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Summary

Main entry: Strong, Lester

Title: Lester Q. Strong Papers, 1941-2001

Size: 11 linear feet (21 boxes; 1 oversized folder)

Source: Gift of Lester Q. Strong, 1996

Abstract: The papers include correspondence, writings, and sound recordings which reflect Lester Strong's personal life and his career as writer and documenter of gay culture. Included is a collection of his family's World War II papers

Access: Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.

Copyright information: No reproduction of sound recordings without permission of interviewee.

Preferred citation: Lester Q. Strong Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Special formats Diaries, Sound recordings
Biographical note

Lester Q Strong is an author and editor noted for essays, criticism and oral histories focusing on gay culture and the arts. Lester Quintan Strong was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico on August 3, 1946, the first son of Dale Howard Strong (1914-1983), a World War II veteran and survivor of the Bataan Death March, and Lena Zuber Strong (1908-1996). He lived in New Mexico until 1968, graduating from St. John's College in Santa Fe, where he received a B.A. in Liberal Arts. Moving to New York City, he enrolled in the New School for Social Research and completed an M.A. in Philosophy in 1972.

From 1969 until 1974, Mr. Strong was employed as a copy editor for two American Institute of Physics publications, Physical Review, and Journal of the Optical Society of America. As an editing supervisor for McGraw-Hill from 1974 to 1979, he was responsible for the editing, design and production of titles for publication. Since 1979, he has focused on freelance writing and editing.


Mr. Strong came out to his family in 1978, the time at which he began living with his lover, Ted Gerald Rauch. As of this writing, they have continued a strong and devoted relationship. Mr. Strong's first published article, “Hometown Revisited: Gay Liberation Reaches the Provinces” (Gay Community News, September, 1981) about gay Albuquerque, was based on interviews with members of the community. He became interested in the lives of older gay men and women through a local New York organization, Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE). From 1982 to 1987, he was involved with SAGE’s Oral History Project, wrote guidelines for the project, conducted interviews with the older gay population, and proposed a book based on SAGE’s taped interviews. This interview approach has continued throughout Mr. Strong's literary career.

Not long after his father's death and the chance discovery of his original diary and handwritten manuscript, Mr. Strong began to research his father's World War II experiences. He gathered letters, taped interviews and other materials to document this aspect of his family's history. His investigations brought to light the wartime broadcast by Radio Tokyo of a message to his mother supposedly from his father.

As a freelance writer, Mr. Strong has contributed essays, articles, reviews and interviews to gay and mainstream publications, including Metroline, Out! Magazine, St. John’s Review and Southern Voice. The process of using interviews has helped him establish contacts in the gay arts community and in the publishing world and, in 1994, led to the development of his “Gay Arts Beat” columns. The columns highlight the involvement of gay people in the arts and how they are received by the art worlds in which they participate. Described by Mr. Strong as “a series of articles that explore and celebrate the role lesbians and gay men play in the arts,” they have appeared in a number of gay publications across the country.

Currently (2004) Strong is serving as a senior editor for Art & Understanding magazine.
Scope and content note

The Lester Q. Strong Papers reflect Mr. Strong's personal life, his career as a writer documenting gay culture, and his documentation of his family's World War II experiences. The majority of the collection consists of project files relating to Strong's articles, including research materials, interview notes, drafts, final versions, relevant correspondence and copies of publications. Many of these project files contain transcripts and sound recordings of interviews he conducted. Prominent interviewees include Edward Albee, Anthony Burgess, Quentin Crisp, Harvey Fierstein, Edward Lucie-Smith, and John Rechy. The collection also contains his personal and professional correspondence as well as the Strong family's collected letters written during World War II, while Strong's father Dale was held as a prisoner of war by the Japanese in the Philippines. Dale's narrative of his experience "My Reminiscence" is also contained in the collection.

