

**Reference code:** GB165-0508

**Title:** Rodney Giesler Collection

**Name of creator:** Giesler, Rodney William Aldous (1931-2016)

**Dates of creation of material:** 1957-1994

**Level of description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 2 boxes

**Biographical history:** Giesler, Rodney William Aldous (1931-2016)

Born 2 Feb 1931. Son of William Frederick Giesler, a champagne grower. Educated at King's College, Taunton, and Nautical College, Pangbourne. Spent National Service as a radio mechanic in the Royal Signals. Poor eyesight prevented a seagoing career and necessitated a change in career direction. Went into the film industry, joining the National Coal Board Film Unit as a trainee in Sept 1955. Went on to writing and directing training and safety films, one of which attracted the interest of the Kuwait Oil Company's consultants Film Centre. Sent to Kuwait in 1958 as writer and director of their film unit. Spent four years there making films for Kuwaiti audiences: explaining the activities of the oil company. The company ran an Arabic language school to encourage their non-Arab employees to learn courtesy Arabic. In addition to this undertook a further eighteen months studying classical Arabic in his spare time. Returned to the Gulf a number of times in subsequent years, filming in Qatar, Dubai and Oman. Married Pamela Wyard in Sept 1960. Two sons and five grandchildren. Retirement since 1991 spent researching family history, and as an oral history interviewer for the National Film & Television Archive, and the Imperial War Museum. Died in 2016.

**Scope and content:** Papers, slides and films relating to Rodney Giesler's life and work for the Kuwait Oil Company Ltd Film Unit and his later travels in the Middle East consisting of an extract from an oral history transcript 'Memories of Kuwait 1958-61' as well as a collection of 35mm colour slides mainly of the Gulf including images of oil fields and installations, the visit of King Saud to Kuwait in 1961 as well as slides of tourist sites in Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Also includes digital copies of the documentary films 'Close up on Kuwait' and 'Dubai' which were directed by Rodney Giesler and focus on the oil industry and the development of Kuwait and Dubai as well as some printed materials including booklets giving a history of the Kuwait oil company.

**System of arrangement:**

- 1 Memories of Kuwait
- 2 Slides
- 3 Films
- 4 Printed materials: Booklets, map and books

**Access conditions:** Open

**Language of material:** English

**Physical Condition:** The 35mm slides are available for browsing via contact sheets. The films can only be viewed using a computer.

**Conditions governing reproduction:** No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns. Copies of the slides can be made for private study and non commercial research. However, requests for copies for commercial research or publication should be directed to Joy Ashworth of the Arabian Album Picture Library at 14 Cruden Street, London N1 8NH.

**Custodial history:** In the possession of Rodney Giesler

**Immediate source of acquisition:** Received as a gift from Rodney Giesler between 15 June 2010 and 23 July 2010. 4/7 and 4/8 received as a gift from Rodney Giesler 25 July 2013.

**Related Units of Description:**

**In MEC Archive**

- GB165-0085 Harold Dickson: Papers and photographs of the British political agent in Kuwait 1929-1936 and then chief local representative of the Kuwait Oil Company
- GB165-0364 Violet Dickson: Photographs mainly of Kuwait but also Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Sharjah and Qatar 1956-1981
- GB165-0214 Stanley Mylrea: Memoir 'Before oil came to Kuwait'

For a more comprehensive overview see the Guide to Collections relating to the Gulf

**Finding aids:** In Guide; Handlist

**Archivist's note:** Fonds, series and item level description created by Debbie Usher 7 Dec 2010 and last revised 21 Jan 2022. Biographical history and captions for slides supplied by Rodney Giesler. Information on the BECTU oral history project obtained from the University of East Anglia website <http://www.uea.ac.uk/ftv/bchrp/bectu> cited online 7 Dec 2010.

**SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE RODNEY GIESLER  
COLLECTION**

<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>Memories of Kuwait</u></b>	<b><u>1958-1994</u></b>	<b><u>1 file</u></b>
<b><u>1/1</u></b>	<p><b><u>Interview Transcript Extract and Film Unit Photograph</u></b></p> <p>Short extract from an oral history interview transcript recorded in 1994 entitled 'Memories of Kuwait 1958-61' in which Rodney Giesler gives an account of his life and work in the Kuwait Oil Company Film Unit. Also includes a photocopy of a photograph of the Kuwait Oil Company Film Unit taken in the summer of 1958</p> <p>Archival History: The oral history interview formed part of the BECTU (Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union) Oral History Project. The BECTU represents personnel working within the British film and related industries. In 1986 a group of its members formed the BECTU History Project with the aim of recording interviews with veterans of the industry. The interviews are available at the University of East Anglia and the British Film Institute Library.</p>	<p><b><u>1958,</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Jan 1994,</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Mar 1994</u></b></p>	<b><u>10 sheets</u></b>
<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>Slides</u></b>	<b><u>1959-1970</u></b>	<b><u>285 items</u></b>
	<p>35mm colour slides mainly covering the Gulf consisting of images of Bahrain, Dubai and Kuwait and including aerial photographs, market scenes, ships docking wares, oil fields and oil installations as well as some photographs taken on the occasion of King Saud of Saudi Arabia's visit to Kuwait in 1961. Also includes slides of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria including images of tourist attractions such as archaeological sites, for example Baalbek and Petra, as well as religious sites such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.</p> <p>System of Arrangement:</p> <p>2/1 Gulf</p> <p>2/2 Iran</p>		

2/3 Jordan

2/4 Lebanon

2/5 Syria

<b><u>2/1</u></b>	<b><u>Gulf</u></b>	<b><u>1959-1970</u></b>	<b><u>157 items</u></b>
	System of arrangement:		
	2/1/1 Bahrain		
	2/1/2 Dubai Creek		
	2/1/3 Dubai Oil		
	2/1/4 Dubai Souk		
	2/1/5 Kuwait		
	2/1/6 Kuwait Oil Operations		
	2/1/7 Kuwaiti Royals Visit of King Saud		
	2/1/8 More Kuwait		
	2/1/9 Trucial States		
<b><u>2/1/1</u></b>	<b><u>Bahrain</u></b>	<b><u>1959</u></b>	<b><u>4 items</u></b>
	2/1/1/1 Muharraq Causeway		
	2/1/1/2 Old Bahrain		
	2/1/1/3 Aerial Manama		
	2/1/1/4 Old Bahrain		
<b><u>2/1/2</u></b>	<b><u>Dubai Creek</u></b>	<b><u>1969-1970</u></b>	<b><u>28 items</u></b>
	Slides of Dubai Creek mainly showing shipping, the docking of wares but also including two aerial images of Dubai creek		
<b><u>2/1/3</u></b>	<b><u>Dubai Oil</u></b>	<b><u>1969</u></b>	<b><u>9 items</u></b>
	View of Fateh Oil Field and also a storage tank under construction		
	2/1/3/1 Fateh Oil Field		
	2/1/3/2 Fateh Oil Field		
	2/1/3/3 Fateh Oil Field		

2/1/3/4	Fateh Oil Field
2/1/3/5	Fateh Oil Field
2/1/3/6	Fateh Oil Field
2/1/3/7	Fateh Oil Field
2/1/3/8	Fateh Oil Field
2/1/3/9	Storage tank under construction

<u>2/1/4</u>	<u>Dubai Souk</u>	<u>1968-1969</u>	<u>14 items</u>
	General market scenes showing fish, vegetables and textiles being sold		

<u>2/1/5</u>	<u>Kuwait</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>28 items</u>
2/1/5/1	Aerial views of Ahmadi		
2/1/5/2	Aerial views of Ahmadi		
2/1/5/3	Aerial views of Ahmadi		
2/1/5/4	Aerial views of Ahmadi		
2/1/5/5	Booms in old harbour		
2/1/5/6	Children Failaka		
2/1/5/7	Fahahil		
2/1/5/8	Fahahil		
2/1/5/9	Booms in old harbour		
2/1/5/10	Old man Failaka		
2/1/5/11	Street scenes Kuwait City		
2/1/5/12	Children Failaka		
2/1/5/13	Street scenes Kuwait City		
2/1/5/14	Booms		
2/1/5/15	Mishrif Palace (Sheikh Abdulla Mubarak)		
2/1/5/16	Old port area		
2/1/5/17	Old State Hospital		
2/1/5/18	Sandstorm (Shimaal)	July 1959	
2/1/5/19	Sandstorm (Shimaal)	July 1959	
2/1/5/20	Sandstorm (Shimaal)	July 1959	
2/1/5/21	Aerial South Ahmadi		

