John West's sense of and regard for history have resulted in a historian's dream—a collection of personal papers that form a unique record of West's leadership as South Carolina's governor, together with details of his long and distinguished career of public service as well as of his life with his wife, Lois. West's papers, which are currently being processed by the staff of Modern Political Collections, document his campaigns for office and his service in the South Carolina Senate (1955-1966), as lieutenant governor (1967-1971), as governor (1971-1975), and as ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1977-1981). Since returning from Saudi Arabia, West has practiced law, lectured on government at the University of South Carolina, and engaged in a number of philanthropic enterprises. Most recently, West has been working to revive the fortunes of the Seibels Bruce Insurance Company, serving as chairman of the board.

The West Collection will form a remarkable resource for future researchers at USC. West not only retained papers generated during his years of public service, but also kept a diary during three important periods of his life. He began the diary as a campaign tool shortly after he decided to run for the office of lieutenant governor. This section of the journal chiefly records the names of people he met who appeared interested in his candidacy. Upon taking office as governor, West resumed keeping his diary on an almost daily basis. His entries, at times quite lengthy, concern his activities as well as issues facing the state.

The third and final segment of the diary dates from his service as ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

In addition to West's papers and diary, researchers will benefit from an oral history interview with Governor West. To date, eight interview hours have been recorded and additional sessions are planned. Interviews will also be conducted with Mrs. West and with key colleagues and staff members in the future.

The West Foundation is underwriting the processing of the West Collection by funding nine-month John Carl West Graduate Assistantships in Modern Political Collections. Laird Whitmire, the 1996 holder of this position, received her master's degree in applied history in August 1997 and will pursue an archival career.
The 1970 race for governor stands out among the many fascinating political contests of this century in South Carolina. The highly contested race featured candidates with clear and important differences in their visions for the future of the state. Prior to this campaign, John West had represented Kershaw County in the state Senate, and had been an active and popular lieutenant governor under Robert McNair. West wanted the opportunity to serve as South Carolina’s chief executive, and was aware that the state had developed a pattern of promoting its lieutenant governors to the governor’s office. However, the Republican Party was gaining strength across the state and had recruited Albert Watson, a tough campaigner, to oppose West. Watson served in the South Carolina House (1955-1958 and 1961-1962), headed Democrats for Nixon in South Carolina in 1960 and, in 1962, was elected to Congress as a Democrat. He resigned from Congress in 1965 after being stripped of seniority following his support of Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Watson was reelected as a Republican in a special election, becoming the first Republican elected to Congress in South Carolina since Reconstruction.

West’s papers contain three linear feet of materials documenting the 1970 campaign. These provide abundant evidence of the earnest and thoughtful manner in which West sought the governor’s office. Shortly after winning the Democratic primary, West asked for advice from a core group of supporters whom he named to his campaign strategy committee. He requested the supporters to list their personal impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of the two candidates. One committee member, Ike McLeece, summarized the situation particularly well: “We have the most eminently qualified candidate ever to offer for governor of this state, who brings with him unexcelled experience and a keen insight into the workings of the state bureaucracy. This is a semimarketable commodity. We are weakened by the fact that our candidate is not Hollywood pretty, nor is he an aggressive flesh pumper.”

In a recent oral history interview, West recalled, “I mapped out a program. I was going to every county in the state at least twice, forty-
six counties. I was going to make every hour count ... [My] strategy was to go out and meet the people, talk to them at every level ... And I did that. I talked to every civic club that I could, every farm bureau. [I] went door to door, house to house, encouraged people to have fish suppers, and teas [for the] ladies.

This bitter campaign highlighted strong ideological differences between the two candidates. Race relations was a primary concern in the state and across the nation, and the highly emotional busing issue had particu-
larly captured the country's attention. Watson wore a white necktie throughout the campaign to signal his stand on segregation. By contrast, West was known as a progressive on racial matters: he had fought the Klan while in the state Senate and, as lieutenant governor, addressed the NAACP.

West won the election with approximately 53 percent of the vote. In summarizing the campaign, journalist Jack Bass wrote in *The Transformation of Southern Politics* [p. 263]: "West drew support among Nixon voters, reacting to Watson's redneck appeal and the threat he posed to stability, and from [George] Wallace voters, many of them traditional Democrats reacting against the Nixon administration's economic and school policies."

West's humane and progressive administration as governor assured a peaceful improvement of affairs for most South Carolinians. Among his major accomplishments were the passage of mandatory automobile insurance for all drivers; the creation of the Advisory Council for Comprehensive Health Planning, the Coastal Zone Planning and Management Council, the Housing Authority, and the Human Affairs Commission; and the reorgani-
As asked to reflect on a lifetime devoted to service, West commented on the impact of his service in World War II—"We spent four years in public service at a very special but very demanding kind. And ... we realized that there were satisfactions in public service ... I look back at the group that came into our university law school in 1946, many of them entered public service ... Jim Mann [and] Hugo Sims in the Congress, immemorial people in the legislature, and of course [Fritz] Hollings ..." He concluded "looking back I'm the luckiest fellow who ever got in politics."

... for you," because people don't work for you, they work with you. That was the key, if there was one. I tried to recognize that most of the legislative leaders had carved out a niche or an expertise in a particular area, some more than one. To get something accomplished you would first have to go to that legislative leader or leaders, and bat the ideas back and forth. Of course, the ideal way was to make them think it was their idea, and give them credit for it ... I learned that from Bob McNair ... As lieutenant governor he gave me a lot of opportunities. He gave me more credit in a lot of instances for accomplishments ... than I deserved. I saw that in practice with McNair and I copied it."

Rembert Dennis was once asked about the role of West's various assistants while governor and replied, "West didn't need much help. West was very smart ... [The] only thing West needed was help with the work, he had the ideas." Fortunately for those interested in the social and political history of South Carolina, the germination and fulfillment of those ideas are well documented in the John C. West Collection.

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Bibliography
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