Arrangement note

The Lester Q. Strong Papers are organized in the following series:

I. Correspondence, 1964-2001
II. Writings, 1971-2001
III. University Papers, 1964-1973
IV. Juvenilia, 1959-1964
V. Family Papers, 1941-1965
VI. Sound Recordings, 1982-2001
Series descriptions and container list

I. Correspondence, 1964-2001
The bulk of the correspondence (1966-2001) is arranged alphabetically in two subseries: A. Personal; and B. Professional. The personal correspondence consists mainly of incoming cards, letters and picture postcards from friends, colleagues and family, containing personal anecdotes, critiques of published and unpublished works, discussions of gay issues. There are a few outgoing letters by Mr. Strong including his coming out letter (6-21-78) to his mother, Lena Strong, and copies of two letters (11-22-81 and 11-5-82) to Sebastian Lopez, an Argentinean refugee who later became a citizen of the Netherlands. The Flint file contains correspondence with Shirley and Richard Flint, authors and scholars of the Spanish colonial period in New Mexico.

The professional correspondence (1980-2001) includes both incoming and outgoing letters. Among these are cover letters sent with manuscripts submitted for publication; rejection letters; and a few letters to editors discussing travel and other common interests. Filed at the end of the subseries is a folder of miscellaneous correspondence with editors arranged chronologically.

A. Personal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Fol</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Benton, Robert</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Blecha, David</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cooper, Ursula</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dissent Magazine</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Emery, Prudence</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feinberg, Naomi</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Flint, Richard and Shirley</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>George, Murray and Richard</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hogan, Rebecca and Joe</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kornbluth, Georgia</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kunz, Alesia</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Life Magazine</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Lopez, Sebastian</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Morrison, Robbie</td>
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<td>Parish, Thelma and Leon</td>
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<td>Phillips, Burton</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Rauch, Ted</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rauch/Silver Family</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sachs, Joe</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sauerwein, Henry A., Jr.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Shenitz, Bruce</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Stein, Linda</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strong, (Jewett) Howard and Jaime</td>
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<td>Strong, Dale and Billie</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Strong, Lena</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sulzemeier, Doug and Harold</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Willett, Bert and John</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Zuber Family</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
17-18  Chroniclogical correspondents

B. Professional

3 1 4-Front Magazine
2 Alabama Forum
3 ANSI
4 Arts & Understanding
5 Baltimore Gay Paper
6 Billboard
7 Christopher Street
8 Gay Community News
9 Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review
10 James White Review
11 McGraw-Hill
12 Metroline
13 McGraw-Hill
14 Out! Magazine
15 Outsmart Magazine
16 Q San Francisco
17 St. Martin’s Press
18 Senior Action in a Gay Environment, Inc.
19 Socialist Review
20 South Dakota Review
21 Chronological Correspondents

II. Writings, 1971-2001

The files contain research materials, interview notes, occasional photographs, rough drafts, final publication versions, relevant correspondence and copies of the various publications where the writings appeared. Many of the files contain Mr. Strong’s handwritten content descriptions.

A. Books

Strong’s book *The Past in the Present* (Revisionist Press, Brooklyn, 1979) contains two essays, “The Myth of Eden” and “A Darkness Touched by Light,” and discusses Vardis Fisher’s Testament of Man series. Included are early drafts and typed manuscripts of the two essays and a typed manuscript and corrected proof of the book. Permission forms signed by Opal Holmes Fisher allowing Mr. Strong to quote from Fisher’s books are also present.

The drafts of three proposed books which are arranged by title include a draft of “Present But Not Accounted For” (1990-91), which was based on interviews with gay men in situations not stereotyped as being gay. Transcriptions of interviews for this book are filed here. Series 6 (Sound Recordings) contains additional audiotaped interviews.

