



Guide to the Cliff Olsen Professional Papers

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Olsen, Clifford W., 1936-
Title:	Cliff Olsen Professional Papers
ID:	MS-00529
Date [inclusive]:	approximately 1949 to 2006
Physical Description:	6.99 Cubic Feet (7 boxes)
Physical Description:	6.34 Linear Feet
Physical Description:	29 Digital Files (2.024 GB) MP3
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The collection, 1949 to 2006, was compiled by Clifford Olsen, a containment physicist at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). It consists of research notes and working papers written by Olsen and other scientists, publications, epoxy aggregate samples, work-related correspondence, nuclear-test-event data, and interviews conducted by Olsen with work colleagues involved with the NTS.

Preferred Citation

Cliff Olsen Professional Papers, 1949-2006. MS-00529. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Biographical Note

Clifford Olsen received his Ph.D. in physics in 1962 and almost immediately went to work full-time for Lawrence Livermore Labs in Pasadena, California. He was assigned to two divisions working with the Nevada Nuclear Test Site program: data retrieval and diagnostics. After the "Baneberry Incident" in 1970, an accidental release of a large quantity of radioactive dust into the atmosphere, Olsen became one of the first containment scientists on the newly created Containment Evaluation Panel (CEP). This panel focused on containing the effects of future nuclear tests at the test site. Olsen held his position on the CEP at Lawrence Livermore for almost forty years. As of 2017, he serves as a Senior Scientific Advisor for the Navarro-Nevada Environmental Management group.

Clifford Olsen, interview by Joan Leavitt, Nevada Test Site Oral History Project, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, September 20, 2004. <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/u?/nts,1283>

Clifford Olsen, LinkedIn profile page, accessed November 28, 2017. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/clifford-olsen-40141147>

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Historical Note

The development of containment science was in response to an underground nuclear test, code-named Baneberry. In May 1970, the explosion unexpectedly vented to the surface, releasing a large quantity of radioactive dust and particles in the atmosphere. Official concern over this incident led to the restructuring of the Nevada Test Site's Test Evaluation Panel (TEP), which to that point had the responsibility of approving all underground nuclear test events in the United States.

Formed in late 1970, the new Containment Evaluation Panel (CEP) was composed of experienced scientists representing a wide range of specialties. The CEP took over the responsibility for addressing potential flaws and approving future nuclear test designs. The panel first met in March 1971, with a charter that specifically defined three goals: evaluate, advise, and record.

U.S. Congress, Office of Technological Assessment, "Containing Underground Nuclear Explosions," in *The Containment of Underground Nuclear Explosions*, OTA-ISC-414 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, October 1989), <https://www.princeton.edu/~ota/disk1/1989/8909/890905.PDF>

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Scope and Contents Note

The collection, compiled by Clifford Olsen, dates between 1949 and 2006. It consists of research notes and working papers written by Olsen and other scientists, publications, work-related correspondence, hardened epoxy samples, a photograph, and testing data for underground nuclear tests conducted in the United States and reports on underground nuclear testing conducted by the USSR. It also includes interviews conducted by Olsen with work colleagues involved with the Nevada Test Site. Most of the collection relates to containment science, with wider-ranging materials associated with nuclear testing.

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Arrangement

These records are organized into three series:

Series I. Containment Evaluation Panel records, 1958-2006;

Series II. Nuclear Test Event records, 1949-2000;

Series III. Interviews, 1997-1999.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2007 by Cliff Olsen; accession number 2007-10.

Processing Note

In 2017, as part of an archival backlog elimination project, John A. Heldt and Melise Leech reboxed and arranged the materials. Additionally, they revised the collection description to bring it into compliance with current professional standards. In 2023, Melise Leech revised the collection description to link the collected digital audio interviews.

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Names and Subjects

- Nuclear weapons -- Testing
- Underground nuclear explosions -- Nevada
- Baneberry Nuclear Test, Nev., 1970

- Radioactive fallout -- Nevada

Collection Inventory

Series I. Containment Evaluation Panel records, 1958-2006

Physical Description: 4.42 Cubic Feet (5 boxes)

Physical Description: 4.17 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents: The majority of the records in this series reflect the work of Cliff Olsen and the Nevada Test Site (NTS) Containment Evaluation Panel between 1971 and 2006, with some records on underground nuclear tests conducted prior to the panel's inception. Also included in this series are volumes of underground nuclear testing symposia, one undated and unidentified photograph of a nuclear test site, United States government and government contractor publications, reports, treaties, and hardened epoxy samples.

