

Collection: Victor Aldine COULTER Papers
1916-1976

Physical Description: 2 cubic feet: letters, photographs, photocopies, transcriptions, typescripts, newspaper clippings, and research notes.

Acquisition: Gift, estate of Victor Aldine Coulter, 1982

North Carolina State Archives
Raleigh, North Carolina

Description: Victor Aldine Coulter (1892-1982), chemist, university professor, and college dean, son of John Summey and Sarah Ann (Herman) Coulter, was a native of Newton, Catawba County, North Carolina. He was educated in the University of North Carolina where his graduate studies were in chemistry (B.S. 1913; M.S. 1914; Ph.D. 1916). Late in 1917 he was commissioned a lieutenant in the Gas Defense Work in the Sanitary Corps, National Army, and early in 1918 was transferred to the Corps of Engineers, National Army. Sent to France in June, 1918, as an officer in the American Expeditionary Force, Coulter was further transferred to the Chemical Warfare Service, promoted to captain, and assigned duties as corps and division level gas officer for the duration of the war. After his discharge, and after he had commenced his professorial career at the University of Mississippi, Dr. Coulter continued his interest in chemical warfare. In 1924 he was commissioned a reserve captain in the Chemical Warfare Service of the U.S. Army and assigned to 301st Gas Regiment, headquartered at Atlanta.

During his years at the University of Mississippi (1920-1960), Dr. Coulter co-authored with his colleague, William O. Swan, Quantitative Analysis (1935), a manual to be used in the university's chemistry department. He served as dean of the university's College of Liberal Arts from 1936 to 1957, and retired from active teaching in 1960. The following year an annual lectureship series, the Coulter Lectureships, was established in compliment to him. The chemistry building erected in 1977 at the University of Mississippi was named Coulter Hall in his honor.

One of Dr. Coulter's private interests was local history and genealogy. About 1930 he explored a Civil War site north of Tallahatchie River in southern Marshall County, Mississippi. Here he made pencil sketch maps of the site and drawings of two remaining earthworks of emplacements for five and three guns used by the United States army to protect federal troops when crossing the nearby river. Years later, when the Catawba County (N.C.) Historical Association began gathering information on pioneer sites and settlers to be used in a county history, Dr. Coulter carried on a steady correspondence in connection with the project from 1951 to 1953. His brother, John C. Coulter, who died in 1935, had been very much interested in family history and had begun collecting information as early as the 1890s. Upon his retirement, Dr. Coulter picked up the work of his brother and in 1975 published The Coulter Family of Catawba County, North Carolina.

In 1926 Dr. Coulter married Margaret McLean of Winona, Mississippi, for whom there are a few papers and photographs in this collection. Fraternally he belonged to Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Omicron Delta Kappa honorary society as well as Alpha Chi Sigma chemistry fraternity. Dr. Coulter's papers fall into three groups: (1) Personal and Professional Papers; (2) Military Papers; and (3) Genealogical Research Files.

Personal and Professional Papers include a few vital and personal papers and photographs relating to Dr. and Mrs. Coulter, citations and certificates, materials relating to the American Chemical Society and to fraternal organizations to which he belonged. A single file containing a photograph and four pencil drawings, made about 1930, of federal gun emplacements on the north side of Tallahatchie River in southern Marshall County, Mississippi, presumably grew out of Dr. Coulter's interest in local history. There is, too, a small file of correspondence carried on with members of the Catawba County Historical Association between 1951 and 1953, at the time a history of the county, edited by Charles J. Preslar, Jr., and published by the association in 1954, was in preparation. From the professional side of his life there are materials relating to the chemistry department at the University of Mississippi, to the Coulter Lectureships, and a draft and finished copy of his doctoral thesis at the University of North Carolina.

Military Papers. Included here are materials relating to Dr. Coulter's World War I experience (1917-1919), from his tenure as a reserve officer in the United States Army (1924-1941), and an extrinsic 1945 army group history from World War II. The World War I papers include personal copies of army records that were put into Coulter's official "201" file: correspondence, orders, memoranda, tables of organization, reports, commissions, and photographs. His papers include, as well, a copy of the gas officer's training manual used by Coulter while in charge of the 39th Division Gas School at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana in 1918, and handwritten notes on the preparation, properties, and effects of six gases on the human system.

Coulter's reserve officer files include some of the same sorts of records as appear in his World War I file, but include as well "public relations" materials put out by the United States Chemical Warfare Association and by the War Department's Chief of Chemical Warfare Service. The burden

of this public relation effort was to convince the public that chemical warfare was, in the final analysis, more humane than traditional warfare by projectiles and explosives, and ought to be made an important part of the national defense. The object of the Chemical Warfare Association was to foster close contact among reserve officers, the American chemical industry, and the U.S. armed services. Also among these papers are two undated articles, presumably by Dr. Coulter, entitled, "Military Gases"; and "Military Gases: Chemicals in Future Wars".

An extrinsic military headquarters history from World War II in the collection had formerly belonged to Coulter's brother-in-law, Colonel David S. McLean. The history is of the 6th Army Group Headquarters, to which Colonel McLean had been assigned when the group was created at the beginning of August, 1944, and given operational control of allied forces in Operation Dragoon. This operation, in conjunction with Operation Overlord, had as its object the sweeping of the German armies out of France, the driving of them back into Germany, and defeating them so crushingly as to ensure surrender. The history, prepared by the headquarters historian, was meant to be complete in 11 sections, of which the copy in this collection has 10 and a final report on the operations of the G-2 Section (military intelligence). The narrative is illustrated by photographs, tables of organization, and maps. Supporting documents, still classified at the time the history was written in 1945, were not issued to Col. McLean and are not in the collection.

