author of two poetry books, A Life of Windows and Mirrors and The Gloria Poems. Mel Weisburd passed away in April 2015, leaving behind a legacy of writing and environmentalism.

Scope and Content of Collection

In 2016, this collection of manuscripts, poetry, journals, and correspondence, as well as 42 Reel-to-Reels from Weisburd's private collection, were donated to California State University, Los Angeles' Special Collections and Archives department by Dr. Andrew L. Knighton. An English professor at California State University, Los Angeles, Knighton is currently working on a book about Thomas McGrath. Many of the reels in this collection were selected for digitization by the California Audio Visual Preservation Project (CAVPP), and have been made available online at Archive.org.

Indexing Terms

Poets

Poetry

Environmental Pollution

Melvin Irving Weisburd

Thomas McGrath
California State University, Los Angeles
Los Angeles
California
Coastlines

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