
Guide to the Ralph Parkman Papers MSS.2019.05.02

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SJSU Special Collections & Archives

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Title: Ralph Parkman Papers

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Physical Description: 1 Box(.83 linear feet)

Date (inclusive): 1966-2014

Abstract: This collection contains materials from Ralph Parkman's career in the Engineering Department at San José State University. Included are historical narratives about engineering programs and curricula, teaching materials, and related newspaper clippings.

Content Description

This collection is comprised of materials from Ralph Parkman's career in the Engineering Department at San José State University. It contains historical narratives by Professor Parkman (including notes from two presentations he gave in the 1960s) about the development of engineering programs and curricula, most notably the establishment of the Materials Engineering department at SJSU and the inception of the undergraduate engineering course, *Cybernation and Man*, that eventually grew into the interdisciplinary Cybernetic Systems masters program. The collection also contains teaching materials and a textbook authored by Dr. Parkman, *The Cybernetic Society*, as well as related newspaper clippings.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged alphabetically by material type.

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Ralph Parkman was born in Cornwall, England in 1920. He earned a B.S. in Metallurgical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh in 1941 and an M.S. and Ph.D. in the same field from Stanford University in 1949 and 1952 respectively. In between his undergraduate and graduate degrees (1944-1946) he served in the U.S. Navy. Dr. Parkman taught at Stanford University from 1952-1954 before joining the San José State College faculty in September of 1954.

Professor Parkman was instrumental in creating the Materials Engineering program at San José State. The original program, called Engineering Metallurgy, was introduced in 1957. He chaired the program during the 1960s. In 1965, Professor Parkman worked closely with the dean of engineering, Norman Gunderson, to launch *Cybernation and Man*, a new course which examined the effects of technology on society. Professor Parkman wrote the textbook for the course, *The Cybernetic Society*, published in 1972, and was a major contributor to the Cybernetic Systems masters program that grew out of the original class. During his career, Dr. Parkman also held visiting professor positions at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (1962) and the University of Hawaii (1964 and 1971). He retired from San José State University in 1985.

Preferred Citation

Ralph Parkman Papers, MSS-2019-05-02, San José State University Library, Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Information

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Related Materials

San José State University Engineering Department Records, MSS-2009-11-05, San José State University Library, Special Collections & Archives.

Norman Gunderson Cybernetic Systems Program Collection, MSS-2012-06-12, San José State University Library, Special Collections & Archives.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

San José State University -- Faculty

Cybernetics -- Study and teaching (Higher)

Chemical and metallurgical engineering -- Study and teaching (Higher)

System theory -- Study and teaching (Higher)

San José State University. College of Engineering -- History

San José State University. College of Engineering -- Curricula

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Box 1, Folder 1	Historical Narratives of SJSU Engineering Programs ca. 1968-2014
Box 1, Folder 2	Newspaper Clippings 1966-1996
Box 1, Folder 3	Teaching Materials 1971-1972