2/1/5/22	Wara Hill, Burgan
2/1/5/23	No caption
2/1/5/24	Ahmadi
2/1/5/25	Aerial views Kuwait City, dust storm
2/1/5/26	Aerial views Kuwait City, dust storm
2/1/5/27	Aerial views Kuwait City, dust storm
2/1/5/28	Ahmadi

<u>2/1/6</u>	<u>Kuwait Oil Operations</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>28 items</u>
2/1/6/1	BP Tanker British Queen		
2/1/6/2	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/3	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/4	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/5	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/6	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/7	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/8	Burgan Oilfield night		
2/1/6/9	Burgan wellhead		
2/1/6/10	Drilling rig		
2/1/6/11	Flare		
2/1/6/12	Gathering Centre		
2/1/6/13	Oilfield night		
2/1/6/14	Iraqi Bedu (Matruud)		
2/1/6/15	Oil jetty Mina-al-Ahmadi		
2/1/6/16	Oil jetty Mina-al-Ahmadi		
2/1/6/17	Burgan field		
2/1/6/18	Drilling site		
2/1/6/19	Rig Move		
2/1/6/20	Rig Move		
2/1/6/21	Rig Move		
2/1/6/22	Rig Move		
2/1/6/23	Rig Move		
2/1/6/24	Rig Move		

2/1/6/25 Rig Move  
2/1/6/26 Rig Move  
2/1/6/27 Ahmadi tank farm  
2/1/6/28 Burgan Wellhead

2/1/7 Kuwait Royals, Visit of King Saud 1961 11 items

Taken on the occasion of King Saud of Saudi Arabia's  
State Visit April 1<sup>st</sup> 1961

2/1/7/1 Royal Bodyguards  
2/1/7/2 Royal Bodyguards  
2/1/7/3 Gold Cadillac  
2/1/7/4 Reception party  
2/1/7/5 Assorted Royals. Abdullah Mubarak centre  
2/1/7/6 Emir of Kuwait Abdullah Salem and King  
Saud (right)  
2/1/7/7 The Welcome Mat  
2/1/7/8 Police Band  
2/1/7/9 Police chief  
2/1/7/10 Assorted Royals  
2/1/7/11 King Saud and Emir Abdullah Salem

2/1/8 More Kuwait Not dated 5 items

2/1/8/1 Abdulliyah water wells  
2/1/8/2 Abdulliyah water wells  
2/1/8/3 Fahahil  
2/1/8/4 Fahahil  
2/1/8/5 Jahra oasis

2/1/9 Trucial States Nov 1968 30 items

Slides of an expedition through Trucial Oman mountains  
to Khor Fakhan and Dibba

<b><u>2/2</u></b>	<b><u>Iran</u></b>	<b><u>1959,</u></b>	<b><u>63 items</u></b>
	System of arrangement:	<b><u>not dated</u></b>	
	2/2/1 Isfahan		
	2/2/2 Persepolis		
	2/2/3 Shiraz		
<b><u>2/2/1</u></b>	<b><u>Isfahan</u></b>	<b><u>Not dated</u></b>	<b><u>28 items</u></b>
	2/2/1/1 Ali Qapu		
	2/2/1/2 Coppersmith		
	2/2/1/3 Coppersmith		
	2/2/1/4 Ali Qapu		
	2/2/1/5 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/6 Chehel Sotoun		
	2/2/1/7 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/8 Madraseh Chaharbagh		
	2/2/1/9 Isfahan scenes		
	2/2/1/10 Isfahan scenes		
	2/2/1/11 Isfahan scenes		
	2/2/1/12 Isfahan scenes		
	2/2/1/13 Khaju Bridge		
	2/2/1/14 No caption		
	2/2/1/15 Madraseh Chaharbagh		
	2/2/1/16 Khomeini Square		
	2/2/1/17 Khomeini Square		
	2/2/1/18 Street scenes		
	2/2/1/19 Siose Pol Bridge		
	2/2/1/20 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/21 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/22 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/23 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/24 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/25 Imam Mosque		
	2/2/1/26 Shaking Minarets		



