

JAMES J. LANG PAPERS

1981 – [ongoing]

Collection Number: MSS 249

Size: .66 linear feet

Special Collections and University Archives

Jean and Alexander Heard Library

Vanderbilt University

Nashville, Tennessee

JAMES J. LANG

1981 – [ongoing]

Biography/History

James J. Lang received his B.A. degree from Canisius College in 1966. His doctoral work in sociology and demography was completed at the University of Michigan. He served as a Vista Volunteer at Southside Settlement House in Columbus, Ohio and worked as a Project Director for Crossroads Africa in Gambia, West Africa.

Since 1974, Professor Lang has held a position in Sociology and Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt University. His research and field work has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Kellogg Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Potato Center, and Vanderbilt's Faculty Research Council.

Between 1988 and 1998, he visited nine countries for his book *Notes of a Potato Watcher*, College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2001. The field notes are from the following countries: Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya and Uganda, India, and Indonesia.

Between 1981 and 1984, he visited thirty-four development projects in six countries: Costa Rica, Brazil, The Dominican Republic, Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina. The field notes from the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Colombia provided the raw materials for *Inside Development in Latin America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988. These materials were received in Special Collections in 2002.

In 1989 Professor Lang took a trip to Brazil, and in 1990 to Asia to meet with people from the IRRI (International Rice Research Institute). Topics discussed include research testing of rice, salt and iron tolerance in rice, weed control, and production. His field notes are contained in two bound volumes titled, *Feeding a Hungry Planet*.

Professor Lang provided a biographical sketch and a bibliography, which is included with the finding aid.

Scope and Contents

This collection, measuring .66 linear feet, contains three series of field notes:

Series I, housed in 12 acid-free file folders, relates to *Notes of a Potato Watcher*, covers potato crops, viruses that effect the potato, research into ways to prevent the viruses, genetic engineering of the potato, production, pests, and breeders. File folders follow the format from the table of contents. Note: An abstract written by Professor Lang is included with the finding aid.

Series II, housed in six acid-free file folders, relates to *Inside Development in Latin America*, covers the principle problems in each country, outlining some programs that may improve conditions in education, health care, and agriculture. File folders are in alphabetical order. The following field notes are included in the collection:

Series III contains two bound volumes of field notes Chapter One: *Asia- Feeding a Hungry Planet*, and Chapter Two: *Brazil-Feeding a Hungry Planet*.

BOX 1, SERIES I

NOTES OF A POTATO WATCHER

Overview and Table of Contents

Peru

July 12, 1988 to July 25, 1988
March 11, 1996 to March 12, 1996
May 12, 1997 to May 15, 1997

Bolivia

April 3, 1990 to April 12, 1990
February 28, 1996 to March 6, 1996

Ecuador

April 28, 1997 to May 9, 1997

Tunisia

June 28, 1996 to July 5, 1996

Egypt

July 9, 1996 to July 11, 1996

Kenya & Uganda

December 9, 1997 to January 6, 1998

India

December 16, 1996 to January 3, 1997

Indonesia

October 19, 1995 to November 17, 1995

BOX 2, SERIES II

INSIDE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

Overview

Brazil

March 2, 1982 to July 2, 1982

July 11, 1983 to July 22, 1983

Colombia

May 7, 1983 to June 17, 1983

Costa Rica

November 17, 1981 to December 10, 1981

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Dominican Republic

January 3, 1983 to January 12, 1983

Box 3, Series III

FEEDING A HUNGRY PLANET

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: JAMES J. LANG

Jim Lang grew up in Buffalo, New York, where he received his B.A. degree from Canisius College in 1966. As a college student, Jim spent his summers as a steel worker at the Bethlehem rolling mill in Lackawanna, New York. Jim did his doctoral work in sociology and demography at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. At Michigan, Lang was a founding member of the first Residential College. Before completing his graduate studies, Jim served as a Vista Volunteer at Southside Settlement House in Columbus, Ohio. He also spent a summer as a Project Director for Crossroads Africa in the Gambia, West Africa. As an advanced degree candidate, Lang held a Danforth-Kent Doctoral Fellowship.

At Vanderbilt University since 1974, Jim holds a position in sociology and Latin American Studies. His research and field work has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Kellogg Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Potato Center, and Vanderbilt's Faculty Research Council.

Jim has participated in Vanderbilt's Faculty-in-Residence Program since 1987. He is a recipient of the Chancellor's Cup for service to Vanderbilt students. Lang is fluent in both Portuguese and Spanish, and is past Director of Vanderbilt's residential language program at Vanderbilt's McTyeire International House.

Jim's published work has focused on comparative history and development. **Conquest and Commerce: Spain and England in the Americas** (New York: Academic Press, 1975) compares the colonial regimes that Spain and England established in the New World. **Portuguese Brazil: The King's Plantation** (New York: Academic Press, 1979) examines how the formation of an export-dominated economy shaped Brazil's development. **Inside Development in Latin America** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) looks at how community-focused, self-help projects are organized; examples come from the Dominican Republic, Columbia, and Brazil. **Feeding a Hungry Planet** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) is about how grassroots technology transformed rice production in Asia and Latin America. **Notes of a Potato Watcher** (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001) describes Andean agriculture, explains how potatoes became a staple crop throughout the world, and analyzes potato production projects in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.