- *The Past in the Present*
  - Correspondence
  - Corrected proofs
  - Typed manuscripts
  - Preface
  - Darkness Touched by Light: early drafts
  - Darkness Touched by Light: typed manuscript
  - The Myth of Eden: early drafts
  - The Myth of Eden: typed manuscripts
  - What Makes Vridar Run?
  - Permissions
Present but not Accounted For, project files

5  
1 Correspondence
2 Proposal
3 First chapter, Typescript
4 Bustamente, Richard
5 Caldano, Dan
6 Edlin, Fred and Ron Williams
7 Gakell, Bob and Fred Bookhardt
8 Hanna, David
9 Levin, Sy
10 Meastas, Bobb Neoboy
11 Reis, Herb
12 Sauerwein, Henry
13 Smith, Ron and Ron Monroe

Queer Hollywood

6  
1 Correspondence
2 Proposal
3-4 Typescripts
5-6 Research files

7 SAGE Oral History Project

B. Articles 1981-2001

The articles, which are arranged alphabetically by topic, contain scripts of Strong’s book reviews, art and news articles, published in both gay and mainstream publications. The majority of these articles are “Gay Arts Beat” columns which were printed in a variety regional gay publications Strong’s monthly column in Out! Magazine (Albuquerque) was titled “Gay Arts Beat,” though the title varies in other publications. For most articles, cassette recordings of relevant interviews can be found in the Sound Recordings series. Prominent interviewees include Edward Albee,

Included also is Strong’s 1991 essay, “When 'Tokyo Rose' Came to Albuquerque,” which was based on a POW message read over Radio Tokyo in 1944, supposedly from Dale Strong to his wife, Lena.

8  
1 AIDS benefits, 1997
2 Albee, Edward, 1996 (Gay Arts Beat article )
4 Azara, Nancy, 1995
5 Badertscher, Amos, 2000
6 Baker, Jean-Claude, 1995
7 Bill and Ray: 32 Years Together
8 Bleckner, Ross, 1999

9  
3 Burgess, Anthony, 1982
4 Chester, Craig, 1996
5 Cinevista, 1995
6 Clinton, Kate, 1994

8  
7 Collins, Thom
8 Costa, Bill, 1997
9-10 Crisp, Quentin, 1997
11 Cratsley, Eric
12 Crisp, Quentin, 1997
13  Degan, Frank, 1997
14  Extended Artists Gallery, 2001

9  15  Fierstein, Harvey, 1996
  1  Flinsch, Peter, 1994
  2  Fisher, Vardis, 1986
  3  Foster, Richard, 1998
  4  Frazer-Howe, Debra, 2000
  5  Gay Games, 1998
  6-9  GLAMA, 1995-1998

10  1  GLAMA, 1999
    2  Goodman, Gail, 1995
    3  Grey Wolf, Wes, 2000
    4  Hanna, David, 1999
    5  Haysbert, Dennis, 2000
    6  Hometown Revisited: Gay Rights Reaches the Provinces, 1981
    7  Hollywood Watering Holes, 1996
        Derived from the unpublished book “Queer Hollywood” (box 6).

11  1  Howe, Delmas, 1994
    2  Howe, Delmas, 1995
    3  Howe, Delmas, 2001
    4  Huston, River and Mary Berridge, 1998
    5  I Have Become a Problem to Myself (St. Augustine’s theory), 1995
    6  Idol Books, 2000
    7  In The Life, 1996

12  1  In The Life, Outtakes, 1996-1998
    2  Irwin, Robert, 1997
    3  Karvoski, Ed, 1997
    4  Kelly, Jim, 1995
    5  Krassner, Jeff, 1995
    6  Krassner, Jeff, 1996
    7  Kauahi, Norman, 1994
    8  Lalli, Joe, 1998
    9  Latzky, Eric, 1992
    10  Leaves from a Notebook (unpublished)

13  1  Lesbigay Radio, 1996
    2  Leslie-Lohman Gay Arts Foundation, 1994
    3  Leslie-Lohman Gay Arts Foundation, 1995
    4  Lifebeat, 1992
    5  Long Term Relationships
    6-7  Lucie-Smith, Edward, 1998
    8  Lucie-Smith, Edward, 1999
    9  Lucie-Smith, Edward, 2000
    10  Maia, Marcelo, 1997
    11  Mann, William, 1999