2/2/1/27 Sheikh Loftollah Mosque  
2/2/1/28 Street scenes

2/2/2 Persepolis Dec 1959 23 items

2/2/2/1 Columns  
2/2/2/2 Cuneiform script  
2/2/2/3 Frieze of Darius  
2/2/2/4 Frieze of figures  
2/2/2/5 Frieze of Darius  
2/2/2/6 Recreation of roof support system  
2/2/2/7 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/8 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/9 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/10 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/11 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/12 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/13 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/14 Views of the Palace  
2/2/2/15 Persepolis valley  
2/2/2/16 Roof support  
2/2/2/17 Roof support  
2/2/2/18 Site of tombs of Darius and Artaxerxes  
2/2/2/19 Site of tombs of Darius and Artaxerxes  
2/2/2/20 The author on site  
2/2/2/21 A Tower of Silence  
2/2/2/22 The Tombs  
2/2/2/23 The Tombs

2/2/3 Shiraz Not dated 12 items

2/2/3/1 Abadan Refinery  
2/2/3/2 Approach to Shiraz  
2/2/3/3 Tomb of Saadi  
2/2/3/4 Tomb of Hafez

2/2/3/4a	Qanats (wells)
2/2/3/5	Aerial view Shiraz
2/2/3/6	Shiraz airport
2/2/3/7	Shiraz airport
2/2/3/8	Souk Shiraz
2/2/3/9	Souk Shiraz
2/2/3/10	Souk Shiraz
2/2/3/11	Tomb of Hafez

**2/3**    **Jordan**    **1960-1961**    **46 items**

System of arrangement:

2/3/1 Petra, 1960

2/3/2 Jerusalem, 1961

**2/3/1**    **Petra**    **Jun 1960**    **24 items**

Slide 2/3/1/1 'Wadi Musa' Slides 2/3/1/2-24 'The ride to  
Petra and scenes within the site'

**2/3/2**    **Jerusalem**    **Jun 1961**    **22 items**

2/3/2/1	Mount of Olives
2/3/2/2	Mount of Olives
2/3/2/3	Church of Dominus Flavit
2/3/2/4	Church of Dominus Flavit
2/3/2/5	Church of Dominus Flavit
2/3/2/6	Bethany
2/3/2/7	Garden of Gethsemane
2/3/2/8	Pilgrims in the Wilderness
2/3/2/9	Pilgrims in the Wilderness
2/3/2/10	River Jordan
2/3/2/11	Walls of Jericho
2/3/2/12	Wilderness
2/3/2/13	Old City
2/3/2/14	Old City

2/3/2/15 Dead Sea  
2/3/2/16 Dead Sea  
2/3/2/17 Inn of Good Samaritan  
2/3/2/18 Vale of Cedron [Kidron]  
2/3/2/19 Church of all Nations  
2/3/2/20 Church of all Nations  
2/3/2/21 Old Jerusalem Street  
2/3/2/22 Dome of the Rock

**2/4**    **Lebanon**    **Not dated**    **8 items**

**2/4/1**    **Baalbek**    **Not dated**    **8 items**

2/4/1/1 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/2 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/3 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/4 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/5 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/6 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/7 Temple of Jupiter  
2/4/1/8 Bekaa Valley

**2/5**    **Syria**    **Not dated**    **11 items**

System of arrangement:

2/5/1 Damascus

2/5/2 Syria

**2/5/1**    **Damascus**    **Not dated**    **7 items**

2/5/1/1 Omayyad Mosque  
2/5/1/2 Souk  
2/5/1/3 Souk  
2/5/1/4 Souk  
2/5/1/5 Souk  
2/5/1/6 Souk

2/5/1/7      Scene of Christ's escape in a basket

<u>2/5/2</u>	<u>Syria</u>	<u>Not dated</u>	<u>4 items</u>
	Slides of Ma'lula. Aramaic village near Damascus		
<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>Films</u></b>	<b><u>1961-1969</u></b>	<b><u>2 items</u></b>
	Documentary films about the oil industry and the development of Kuwait and Dubai directed by Rodney Giesler		
<u>3/1</u>	<u>Close up on Kuwait</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1 item</u>
	<p>Digital copy of the film 'Close up on Kuwait'. A Kuwait Oil Company Film Unit Production Directed by Rodney Giesler assisted by Ibrahim Abu Nab Ali Siam. Photographed by John Sharples, assisted by Ahmad Hamadeh and produced by Derek Armstrong. The film is approximately 30 minutes long and starts by interviewing Kuwaiti students studying in Britain before moving on to an overview of the oil industry in Kuwait as well as the development of the country covering subjects such as the Government, education, the multinational nature of the skilled workforce, migrant labour, the Government Development board and the challenges of Kuwait's desert environment, farming, Islam, access to the Government and equality before the law.</p> <p>Physical Condition: A computer is needed to watch this film. Please ask the Archivist for further details.</p>		
<u>3/2</u>	<u>Dubai</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1 item</u>
	<p>Digital copy of the BP film 'Dubai' A Spectator Films Production written and directed by Rodney Giesler. The film is approximately 29 minutes long and gives an overview of the development of Dubai before the discovery of oil through trade, the dredging of the Dubai creek to</p>		

