

James E. Thornton fonds

Compiled by Christopher Hives (2001)
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(2012, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021)

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Table of Contents

- **Fonds Description**
 - Title / Dates of Creation / Physical Description
 - Biographical Sketch
 - Scope and Content

- **Series Descriptions**
 - Biographical Information
 - Thesis
 - Unpublished Papers
 - Course Material
 - Books, Reports, and Reprints
 - Research Series
 - Correspondence
 - China Tour
 - Photographs
 - Audiocassettes
 - VHS

- **File List**

- **Catalogue entry** (UBC Library)

Fonds Description

James E. Thornton fonds. – 1971-2020.

1.4 m of textual records and other materials.

Biographical Sketch

James E. Thornton (b. 1927) received his MA (1967) and PhD (1972) in Adult Education from the University of Michigan. From 1969 until his retirement in 1992, Thornton taught in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education at the University of British Columbia. His research interests concern the impact of educational, social and economic programs on the development and well-being of the older adult. Current research interests are education for the third age: second careers, retirement, leisure activity, aging in the workforce, and life-span learning and education. At UBC Thornton introduced graduate course in educational gerontology and on aging themes. From 1980 to 1990, he served as co-ordinator for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Committee on Gerontology. The Committee encouraged teaching and research programs in faculties, schools and departments.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of biographical material (1993-2020), copies of Thornton's thesis (1967) and dissertation (1971), copies of his papers (published and unpublished), books, reports and reprints, as well as audio/visual material.

Included in the biographical material is a self-published autobiography, entitled *Telling My Life Story - ... a journey of discovery*.

Notes

Acquired from James Thornton by the University Archives in several accessions – the most recent in 2021.

Includes 1 audiocassette, 7 videocassettes, 3 DVDs, 167 photographic prints, 746 photographic slides.

Selected prints are included in UBC Archives' [Historical Photograph Database](#) as [UBC 114.1](#). Slides are made available in digital contact-sheet format.

Photographs, audiovisual recordings, and DVDs stored separately.

File/item list available.

File List

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Box 1

- 1-1 Copies of Thornton's CVs and resumes (1993, 1994, 1998) and other biographical material (1998, 2001)
- 1-1a "Telling My Life Story - ... a journey of discovery". Autobiography August 2012

[\(continued\)](#)

THESIS

- 1-2 James E. Thornton, An Educational Program for Economic-Opportunity Migrants: A Case Study in Program Development in Adult Education (1971)

[\(continued\)](#)

UNPUBLISHED AND PUBLISHED PAPERS

- 1-3 James E. Thornton "Assessing Needs" (1980)
- 1-4 James E. Thornton, "Methods of Adult Education" (1980)
- 1-5 Brian deVries and James E. Thornton, "A Focus on Aging" (1986)
- 1-6 James E. Thornton (ed) "Research and Education in Gerontology Directory of Departments and Schools Active in the Study of Aging at the University of British Columbia" (1987)

[\(continued\)](#)

COURSE MATERIALS

- 1-7 Course syllabus, bibliography and associated materials for Guided Autobiography and Forms of Life Review (1987/89)

1-8 Course material Educational Gerontology (1992)

(continued)

BOOKS, REPORTS AND REPRINTS

Box 2

- James E. Thornton, "The Challenge to the University" in "The Challenge of Canada's Maturing Population: Research and Priorities" (1981)
- James E. Thornton, "Issues Affecting Gerontology Education and Manpower Needs in Population Aging" in "Canadian Journal on Aging" (1984)
- David A. Peterson, James E. Thornton, James E. Birren (eds) "Education and Aging" (1986)
- "Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging" (Winter 1987-88)
- James E. Thornton and Earl Winkler, "Ethics and Aging: The Right to Live, the Right to Die" (1988)
- James E. Thornton (ed) "Lifelong Education in an Aging Society" (1989)
- "Seniors in Higher Education: Development Opportunities A.I.U.T. Proceedings" (1990)
- James E. Birren and Donna E. Deutchman "Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults" (1991)
- James E. Thornton, "Educational Gerontology in Canada" in "Educational Gerontology: An International Journal" (July-August 1992)
- James E. Thornton, "Universities of the Elderly: Continuing Education at its Best" in "Stay Healthy and Happy: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Elderly" (September 1993)

(continued)

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (cont.)