14  1  Massengill, Reed, 1996
    2  McCormick, Tom, 1998
    3  McEntire, Reba, 2001
    4  Meastas, Bobb Neoboy, 1993
    5  Meastas, Bobb Neoboy, 2000
    6  Monetti, Sal, 1996
    7  Monetti, Sal, 1998
    8  Newton, Jeremiah, 1996
III. University Papers, 1964-1973

The bulk of the papers in this series, arranged chronologically, consists of Mr. Strong's notes, exams and papers from St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico (1964-1968), and The New School for Social Research, New York City, New York (1968-1973). Included is a booklet profiling the first graduating class of St. John's College, of which Mr. Strong was a member, and Mr. Strong's seminar paper written for Hannah Arendt (Fall, 1971), with her handwritten comments. This paper was used as the basis for Mr. Strong's 1995 article, "I Have Become a Problem to Myself: Augustine's Theory of Will and the Notion of Human Inwardness" [see Series 2 (Writings)].

A. St. John's College

notes and papers, 1964-1968

B. The New School for Social Research

Correspondence
Course work
Fall 1968
Spring 1969
Summer 1969
Fall 1969
Spring 1970
Fall 1970 - Spring 1971
### IV. Juvenilia, 1959-1964
This series is arranged chronologically and contains early writings by Mr. Strong during his high school and college years, and copies of school newspapers, yearbooks, and literary magazines in which his work appeared.

| 20 | 1 | Juvenilia, 1959-1964 |
| 20 | 2 | Jefferson Spirit, 1961 |
| 20 | 3 | Sandia Sage, 1961-1964 |

### V. Family Papers, 1941-1965
This series documents the experiences of Mr. Strong's father, Dale Strong, during World War II, and consists of correspondence and handwritten and typed manuscripts of Dale's memoir, "My Reminiscence."

The correspondence (1941-1965) is arranged alphabetically and contains letters, telegrams, photographs, POW postal cards and War Department circulars from 1941-1953. Correspondents include Lena Strong, Dale Strong, the Red Cross, the War Department and Richard French, who was responsible for typing Dale's memoir. Included are letters, cards and a government telegram received by Lena concerning a November, 22, 1944 POW message, supposedly from Dale, broadcast on Radio Tokyo [see also Series 6 Sound Recordings]; American and Japanese POW postcards [see also Series 2 (Writings)]; the War Department's official correspondence concerning prisoner of war status, family allotments, repatriations (including letters from Gen. George Kenney and President Truman) and claims for compensation; and Dale's diary started in April, 1944, and written on the backs of Lena's 1943 letters. The page order of this diary is arranged by the date of Lena's letters, resulting in the diary entries being out of date order.

Dale Strong's eyewitness account of the war years, 1941-1945, include descriptions of air raids in the Philippine Islands and Tokyo; his experiences on the Bataan Death March, beginning at Marvales and ending at San Fernando La Pompanga; the regimen of the POW Camps O'Donnell and Clark Field; his transfer to Japan and life in the steel mill between Yokahama and Tokyo and the mining town, Ashio; liberation in September, 1945; and his arrival in San Francisco a month later. Included is a notebook which records various activities and army songs and poems. Dale's handwritten manuscript of "My Reminiscences," a typed, laminated version and an unpublished account of Dale's experiences as a prisoner of war at Clark Field in the Philippines, written for Reader's Digest by Richard French, are included.

