

# **Criminology Programme Collection / Elmer "Kim" Nelson (collector)**

**Compiled by Erwin Wodarczak (2007)**

**University of British Columbia Archives**



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# Collection Description

**Criminology Programme Collection / Elmer "Kim" Nelson (collector).** - 1952-2007.

3 cm of textual materials.

1 audio cassette.

## Collector's Biographical Sketch

Elmer K. "Kim" Nelson was instrumental in the development of the criminology programme at the University of British Columbia in the 1950s. The B.C. Prison Commission had called for UBC to begin training in criminology in 1950. Two years later Nelson was appointed assistant professor of criminology in UBC's Department of Anthropology and Sociology. He developed a criminology programme in consultation with staff in the Faculty of Law, the School of Social Work, and the Department of Psychology. By 1956 his department had been renamed Anthropology, Criminology, and Sociology, and he had been promoted to associate professor. Nelson's appointment at UBC was funded in part by the B.C. Attorney-General's Office on the understanding that he would also serve part-time as a consultant to the Director of Corrections. As a consultant Nelson initially was responsible for staff development and training, and advising the Director on policy development. Later he helped plan the new Haney Correctional Institution, where he became full-time warden in 1956. Nelson went to the University of Southern California in 1958, where he headed the Youth Studies Centre, and later served as Dean of the USC School of Public Administration. He also served with a number of bodies and institutes in the fields of sociology and criminology, and published extensively on topics related to organizational behaviour and criminal justice. The criminology programme that he founded at UBC continued until 1960, when it was largely absorbed by the School of Social Work; certificates in criminology were also offered through UBC Continuing Education until 1982.

## Scope and Content

The collection consists of materials acquired or collected by Elmer K. Nelson primarily relating to the UBC criminology programme and his work for the B.C. Office of Corrections. It includes biographical information (1954-2007), correspondence (1952-1987), newspaper clippings (1952-1957), and publications (1953-1957). Also included is an audio cassette recording (catalogue # UBC 3415) of an interview with Nelson conducted by the B.C. Corrections Branch History Committee, dated 1978. Additionally, a copy of an article written by Gary Parkinson in 2007, "Recovering the early history of Canadian criminology: Criminology at the University of British Columbia, 1951 to 1959", is included at the request of the collector.

## Notes

File list available.

Acquired by the University Archives from Elmer K. Nelson, with the assistance of researcher Gary Parkinson, in August 2007. Parkinson also provided a copy of his article on the UBC criminology programme.