enable shipping and its re-export trade to neighbouring countries and then an account of the development of Dubai's oil industry after the discovery of offshore oil in 1966 including the installation of an underwater storage tank and how Dubai intends to use oil revenue to pay for a new deep water harbour and a larger airport

Physical Condition: A computer is needed to watch this film. Please ask the Archivist for further details.

- |                 |  |                         |                       |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b><u>4</u></b> | <b><u>Printed materials: Booklets, map and books</u></b>   | <b><u>1957-1988</u></b> | <b><u>6 items</u></b> |
|                 | Printed booklets giving a history of the Kuwait oil company, a map of Dubai in 1968, two books giving an illustrated overview of the people and terrain of Arabia and a printed guide to the Jamahiriya Museum in Libya  |                         |                       |
| <br><u>4/1</u>  | <br><u>The Story of Kuwait</u>   | <br><u>Jan 1957</u>     | <br><u>1 booklet</u>  |
|                 | Printed booklet 'The Story of Kuwait' by the Kuwait Oil Company Ltd giving an account of the development of the Kuwait Oil Company up until 1956 as well as an introduction to the history of Kuwait and its surroundings and the development of modern Kuwait |                         |                       |
| <br><u>4/2</u>  | <br><u>The Story of Kuwait</u>   | <br><u>Dec 1959</u>     | <br><u>1 booklet</u>  |
|                 | Printed booklet 'The Story of Kuwait' by the Kuwait Oil Company Ltd giving an account of the development of the Kuwait Oil Company up until 1959 as well as an introduction to the history of Kuwait and its surroundings and the development of modern Kuwait |                         |                       |
| <br><u>4/3</u>  | <br><u>Map of Dubai</u>  | <br><u>Mar 1968</u>     | <br><u>1 sheet</u>    |
|                 | Printed map entitled 'Guide to Dubai' published by the Dubai Petroleum Company   |                         |                       |
|                 | Related material: 4/7 Map of Dubai – which is a larger revised version.  |                         |                       |

- |            |   |                 |                  |
|------------|---|-----------------|------------------|
| <u>4/4</u> | <u>Face of Arabia</u>   | <u>1977</u>     | <u>1 book</u>    |
|            | Printed book 'Face of Arabia Thoughts and images of the Arabian Peninsula' with photographs by Cecilia Green and text by Michael Field and Tony Axon published by World of Information, Essex, England. |                 |                  |
| <u>4/5</u> | <u>Face of Arabia</u>   | <u>1986</u>     | <u>1 book</u>    |
|            | Printed book 'Face of Arabia Thoughts and images of the Arabian Peninsula' with photographs by Cecilia Green and text by Michael Field and Tony Axon published World of Information                     |                 |                  |
| <u>4/6</u> | <u>Jamahiriya Museum Guide</u>  | <u>1988</u>     | <u>1 book</u>    |
|            | Printed guide book 'The Jamahiriya's Museum' published by the Department of Antiquities and giving an account of the purpose of this Museum in Libya with an overview of its various galleries          |                 |                  |
| <u>4/7</u> | <u>Oil in Kuwait</u>  | <u>c1958</u>    | <u>1 booklet</u> |
|            | Printed booklet 'Oil in Kuwait A Short Account of the Operations of Kuwait Oil Company' issued by the Kuwait Oil Company  |                 |                  |
| <u>4/8</u> | <u>Map of Dubai</u>   | <u>Oct 1968</u> | <u>1 sheet</u>   |
|            | Printed map entitled 'Guide to Dubai' published by the Dubai Petroleum Company  |                 |                  |
|            | Related material: 4/3 Map of Dubai, Mar 1968  |                 |                  |