

**The New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Lester Q. Strong Papers**  
1941-2001  
MssCol 2909

**Ellen Levine  
November 1996**

**Revised by Donald Mennerich  
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## Summary

<b>Main entry:</b>	Strong, Lester
<b>Title:</b>	Lester Q. Strong Papers, 1941-2001
<b>Size:</b>	11 linear feet (21 boxes; 1 oversized folder)
<b>Source:</b>	Gift of Lester Q. Strong, 1996
<b>Abstract:</b>	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
<b>Access:</b>	Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.
<b>Copyright information:</b>	No reproduction of sound recordings without permission of interviewee.
<b>Preferred citation:</b>	Lester Q. Strong Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
<b>Special formats</b>	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 spent several years writing literary criticism of Vardis Fisher's Testament of Man series, which he confessed had a strong influence on his early intellectual life. His essays, "A Darkness Touched by Lights" and "The Myth of Eden," were combined into the book, *The Past in the Present: Two Essays on History and Myth in Vardis Fisher's Testament of Man* (Revisionist Press, Brooklyn, 1979). His article, "Vardis Fisher Revisited" (South Dakota Review, Autumn 1986), reflected a reinterpretation of that influence.

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

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

17-18 Chronological correspondents

		<b>B. Professional</b>
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	NLGJA
	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
	1	Correspondence
4	2	Corrected proofs
	3	Typed manuscripts
	4	Preface
	5	Darkness Touched by Light: early drafts
	6	Darkness Touched by Light: typed manuscript
	7	The Myth of Eden: early drafts
	8	The Myth of Eden: typed manuscripts
	9	What Makes Vridar Run?
	10	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.

7	1	AIDS benefits, 1997
	2	Albee, Edward, 1996 (Gay Arts Beat article )
	3	Albee, Edward, 1996 (Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review)
	4	Azara, Nancy, 1995
	5	Badertscher, Amos, 2000
	6	Baker, Jean-Claude, 1995
	7	Bill and Ray: 32 Years Together
	8	Bleckner, Ross, 1999
8	1	Blumenfeld, Warren J., 1993
	2	Burroughs, William, 2000
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
12	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

- |    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
|    | 9   | NLGLA, 1997                               |
| 15 | 1   | Northern New Mexico, 1994                 |
|    | 2   | Outwrite '92                              |
|    | 3   | Outwrite '92 (workshop presentation)      |
|    | 4   | Pire, Felix, 1997                         |
|    | 5   | Publishing Triangle, 1997                 |
|    | 6   | Pujol, Ernesto, 1998                      |
|    | 7   | Rapp, Anthony, 1998                       |
|    | 8   | Rechy, John, 1999                         |
|    | 9   | Rorem, Ned, 1996                          |
|    | 10  | Rosenfield, Allan, 2000                   |
|    | 11  | Sandler, Arlene, 1995                     |
| 16 | 1   | Schulman, Sarah, 2000                     |
|    | 2   | Smith, Leslie, 1998                       |
|    | 3   | Stein, Linda                              |
|    | 4   | Steinberg, Paul, 1995                     |
|    | 5   | Stonewall 25, 1994                        |
|    | 6   | Stonewall to Stonewall 25, 1994           |
|    | 7   | Stonewall Inn Publishers, 1998            |
|    | 8   | Stuart, Jason, 1996                       |
|    | 9   | Stuart, Otis, 1995                        |
|    | 10  | Teal, Donn, 1995                          |
|    | 11  | Timerman, Jacobo, 1982                    |
| 17 | 1   | Travel Articles (unpublished)             |
|    | 2   | Vining, Donald, 1993                      |
|    | 3   | Vining, Donald, 1995                      |
|    | 4-7 | When Tokyo Rose Came to Albuquerque, 1991 |
|    | 8   | Watson, Steve, 1996                       |
|    | 9   | Waugh, Thomas, 1997                       |
|    | 10  | Wigstock, 1994                            |

### 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

- |    |     |                             |
|----|-----|-----------------------------|
| 18 | 1-2 | notes and papers, 1964-1968 |
|----|-----|-----------------------------|

#### B. The New School for Social Research

- |    |   |                         |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| 18 | 3 | Correspondence          |
|    |   | Course work             |
|    | 4 | Fall 1968               |
|    | 5 | Spring 1969             |
|    | 6 | Summer 1969             |
|    | 7 | Fall 1969               |
| 19 | 1 | Spring 1970             |
|    | 2 | Fall 1970 - Spring 1971 |

3 Fall 1971 - Spring 1972  
4 Dissertation Notes, 1970-1973

#### **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  
2 Jefferson Spirit, 1961  
3 Sandia Sage, 1961-1964  
X-9 The Sandian, 1962-1964

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

##### **B. My Reminiscence**

21 1 Notebook  
2 Handwritten, laminated

- 3 Typescript, original-laminated
- 4 Typescript, copy
- 5 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