Box 3

- 3-1 Copies of Thornton's CVs and resumes (1992, 1993, 2001, 2002)
- 3-2 Committee-Knowledge for Everyday Living Agendas (1997)
- 3-3 Awards and Recognition (1993-2003)

3-4 AGHE (Association for Gerontology in Higher Education) Fellowship (1997-2002)

(continued)

THESIS (cont.)

3-5 James E. Thornton, "An Exploratory Study of the Educational Deficiencies of Occupationally Unstable Economic-Opportunity Migrants" (1967)

3-6 James E. Thornton, Master's Thesis, "The Conceptualization of an Experimental Field Study in Adult Education: A Dissertation Proposal" (1970)

UNPUBLISHED AND PUBLISHED PAPERS (cont.)

3-7 James E. Thornton, "Eldering: Developing a New Construct for Gerontology" (1980)

3-8 James E. Thornton, "Life-Span Learning and Education: A Conceptual Progression in the Life Course" draft (1985)

3-9 James E. Thornton, "Human Factors in Aging and Technology: Issues for Adult Education" (1986)

3-10 James E. Thornton, "Lifelong Education, Aging and Guided Autobiography" (1986)

3-11 James E. Thornton, "Use It or Lose It: The Importance of Life-span Learning" (1986, 1998)

3-12 James E. Thornton and Sharon A. Harold, "Metaphors of Aging" draft (1988)

3-13 James E. Thornton, (ed) "Lifelong Education in an Aging Society" (1989)

3-14 James E. Thornton, "Bibliography: Reminiscence and Life Review" (1991)

3-15 James E. Thornton, "Lifelong Learning and Welfare in Canada" draft (1991)

3-15a James E. Thornton, "Lifelong Learning and Welfare in Canada" final version and related correspondence (1991)

3-16 James E. Thornton, "Competence Model for Older Adult Education" (1993)

3-17 James E. Thornton, et al. "Physical Activities and Social Conditions of a Sample of Older Adults in British Columbia" (1993)

3-18 James E. Thornton, "Third Age Colleges in Japan and Canada" (1994)

3-19 James E. Thornton, "Education in the Third Age" draft (1996)

3-20 James E. Thornton, "What's In It for Me? - The Developmental Exchange" draft (2003)

- 3-21 James E. Thornton, "Educational Activities for Older Adults: Handbook of the Society for Learning in Retirement" draft (July 2005)
- 3-22 James E. Thornton, "Adult Education and Aging" [nd]
- 3-23 James E. Thornton, "Adult Education in an Aging Society" draft [nd]
- 3-24 James E. Thornton, "Educational Gerontology in Canada" [nd]
- 3-25 James E. Thornton, "Learning, Growth and Wellness: Opportunities and Strategies in Older Adult Education Programs" [nd]
- 3-26 James E. Thornton, "Planning for an Aging Society through Education" draft [nd]
- 3-27 James E. Thornton, "Retirement Planning-Where is the Research?" [nd]
- 3-28 James E. Thornton, "Seniors Access to Higher Education" [nd]
- 3-29 James E. Thornton, "Information Access for Seniors" [nd]

The following unpublished papers were delivered at various conferences:

- 3-30 James E. Thornton, "Images of Aging in a Technological Society" presented at Symposium on 'Aging and Technological Advances' University of Southern California, (1983)
- 3-31 James E. Thornton, "New Roles for Older Canadians" presented at The B.C. Chapter of the Canadian Association of Pre-Retirement Planners, (28 March 1991)
- 3-32 James E. Thornton, "Universities of the Elderly: Continuing Education at its Best" presented at The International Conference on the Elderly, Singapore (1993)
- 3-33 James E. Thornton, "Educational Gerontology: A Missing Variable in Service to the Community" presented at Okanagan University College President's Lectures, (23 Nov. 1994)
- 3-34 James E. Thornton, "Aging is a Learning Experience" presented at 16th Annual Southeastern Alberta Gerontology Conference, (12 Oct. 1995)
- 3-35 James E. Thornton, "Educational Gerontology: Where are We!!" presented at Educational Gerontology Interest Group, (27 Oct. 1995)
- 3-36 James E. Thornton, "Older Experienced Workers" presented at Symposium: Canadian Association of Gerontology, (1996)
- 3-37 James E. Thornton, "Myths of Aging: 'Mostly Strawman Statements!'" presented at Cariboo & Chilcotin Elder College, (10 May 2003)

(continued)

COURSE MATERIALS (cont.)

