

JOEL GARDNER PAPERS

Mss. 3954, 3562

Inventory

Compiled by
Kris Kallies

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2022
Revised 2025

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SUMMARY

Size	3.5 linear feet
Geographic Locations	Baton Rouge, La., New Orleans, La., Morgan City, La., Houma, La., Shreveport, La., Cherry Hill, N.J., Los Angeles, Ca.
Inclusive Dates	1978-2021, undated
Bulk Dates	1980-1985
Languages	English
Summary	The Joel Gardner Papers contain oral histories, grant proposals, workshop materials, recordings, entertainment articles written by Gardner for lifestyle magazines, scholarly articles written on oral histories, and theory-related materials.
Access Restrictions	None.
Reproduction Note	May be reproduced.
Copyright	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
Related Collections	None.
Citation	Joel Gardner Papers, Mss. 3954, 3562, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location(s)	G:86-87

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Joel R. Gardner is a journalist and oral historian from Louisiana. He attended Tulane University in New Orleans, where he received both his B.A. and M.A. degrees in French. He received a second master's degree in journalism from the University of California-Los Angeles, where he began working with the school's oral history program.

He returned to Louisiana in 1980 and began recording oral histories on a grant-by-grant basis under the auspices of the Louisiana State Archives. He established contacts and relationships with the University of New Orleans, Louisiana State University, and Tulane, as well as in the northern part of the state, through the North Louisiana Writers' Conference and LSU-Shreveport, to produce oral histories.

In 1985, he and his wife, Holly, relocated to Cherry Hill, New Jersey, to be closer to her family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He continued recording oral histories and was employed by the Pew Charitable Trust, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation until his retirement in 2012.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Joel Gardner Papers comprise materials created by Gardner or his professional colleagues related to writing oral histories. They include grant applications, workshop and conference planning materials, research topics covered at the workshops, correspondence, news articles on oral history or Gardner himself, lifestyle articles written by Gardner for Louisiana publications, information on conference speakers, scholarly publications on oral history theory, published materials, and audio recordings on both reel and cassette. The records are arranged first by material type and/or subject matter, then chronologically within each series.

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

Series I. Grants, Workshops, Conferences, and Correspondence, 1978-2007, undated

Subseries 1. Assorted Oral History Programs and Grants, 1978-2007, undated

Subseries 2. *Oral History for Louisiana*, 1980

Series II. Oral Histories and Article Materials, 1979-2021, undated

Subseries 1. Assorted Oral History Projects, 1979-2021, undated

Subseries 2. *Folklife in the Florida Parishes*, 1983-1989

Subseries 3. *Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters*, 1981-1985

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Grants, Workshops, Conferences, and Correspondence, 1978-2007, undated

The materials in this series document Gardner's and his associates' efforts to secure grant funding for oral history projects, as well as to organize workshops and conferences. The materials in this series are not concerned with the work of individual projects, but rather with financially organizing future oral history projects, conferences, or larger programs that discuss oral history work more broadly. Correspondence to that effect is included in both of the following subseries.

Subseries 1. Assorted Oral History Programs and Grants, 1978-2007, undated

The paperwork required for several of those grants can be found in this subseries. Gardner served as a member of the Louisiana Library Association, where he organized a yearly pre-conference on oral history during the association's annual meeting. Materials to that effect are included in this series. Some miscellaneous correspondence related to program development and securing funding, which does not correlate to specific projects, can be found at the end of this series, as well as a limited amount of personal correspondence that did not fit elsewhere within the holdings. While Gardner and his wife left Louisiana for New Jersey in 1985, some of the correspondence was written as recently as 2007 but is related to his time collecting oral histories in Louisiana.

Subseries 2. *Oral History for Louisiana*, 1980

This subseries contains materials related to the publication of Gardner's *Oral History for Louisiana*, which is a guide for potential oral historians to conduct interviews and publish materials in the field. Published in 1980, the technological methods suggested for recording oral histories are now obsolete; however, the guide's other contents describe methods for obtaining oral histories, as well as listing legal and ethical considerations for saving interviews and publishing data. The folders contain drafts at various levels of completion, correspondence, cost-related materials for its publication, and the final product. A separate box contains the guide's layouts for printing and publication.