#### A. Correspondence, 1941-1965

| 20 | 4 | French, Richard |
| 20 | 5 | Red Cross |
| 20 | 6 | Strong, Dale |
| 20 | 7 | Strong, Lena |
| 20 | 8 | Tokyo Radio Broadcast (1 Sound Disc : Analog. mono. 78 rpm ; 5 in.) |
| 20 | 9 | War Department |
| 20 | 10 | Miscellaneous |

#### B. My Reminiscence

| 21 | 1 | Notebook |
| 21 | 2 | Handwritten, laminated |
Typescript, original-laminated
Typescript, copy
Unpublished Readers Digest article

**VI. Sound Recordings, 1944-2001**

The collection includes a sound recording of the POW message read over Radio Tokyo November 22, 1944, supposedly from Mr. Strong's father, Dale Strong, to his mother, Lena Strong and 41 audiocassettes of interviews conducted by Mr. Strong in connection with his writings.

Sound recordings are unavailable until preservation copies have been made. Contact the division regarding access.

Albee, Edward, 02/02/1996
Azara, Nancy, 12/13/1995
Badertscher, Amos, 10/17/1998
Baker, Jean-Claude, 9/13/1994
Bleckner, Ross, 01/09/1999
Blumenfeld, Warren, 09/29/1992
Blumenfeld, Warren, 1994
Bustamente, Richard, 02/1991
Caldano, Dan, 06/05/1990
Chester, Craig, 04/22/1996
Cinevista, 07/19/1995
Clinton, Kate, 09/09/1994
Collins, Thom, 11/04/1998
Cratesly, Eric, 1994
Crisp, Quentin, 02/26/1997
Degan, Frank, 11/21/1997
Edlin, Fred and Ron Williams, 09/01/1991
Fierstein, Harvey, 11/10/1995
Flinsch, Peter, 08/01/1994
Frazer-Howze, Debra, 08/29/00
Foster, Richard, 08/30/1998
Gaskell, Bob and Fred Bookhardt
Goodman, Gail, 09/09/1994
Grey Wolf, Wes, 06/21/1998
Hanna, David, 05/11/1987
Heysbert, Dennis, 03/22/2000
Howe, Delmas, 09/30/1994
Howe, Delmas, 11/29/1997
Huston, River and Mary Berridge, 10/02/1997
Idol Books (Jeff Hunter, Mark Dewina), 06/14/1998
In The Life, 04/17/1996
Irwin, Robert, 11/17/1997
Karvoski, Ed, 05/27/1997
Krassner, Jeff, 08/06/1995
Krassner, Jeff, 10/24/1995
Kauahi, Norman, 06/06/1994
Kelly, John, 02/10/1995
Lallin, Joe, 06/02/1998
Latzky, Eric, 1992
Lesbigay Radio (Allen Amberg), 04/29/1996
Levin, Sy, 11/26/1990
Lucie-Smith, Edward, 01/10/1997
Lucie-Smith, Edward, 09/25/1998
Maia, Marcello, 03/25/1997
Massengill, Reed, 08/09/1996
McCormack, Tom, 07/27/1998
McEntire, Reba, 02/19/2001
Meastas, Bobb Neoboy, 02/23/1991
Meastas, Bobb Neoboy, 12/07/1999
Monetti, Sal, 12/05/1995
Newton, Jeremiah, 04/13/1996
Pire, Felix, 06/13/1997
Pujol, Ernesto, 01/25/2001
Rapp, Anthony, 03/13/1998
Rechy, John, 05/08/1999
Reis, Herb, 03/13/1991
Rorem, Ned, 11/16/1996
Rosenfield, Allan, 09/26/1998
Sandler, Arlene, 09/25/1991
Sauerwein, Henry, 06/27/1986
Scharfman, Gary, 08/02/1997
Schulman, Sarah, 03/07/2000
Smith, Leslie, 04/13/1998
Smith, Ron and Ron Monroe, 01/28/1991
Steinberg, Paul, 02/1995
Stone, Nathan, 09/1992
Stonewall 25 Interviews
Stonewall Inn Publishers, 01/21/1998
Pfc. Dale H. Strong message, 11/22/1944
Strong, Lena, 06/24/1993
Stuart, Jason, 10/25/1996
Teal, Donn, 03/25/1998
Vining, Donald, 10/10/1994
Watson, Steve, 03/01/1996