- 3-38 Statistical data and one report from ADED 525, (original file was entitled "Van. Data"), (1984, 1986-1987)

BOOKS, REPORTS AND REPRINTS (cont.)

- 3-39 James E. Thornton, "Some Ideas: About Planning for a Change; About Finding Jobs; Developing a Plan; About Moving to New Towns" (1970)
- 3-40 James E. Thornton, "Seniors Access to Higher Education" (198[?])
- 3-41 James E. Thornton and Gerry M. Bates, "The Aging Worker: Recommendations for Public Service" (July 1987)
- 3-42 Alvar Svanborg, Eva Sixt, Valter Sundh, James E. Thorton, "Subjective health in relation to aging and disease in a representative sample at ages 70, 75 and 79" (1988)
- 3-43 James E. Thornton (ed.), "Lifelong Education in an Aging Society" (1989)
- 3-44 James E. Thornton and Joanne Taylor, "A Content Analysis in the Journal of Educational Gerontology" (Volume 1 (1976) to Volume 15 (1989))
- 3-45 James E. Thornton, Book Review: "Older Adult Education: A Guide to Research Programs, and Policies" (1997)
- 3-46 James E. Thornton, "Older Adult Education: A Guide to Research, Programs and Policies" (1997)
- 3-47 James E. Thornton, "Myths of Aging or Ageist Stereotypes" (January 2001)
- 3-48 James E. Thornton, "Life-span Learning: A Developmental Perspective" (2003)
- 3-49 James E. Thornton, "Learning, Growth and Wellness: Looking at Strategies for Older Adult Education Programs" (2005)
- 3-49a James Thornton, Sharon A. Harold, "Education in the Third Age – Canadian and Japanese Perspectives" (1992)

(continued)

RESEARCH

- 3-50 James E. Birren Project (1985, 1990)
- 3-51 Third Age Scholars Proposal (1994)
- 3-52 Personal Calendar (1998-1999)
- 3-53 Japan Project - Comparative Study in Japan and Canada on Education for the Third Age (1987)

- 3-54 Japan Project - Van Data (1991)
- 3-55 Japan Project - Data Analysis (1988)
- 3-56 Japan Project - Questionnaires (1985)
- 3-57/58 Japan Project - Code Sheets (1985)

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters to James E. Thornton

- 3-59 Royal Society of Arts (1988-90)
- 3-60 Japan (1991-1993)
- 3-61 Options 45+ Project (1996)

Letters from James E. Thornton

- 3-62 Birren (1994, 2001)
- 3-63 National Advisory Council on Aging (2003)

[\(continued\)](#)

PHOTOGRAPHS

- UBC 114.5/1 James Thornton [nd] small-print, small-negative
- UBC 114.5/2 James Thornton and unknown man at International Dental Academy (IDA) Certificate Awarding Ceremony 1978 - large-print
- UBC 114.5/3 James Thornton, [Mr. Takahashi?] and unknown man at IDA Certificate Awarding Ceremony 1978 large-print
- UBC 114.5/4 James Thornton (centre) with IDA group 1978 large-print
- UBC 114.1/5 Group photograph of participants on a tour of China taken in front of Mao's childhood home (1978) [Print]

BOX 4

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (cont.)

4-1 Biographical Info 1983

(continued)

BOOKS, REPORTS, AND REPRINTS (cont.)

4-2/6 Publications 1980-84

4-7/10 Publications 1986-87

4-11/15 Publications 1987-89

4-16/18 Publications 1990

4-19/22 Publications 1990-92

4-23/24 Publications 1986-90

(continued)

RESEARCH (cont.)

4-25 Ethics & Aging - Table of Contents 1987

4-26 Ethics and Aging Introduction [n.d.]

