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- **Charles L. Wagandt II collection**

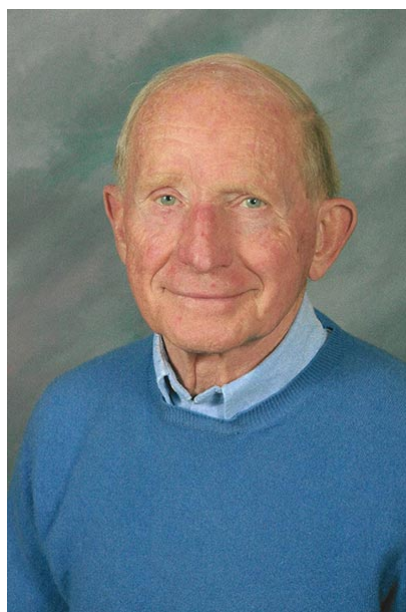
## Overview

**Title:** Charles L. Wagandt II collection  
**Call Number:** Coll320  
**Creator:** Wagandt, Charles Lewis  
**Dates:** 1854-2019  
**Size:** 83 boxes (75 linear feet)  
**Language:** English

**Abstract:** The Charles L. Wagandt II Collection consists of archival documentation pertaining to the history of the Oella Mill and Oella Company, Inc., including photographs, manuscript materials, audio-visual materials, and objects. Subjects include Oella Company Scrapbooks, documentation of the Oella Festival, Community Calendars, Oella Cemetery Company Ledgers, documentation of the George Ellicott House Restoration, oral histories from the Goucher College Historic Preservation Class, and documentation of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Founded as the Union Manufacturing Company in 1808, the Oella Mill was the first textile company chartered by the State of Maryland. In 1887, William J. Dickey bought the property and shifted production to woolens. The mill burned down in 1918 and was rebuilt, becoming America's foremost producer of fancy menswear woolens. The demand for these fabrics dropped with the introduction of synthetics and double knits and the trend to casual dress and in 1972 the mill closed. The company sold the mill village, exclusive of the mill, to Charles Lewis Wagandt II (1925-2020), who formed Oella Company, a firm dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the historic mill village of Oella, MD. Born and raised in Baltimore, Wagandt served as lieutenant in the US Marine Corps during World War II, and received an AB from Princeton and an MA in textile science from University of Pennsylvania. He was great-grandson of William James Dickey, whose family operated textile mills in Oella and in Dickeyville in Baltimore City, and worked for the family business, W.J. Dickey & Sons Inc. until the plants were sold in 1971 and 1972. For over 40 years, Wagandt led efforts to refurbish 76 acres and 245 housing units in Oella, bringing sewage and electricity to the area in the early 1980s. His interest also included politics, civil rights, and city planning; his public service included numerous roles on the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Commission, the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Heritage Committee, and the State House Trust. He helped create the Benjamin Banneker Museum and Park and was founder and chair of the George Ellicott House Committee. Among his many awards, he received the Preservation Maryland President's Award in 2007, the Maryland Historical Trust Calvert Award in 2008, and was given Howard County's Senator James Clark Lifetime Achievement Award. Textual and audiovisual materials (1854-2019) exclusively from the Oella Company vault that was accompanied by 68 individual finding aids (63.5 linear ft). Accessions include images, mill records, research materials, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, oral histories and their transcripts, objects, project planning records, mill samples, correspondence.

**Citation:** Charles L. Wagandt II Collection, Collection 320, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD).

## Administrative/Biographical Note



Charles Lewis Wagandt II (February 25, 1925- May 21, 2020) was the owner and president of the Oella Company Inc. and led a 40 year effort to restore the Baltimore County milling village of Oella. Born and raised in Roland Park, he was the son of George Taylor Wagandt and Lillie Hays Dickey. After serving as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps during World War II, he earned a degree from Princeton University and received his master's degree in textile science from the University of Pennsylvania. Wagandt was the great-grandson of William James Dickey, who owned textile mills W.J. Dickey & Sons, Inc., a Woolen Manufacturer from 1838 until the plant was sold in 1972. Wagandt then became its president, treasurer, and secretary in the years after. With a growing interest in politics, civil rights, and city planning, Wagandt was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of Maryland and served on a local advisory group to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He also sat on the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Commission and was the president of the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. In 1973, Wagandt bought the mill village of Oella, exclusive of the mill, and the mill workers' homes with hopes to maintain the history and spirit of the village in honoring the low rents while improving housing for residents who lived there. He oversaw the management, development, and rehabilitation of the historic mill village of Oella, Maryland. After gaining recognition as a National Registered Historic District, Charles formed the Oella Company and began the installation of water and sewage and architectural and land planning for rehabilitation through property development and management. Wagandt enjoyed local history and preservation. He wrote "The Mighty Revolution: Negro Emancipation in Maryland: 1862-1864", published by the Johns Hopkins Press in 1964. He served on the

board of the Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum and was a founder of the Friends of the Patapsco Valley and Heritage Greenway. He also helped create the Benjamin Banneker Museum and Park to commemorate America's first black man of science. He was founder and chair for the George Ellicott House Committee, whose members oversaw its move out of flood zones and subsequent restoration. He was recognized by the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission and Howard County Historic District Commission. In 2008, Charles Wagandt was awarded the Maryland Historical Trust Calvert Award for "paramount leadership and contributions to the preservation of Maryland's architectural and cultural heritage". He was given Howard County's Senator James Clark Lifetime Achievement Award.

This collection was donated by the wife of Charles L. Wagandt II, Mary Jo Wagandt, and their three children, Marianne Wagandt, Charles Wagandt, III, and James Wagandt.

## Provenance Information

### Provenance and Acquisition Information

Accessions MSS2021-09 and MSS2021-11.

### Processing Note

The collection was previously processed into 68 separate and unique collections by Oella Historical Society Archivists Mary Mannix and Julia Nicoll. Much of the collections document the various angles of Charles L. Wagandt's restorative projects, family history, and the Oella mill business records and the historical preservation of Maryland landmarks.

### Descriptive Rules Used

Describing Archives: a Content Standard (DACS)

[Archives Processing Manual: Description \(2015\)](#): The processing manual used in Special Collections for all descriptive platforms, including PastPerfect.

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## Access & Use

### Finding Aids

Finding Aid is unavailable.

### Access Conditions

This collection is unprocessed.

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## Subject Headings

### Creators

Wagandt, Charles Lewis

### Subjects



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