Series II. Oral Histories and Article Materials, 1979-2021, undated

The oral histories in this series encompass a wide range of subjects and include supporting materials of varying lengths. Additionally, a folder of entertainment pieces written for lifestyle magazines and newspapers while living in Baton Rouge is included in this series.

Subseries 1. Assorted oral history projects, 1979-2021, undated

This subseries contains assorted oral histories written by Gardner or his associates. Histories with large amounts of supporting documents or those that are longer in length are in individual folders. Some of these oral histories pertain to topics such as the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans, the history of the Florida Parishes, quirky local folkways

and foodways specific to the state, and the unique melting pot of cultures and ethnicities found in Louisiana. In one case, Gardner wrote a history about himself and the time he spent working in Louisiana from 1980 to 1985, which he wrote in 2021. One folder is composed of “assorted oral histories” because they are brief (usually 1-3 pages) and lack supporting materials.

A set of audio cassettes is also part of this subseries and is housed separately. These cassettes comprise two oral histories: one from Ruth Johnson in 1981 (two cassettes) and another from John S. McIlhenny in 1985 (nine cassettes). These cassettes are listed at the item level in the container list below. (The Ruth Johnson cassettes originally had a separate manuscript number, Mss. 3562.)

Subseries 2. *Folklife in the Florida Parishes, 1983-1989*

The materials in this subseries comprise essays written about the eight Louisiana parishes that were originally part of Spanish West Florida and later the semi-independent Republic of West Florida, before being formally annexed by the United States in 1812. The oral histories presented in the first three folders of this subseries are drafts that would later become the final published copy found in folder four. Histories included here are related to life, foodways, and folkways in the eastern region of the state now known as the Republic of West Florida Historic Region, or simply the Florida Parishes. The publication contains assorted histories from all eight parishes.

Subseries 3. *Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters, 1981-1985*

This subseries comprises materials from a project Gardner referred to as his “favorite” during his time working in Louisiana—an oral history project with members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in communities in the northern part of the state, such as Shreveport, Monroe, and Natchitoches. It includes materials regarding the procurement of the grant and completed application in 1981, correspondence on the project with other oral historians and tradesmen being interviewed for the project, drafts of the book at varying levels of completion, the final typed draft, an excerpt published in a Louisiana literary magazine prior to the book’s completion, and two copies of the finalized printed product from 1985.

INDEX TERMS

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found in the series indicated, as represented by their numbers.

Florida Parishes (La.)--History.	II
Gardner, Joel R.	I-II
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (La.)	II
Louisiana Library Association.	I-II
Louisiana World Exposition (1984: New Orleans, La.)	II
McIlhenny Co.	II
Morgan City (La.)	II
Oral history--Louisiana.	I-II
Oral History Association.	I
Oral history Handbooks, manuals, etc.	I-II
Oral history Periodicals	I
Proposal writing for grants.	I, II
Texas 1986 Sesquicentennial Commission.	II
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.	II
Young Women's Christian Association.	II

CONTAINER LIST

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Stack

Location Box Folder Contents (with dates)