4-27 Thornton - Work File 1987-89

4-28 Thornton, James E. & Anne D. Evans -- Ethics and Aging: An Annotated Bibliography [notes] 1987

4-29 Ethics and Aging

4-30 Bennett, John C. - Ethical Aspects of Aging... 1987

4-31 Birren, James & Candace Stacey - Paradigms of Aging... 1987

4-32 Boyajian, Jane - On Reaching for a New Agenda... 1987

4-33 Brown, Barry - Proxy Consent for Research on the Incompetent Elderly 1987

4-34 Browne, Alister - Foregoing Life Sustaining Treatment... 1987

4-35 Burnside, Beverly - Seniors' Challenge to Gerontology... 1987

4-36 Chappell, Neena - Society & Essentials for Well-Being... 1987

4-37 Denton, Frank & Byron Spencer - Population Aging & the Economy... 1987

4-38 Hultsch, David - Cognitive Intervention in Later Life... 1987

4-39 Kluge, Eike-Henner - The Calculus of Discrimination... 1987

- 4-40 MacDougall, Donald J. - The Right to Participate... 1987
- 4-41 Prado, C.G. - Narrative, Perspectives & Aging 1988
- 4-42 Schaler, Arthur - Civil Liberties & the Elderly Patient 1987
- 4-43 Tomkins, Catherine - Powerlessness... 1987
- 4-44 Winkler, Earl - Decisions About Life & Death... 1987
- 4-45 Winkler, Earl & James Thornton - Ethics & Aging 1986-87
- 4-46 Roy, David - Ethics & Aging 1987

- 4-47 Author Contracts [n.d.]
- 4-48 Havighurst Summer School 1979
- 4-49 Educational Gerontology courses 1983-84
- 4-50 Test Form(s) - (samples) [n.d.]

CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

- 4-51 Correspondence 1974-81
- 4-52 Gerontology Correspondence with Dr. David Roy 1981-84
- 4-53 Gerontology Correspondence - Denton, Frank - Spencer, Byron 1984
- 4-54 Gerontology Correspondence with Dr. Neena Chappell 1984-85
- 4-55 Gerontology Correspondence with Dr. Donald J. MacDougall 1984-85
- 4-56 Gerontology Correspondence - Bennett, John 1984-87
- 4-57 Gerontology Correspondence with Dr. James E. Birren 1984-88
- 4-58 Gerontology Correspondence with Dr. Jane A. Boyajian 1984-88
- 4-59 Gerontology correspondence with C.G. Prado 1987

(continued)

BOX 5

BOOKS, REPORTS, AND REPRINTS (cont.)

- 5-1 Centre for Continuing Education - Annual Report 1977-78
- 5-2 Woodward Foundation Project - Education for Aging 1978
- 5-3 Coping With Aging 1979-80
- 5-4 Trying to Establish a Centre for the Study of Aging 1982-83
- 5-5 Committee on Gerontology 1983-84
- 5-6 Submitted Papers - Ethics and Aging Conference 1984 [2 folders]
- 5-7 Abstracts - Conference - "Ethics & Aging" 1984

- 5-8 [Education in the Third Age] 1989
5-9 Ed. In 3 Age Invited Guest - Replies 1989

CHINA TOUR (1978)

In 1978 James Thornton participated in an adult educators' visit to the People's Republic of China. Organized by UBC's Adult Education Department and the Centre for Continuing Studies, the objective of the tour was to examine how the newly-formed Chinese Government after the fall of the "Gang of Four" would use forms of formal and informal adult education programs and professional training initiatives to repair China's social fabric and revitalize economic structures devastated by the "cultural revolution". Shortly after the UBC group arrived in Shanghai in the summer of 1978, they were joined by a group from the University of Alberta and then continued on a three week tour of China.

This series includes 746 slides taken during the trip, a group photograph and a short description of the tour from Thornton's autobiography. The slides have been removed from their original boxes and transferred into slide sleeves and put into file folders. The original descriptions from the slide boxes have been transferred to the file descriptions.