Arrangement Note: Materials are arranged chronologically.

Title/Description	Containers
Containment Evaluation Panel working papers, research notes, and correspondence, 1958-1983 Physical Description: 26 folders	box 01
Containment Evaluation Panel working papers, research notes, and correspondence, 1984-2006 Physical Description: 20 folders	box 02
Containment of Underground Nuclear Explosions symposia, 1983-1995 Physical Description: 20 folders	box 03
Test site photograph, undated	box 04
Government agency publications, 1973-1974	box 04
Government agency publications, 1992-1995	box 04
Government agency publications, 2001	box 04
Congressional reports, 1987-1996	box 04
Treaty, USA and USSR, 1974	box 04
Sandia Lab publication, 1975	box 04
Documents from Bechtel Nevada, contractor, 1996-2002	box 04
Underground nuclear testing and the test readiness program, 2000	box 04
Hardened epoxy samples, undated	box 07

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Series II. Nuclear testing event records, 1949-2000

Physical Description: 1.28 Cubic Feet (1 box)

Physical Description: 1.08 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents: The materials in this series relate to underground nuclear testing events between 1949 and 2000, including individual test events in the United States between 1957 and 1992. There is also a published report on underground testing in the USSR between 1940 and 1990. Additional materials include design and planning guides, operations directives, a ground shock overview from 2000, and several lists of underground nuclear tests in the United States between 1957 and 1992 that provide additional information about containment procedures.

Arrangement Note: Materials are arranged chronologically.

Title/Description	Containers
Individual nuclear test events, 1957-1992 Physical Description: 31 folders	box 05
Planning and Operations Directive, 1993	box 05
Nuclear Test Engineering Division Design Guide, 1993	box 05
Graybeard Ground Shock Workshop, 2000	box 05
Controlled Nuclear Testing Event lists, 1957-1992	box 05
Report on USSR underground nuclear testing program, 1949-1999	box 05
Reports examining multiple nuclear test event in the United States, undated	box 05

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Series III. Interviews, 1997 to 1999

Physical Description: 1.28 Cubic Feet (1 box)

Physical Description: 1.08 Linear Feet

Physical Description: 29 Digital Files (1.88 GB) MP3

Scope and Contents Note: This series contains interviews, conducted by Cliff Olsen, with individuals associated with the Containment Evaluation Panel. The interviews were completed between 1997 and 1999.

Arrangement Note: Materials are arranged alphabetically.

Access Note: Digital files are open for research. Arrangements must be made in advance to access digital files; please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives for additional information.

Processing Note: Audio cassettes were outsourced for digitization in 2019.

Title/Description	Containers
Fred App, 1997 April 30 (MS_00529_004) Physical Description: 2 Digital Files MP3	box 06 digital file 00
Bob Brownlee, transcript only, 1997	box 06
Norm Burkhard, 1998 (MS_00529_012)	box 06 digital file 00
Jim Carothers, transcript only, 1997 to 1999	box 06

Jacque Charest, 1997 August 25 (MS_00529_007)	box 06 digital file 00
Ray Cornell, 1998 April 01 (MS_00529_014)	box 06 digital file 00
Lee Davies and Al Moeller, 1998 July 31 (MS_00529_010)	box 06 digital file 00
Russell Duff, 1997 April 15 (MS_00529_015)	box 06 digital file 00
Larry Germain and Barbara Killian, 1997 July 31 (MS_00529_009)	box 06 digital file 00
Mel Hatch, 1998 July 31 (MS_00529_011)	box 06 digital file 00
Gary Higgins, transcript only, 1998	box 06
Jack House, 1998 April 29 (MS_00529_006)	box 06 digital file 00
Tom Kunkle, 1997 April 30 (MS_00529_016)	box 06 digital file 00
Andy Lundberg, 1998 July 21 (MS_00529_002)	box 06 digital file 00
Dan Patch, transcript only, 1997	box 06
Gayle Pawloski, 1998 August 13 (MS_00529_005)	box 06 digital file 00
Ed Peterson, 1997 April 17 (MS_00529_003)	box 06 digital file 00
John Rambo, 1997 June 05, 1997 June 10 (MS_00529_008)	box 06

digital
file 00

Norton Rimer, 1997 April 17 (MS_00529_013)

box 06

digital
file 00

Byron Ristvet, transcript only, 1999

box 06

Gary Adney, interview notes only, 1998

box 06

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