Series I. Grants, Workshops, Conferences, and Correspondence, 1978-2007, undated

Subseries 1. Assorted Oral History Programs and Grants, 1978-2007, undated

G:86	1	1	State Archives and Records Service newsletters, Dec. 1978-June 1980
		2	Gardner professional correspondence, March 27, 1980-Nov. 27, 2007
		3	Grant-related correspondence, May 27-Dec. 16, 1980
		4	Grant proposal and lecture series materials, Aug. 13-Dec. 6, 1980
		5	Publications and news articles on oral history and Gardner, 1980-1984
		6	Grant speaker reimbursements, Dec. 4-16, 1980
		7	South Central Bell contact book, 1980-1981
		8	Follow-up grant materials, 1981-1982
		9	Louisiana Library Association materials, Jan. 15, 1981
		10	Houma, La. oral history workshop, June 12-July 18, 1981
		11	National Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities newsletters, Aug. 26, 1981-Feb. 4, 1982
		12	Project materials, Oct. 8, 1981-Feb. 1982
		13	LLA Oral History Pre-conference, Nov. 9, 1981-Sept. 17, 1982
		14	Teaching Oral History mini-grant, Jan. 15-Feb. 15, 1982
		15	Bastrop, La. oral history workshop, March 8-April 19, 1982
		16	Mansfield, La. oral history workshop, Aug. 9-16, 1982
		17	Teaching and Interpreting Oral History workshop mini-grant, Aug. 15-Oct 16, 1982
		18	St. Tammany Parish oral history workshop, Oct. 25-26, 1982
		19	Oral History Association programs and correspondence, 1982-1983
		20	Research on aging correspondence, Feb. 6-May 2, 1983
		21	Third Annual Northwest Louisiana Writers Conference, March 16-June 18, 1983
		22	LLA Oral History Pre-conference, Feb. 20-March 29, 1984
		23	Arts and humanities correspondence, reports and proposals, Feb. 23, 1984-Nov. 30, 1985
		24	LLA Publications Committee materials, March 8-Nov. 16, 1984
		25	LLA Bulletin issue on oral history, May 14, 1984-Feb. 15, 1985
		26	National Assembly of State Arts Agencies materials, Aug. 16, 1984-Jan. 9, 1985
		27	Scholarly publications on oral history theory, 1984
		28	Oral history collections questionnaire, Jan. 20-Dec. 18, 1985
		29	LLA Oral History Pre-conference, March 27-April 8, 1985
		30	LLA conference planning materials, May 22-July 24, 1985
		31	Gardner personal correspondence, 1986-1987
		32	Curricula vitae for oral history speakers, undated

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Stack

Location Box Folder Contents (with dates)

G:86	2	16	Monthly appointment book, 1985
		17	John S. McIlhenny oral history interview transcript (early draft), 1985
		18-19	John S. McIlhenny oral history interview transcript (later draft), 1992
	4	--	John S. McIlhenny oral history interview on cassette (nine cassettes), April 6-Sept. 11, 1985
	2	20	LSU oral history project, Jan. 4, 1990-Jan. 31, 1991
		21	Joel Gardner's personal history of creating oral histories in Louisiana from 1980 to 1985, April 2021
		22	History of Louisiana, draft copy, 1980-1981
		23	"The Wrong Topi: Sun Helmets as Symbols" by Francis de Caro, undated
		24	"Was there a Folk in the Bungalow?" by Francis de Caro and Rosan Jordan, undated
		25	Assorted oral histories, undated

Subseries 2. Folklife in the Florida Parishes, 1983-1989

26	Essays on the Florida Parishes (original title) (1 of 3), 1983-1984
27	Essays on the Florida Parishes (original title) (2 of 3), 1984-1985
28	Essays on the Florida Parishes (original title) (3 of 3), 1984-1988
29	<i>Folklife in the Florida Parishes</i> , 1989

Subseries 3. *Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters*, 1981-1985

G:87	3	1	Louisiana Committee for the Humanities mini-grant, History of Louisiana Carpenters, April 15-Sept 16, 1981
		2	United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America materials, 1981
		3	<i>Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters</i> , early draft, 1981
		4	<i>Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters</i> , late draft, 1981
		5	Carpenter project, full grant application, 1981-1982
		6	Carpenter's project correspondence, Feb. 8, 1981-Oct. 2, 1984
		7	<i>Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters</i> , published copy, 1984
		8	<i>Built in Louisiana: A Social History of Louisiana Carpenters</i> , final draft, 1984
		9	"A History of Shreveport Carpenters" Spring 1984
		10	Central Lumber Company oral history grant proposal, Jan. 18-April 17, 1985