BOX 6

- 6-1 Shanghai – Box A [40 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)
[Sheet 2](#)

- 6-2 Shanghai to Changsha – Box B [42 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)
[Sheet 2](#)
[Sheet 3](#)

- 6-3 Embroidery Train to Shaoshan – Box C [40 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)
[Sheet 2](#)

6-4 Shaoshan – Box D [38 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

6-5 Shaoshan to Commune – Box E [40 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

6-6 Commune – Box F [39 slides]

[Sheet 1a](#)

[Sheet 1b](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

6-7 Commune to Big Goose – Box G [40 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

6-8 Big Goose/Sian Prov. Museum – Box H [39 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

6-9 Sian Prov. Museum/Peking Zoo – Box I [40 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

6-10 Peking Zoo – MKT – Great Wall – Box J [40 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

BOX 7

7-1 Cadre School to Forbidden City – Box K [39 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

7-2 China Show Slides [39 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

7-3 Inst. Of Minorities/Bill Day – Box 17 [22 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

7-4 Ming Tombs/Great Wall – Box 20-19-18 [25 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

7-5 Imperial Palace – Box 22 [33 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

7-6 Multiple slide boxes labelled “Extra” [190 slides]

[Sheet 1](#)

[Sheet 2](#)

[Sheet 3](#)

[Sheet 4](#)

[Sheet 5](#)

[Sheet 6](#)

[Sheet 7](#)

[Sheet 8](#)

[Sheet 9](#)

[Sheet 10](#)

7-7 China tour (1978) notes from J. Thornton's "Telling My Life Story" (3 pp.)

AUDIOCASSETTES

AT 3621 Mentoring Supportive Behaviors, Dr. Klause Schroeder 2/21/90

VHS

VT 1985 Educational Gerontology Tour in Haruna, May 21,'87

VT 1986 Havighurst, R.J. "Developmental Tasks" (J.E. Thornton) 1979

VT 1987 "Growing Old in America" Jan/86 (Episode: "The Retirement Dilemma")

VT 1988 TV Osaka Footage, Symp. 3rd Age, May 1989

VT 1989 The Psychology of Aging: An Interview with Dr. James E. Birren

VT 1990 Education and the Third Age (Thornton)

#0 Dr. Kazufas Moor'oka

#420 Dr. Allan Thomas

VT 1991 Education and the Third Age (Thornton)

#0 Dr. Yoshiyuki Matsuda

#435 Dr. Sol Rubinstein

#700 Dr. Bill Griffith

VT 2654 DVD – "Introduction to Guided Autobiography" – James E. Birren 2007

BOX 8

CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

8-1 Sweden Correspondence 1982-86

8-2 James Birren – Correspondence 1989-2016

8-3 John B. Collins – memorials 2015

UNPUBLISHED AND PUBLISHED PAPERS (cont.)

- 8-4 "Aging is a Learning Experience" – paper delivered at 16th Annual Southeastern Alberta Gerontology Conference 12 Oct. 1995
- includes cover letter dated 23 September 2018
- 8-5 "The Experienced Older Worker" 1996
- four articles written for "The Interchange Newsletter"
- 8-6 "Reminiscing on Learning and Teaching: 'I Believe...'" April 2018
- 8-7 "Reflections: James E. and Betty Birren at UBC" [n.d.]
- 8-8 [Gerontology writings] 1984-2000
- Thomas Sork, "Planning Educational Programs"
- Daniel Pratt, John Collins, "The Teaching Perspectives Inventory (TPI)"
- James E. Thornton, various
- 8-9 Articles by James Birren and others 1994-2013
- 8-10 Notes: Use It Or Lose It! [1986?]

BOX 9

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (cont.)

- 9-1 Trevino – Nimpo Lake July 2015
- 9-2 Order of the Good Time – Nova Scotia 1973, 2016
- 9-3 UBC Study Tour Group – "Wellbeing for Seniors" – Educ. Studies 1987
- 162 8 x 12 cm colour photograph prints in four booklets

BOX 10

- 10-1 "Telling My Life Story - ... a journey of discovery". Autobiography August 2012 [revised?]
- 10-2 Lifelong Education, Aging and Guided Autobiography – Vol. 1: 1975-2006 2020
- collected writings and published papers, bound
- 10-3 Lifelong Education, Aging and Guided Autobiography – Vol. 2: 2007-2020 2020
- collected writings and published papers, bound

DVDs

- 1 James E. Birren – papers & emails exchanged with James E. Thornton 4 Oct. 2019
- 2 James E. Thornton
 - 21 file folders: Artwork, Birren, Charles & Anna Thornton, Educ. Gerontology, etc.
 - JET – my autobiography
 - 44 academic papers by JET from his academic work at Un. of B.C.
 - papers during retirement