Genealogical Research Files. Dr. Coulter's files include his correspondence relating to the Coulter and related families, ranging in date from 1953 to 1976 (though none survives for 1970). Of the Coulter family, proper, there are drafts of his 1975 family history, genealogical notes and source material (including copies of some eighteenth and nineteenth century documents), a family chart, and brief historical sketches of the family. A dismantled scrapbook of 159 pages contains newspaper articles and marriage and death notices of the Coulter and related families, as well as articles on Catawba County local history, pioneer families, and persons contemporary with Dr. Coulter; an index is at the front of the scrapbook. There are brief files of information relating to other Catawba County families to whom the Coulters were connected by consanguinity or marriage: Boone, Fry, Hager, Herman, Hunsucker, Isenhour, Killian, Lowrance, Plonk, and Setzer.

INVENTORY

1705.1 Personal and Professional Papers

Personal. Dr. and Mrs. Coulter

Personal. Mrs. Coulter

Personal--Citations, Certificates

Personal--Local History--Catawba County, N.C., 1951-1953 (Corresp.)

Personal--Local History--Civil War Gun Emplacement, Marshall Co., MS

Personal--Organizations--American Chemical Society

Personal--Organizations--Fraternities

Personal--Photographs

University of Mississippi. Chemistry Dept.--History

University of Mississippi. Chemistry Dept.--Qualitative Analysis

University of Mississippi. Coulter Lectureships.

University of North Carolina. Doctoral Thesis (draft)

University of North Carolina. Doctoral Thesis

INVENTORY, continued

1705.2 Military Papers

- W.W.I. Personnel File. Captain Coulter, 1917-1919
- W.W.I. Gas Officer's Training Manual, 1918
- W.W.I. Notes on the Chemistry of Some Gases
- Chemical Warfare Service. Reserve Officer, 1924-1925 (July)
- Chemical Warfare Service. Reserve Officer, 1925 (Aug.-Nov.)
- Chemical Warfare Service. Reserve Officer, 1926-1941
- Chemical Warfare Service. "Military Gases", n.d.
- Chemical Warfare Service. "Military Gases: Chemicals in Future Wars", n.d.
- W.W.II. 6th Army Group Hq. History, 1944-1945. Sections I-III
- W.W.II. 6th Army Group Hq. History, 1944-1945. Sections IV-V

1705.3 Military Papers

- W.W.II. 6th Army Group Hq. History, 1944-1945. Sections VI-X and Final Report, G-2 Section

1705.4 Genealogical Research Files

- Correspondence, 1953-1960
- Correspondence, 1961-1963
- Correspondence, 1964-1969
- Correspondence, 1971-1976
- Coulter Family (1975 draft)
- Coulter Family (1972 draft)
- Coulter Family--Appendix VI
- Coulter Family--Generations 5 and 6
- Coulter Family--Address Book
- Coulter Family--Address Book

1705.5 Genealogical Research Files

- Coulter--Genealogical Notes
- Coulter--Genealogical Notes
- Coulter--Genealogical Sources--Bible Records/Biographical
- Coulter--Genealogical Sources--Cemetery Records
- Coulter--Genealogical Sources--Deeds, Wills, etc.
- Coulter--Genealogical Sources--Plat Maps
- Coulter Family Chart
- Coulter Family "Historical and Biographical Sketch"
- Coulter Family History, Chapter 1 [anonymous]
- "Coulter Family in America" [anonymous]
- Coulter, Martin--Revolutionary War Record
- Coulter Mill, Catawba Co., N.C. (photograph)

1705.6 Genealogical Research Files

- Coulter Family and Catawba Co. Scrapbook, p.1-55
- Coulter Family and Catawba Co. Scrapbook, p.56-120
- Coulter Family and Catawba Co. Scrapbook, p.121-159
- Boone Family--Genealogical Correspondence, 1921-1970
- Boone Family--Boone Bulletin, 1927-1932
- Boone Family--Boone Scout, 1972-1978

INVENTORY, continued

1705.6 Genealogical Research Files, continued

Fry Family
Hager Family
Herman Family
Hunsucker Family
Isenhour Family
Killian Family
Lowrance Family
Plonk Family
Setzer Family

FINDING MEDIA

Main entry cards

Subject cards

American Chemical Society
Boone Family
Camp Beauregard (Louisiana)
Chemical Warfare
Coulter, Martin (1759-1847)
Coulter Family
Coulter's Mill (Catawba Co., N.C.)
Fry Family
Gases, Asphyxiating and Poisonous--War use
Gristmills
Hager Family
Herman Family
Hunsucker Family
Isenhour Family
Killian Family
Lowrance Family
Operation Dragoon
Plonk Family
Setzer Family
United States. Army. American Expeditionary Force. Army Corps, 7th
United States. Army. American Expeditionary Force. Division, 39th
United States. Army. American Expeditionary Force. Division, 77th
United States. Army. American Expeditionary Force. Division, 90th
United States. Army. Army Group, 6th
United States. Army. Chemical Corps
United States Chemical Warfare Association
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
University of Mississippi (Oxford, Miss.)
University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC)
World War, 1914-1918
World War, 1914-1918--Chemical Warfare
World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--France
Coulter, Margaret (McLean), 1890-1961

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FINDING MEDIA, continued

Geographic cards

Catawba County (NC)
Marshall County (MS)

Originally arranged and described 1986 by L. A. Procter, under the
direction of C. Edward Morris; rearranged and re-described by G. Stevenson,
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