

Spring 2018

WVRHC Newsletter, Spring 2018

West Virginia & Regional History Center

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West Virginia and Regional History Center

NEWSLETTER

Volume 33, No. 2

West Virginia University Libraries

Spring 2018

Papers of Attorney and Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson Now Open to Research

While the name Louis A. Johnson does not have the familiarity it once enjoyed across America, when coupled with Steptoe, the name Johnson still resonates throughout the Mountain State and far beyond. The co-founder of one of the state's most successful law firms, Louis Johnson was not only an eminent attorney but also one of the leading American statesmen of the mid-twentieth century. Researchers interested in studying his multifaceted and highly distinguished career now have a new primary resource at their disposal: the Louis A. Johnson Collection at the West Virginia and Regional History Center.

Born in Roanoke, Virginia in 1891, Johnson worked in his family's grocery store as a young man. His interest in politics and public service was sparked at an early age by his family's devotion to improving their community. An excellent student, Johnson attended the University of Virginia where he excelled not only in academics but also in athletics. Graduating with a bachelor's degree in law in 1912, he relocated to Clarksburg, West Virginia the following year to establish a law practice with fellow UVA graduate John Rixey. He formed a fast friendship with lawyer Philip Steptoe, another UVA graduate, who had come to Clarksburg a decade earlier. The three attorneys joined forces and formed a new firm, Steptoe, Rixey, & Johnson. After Rixey left in 1914, the practice became known as Steptoe & Johnson.

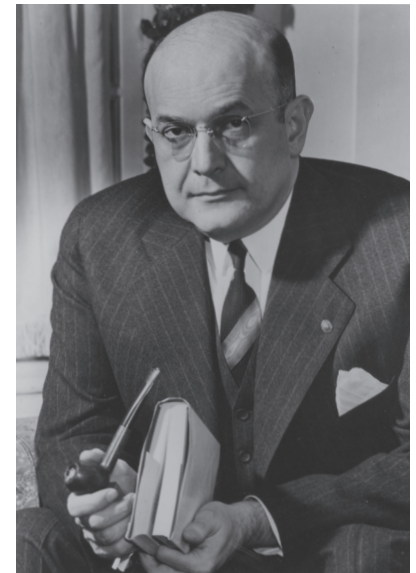
The ambitious young man won election to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1916. However, he left for France soon afterwards to serve as an officer in the U.S. Army during World War I. His military service would prove to have an enduring effect on his life. Following

the war, Johnson resumed his law practice and became increasingly devoted to promoting veterans affairs. He played a particularly significant role in founding and administering the American Legion and served as the organization's national commander in 1932-1933.

Through his association with the American Legion, Johnson was introduced

to President Franklin Roosevelt, who would enlist his services in a wide assortment of roles and activities in the ensuing years. He played a significant role in FDR's re-election campaign in 1936 and was subsequently appointed Assistant Secretary of War, serving from 1937-1940. In the latter position Johnson advocated for a military buildup in anticipation of the United States' entry into World War II.

Following a hiatus of nearly a decade devoted to public service, Johnson returned to the practice of law in Clarksburg with the exception of a brief stint as Roosevelt's representative in India in 1942. A notable accomplishment included the founding in 1945 of the Washington, DC branch of Steptoe & Johnson. His return to law proved to be short-lived. In 1948, he agreed to serve as chair of the finance committee for Harry Truman's presidential campaign. After Truman's surprise victory, Johnson was



Louis A. Johnson, ca. 1950

West Virginia and Regional History Center NEWSLETTER

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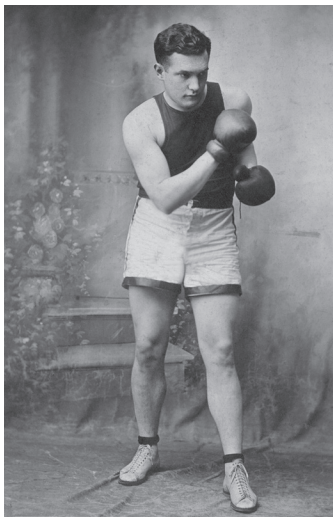
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Johnson being sworn in as Assistant Secretary of War, 1937. On his left is West Virginia Senator Matthew Neely. On the right are General Malin Craig, U.S. Army Chief of Staff and F.M. Hoadley, Assistant Chief Clerk performing the ceremony.



Louis Johnson was a heavyweight boxer and wrestler at the University of Virginia, ca. 1912.



Johnson served as an officer World War I, ca. 1917.

internationally recognized firm. In 1980, the West Virginia and Washington branches parted ways in an amicable separation.

In fitting tribute to Johnson's lifelong devotion to servicemen, the veteran's hospital in Clarksburg was renamed the Louis A. Johnson Veterans Administration Medical Center in his honor.

Donated to the WVRHC by Steptoe & Johnson PLLC in March 2018, the Louis A. Johnson Collection, A&M 4311, contains an array of materials relating to all stages of Johnson's illustrious life and career. In addition to papers, documents, correspondence, and photographs are assorted artifacts and a unique set of political cartoons that chronicle Johnson's quest for military unification as Secretary of Defense.

appointed as the U.S. Secretary of Defense in March 1949.

Known for his skill in organization, logistics, and supply, Johnson strongly supported Truman's platform of a unified post-war military to reduce costs and promote efficiency. Unfortunately, these efforts often put him at odds with high ranking military officials and other cabinet members, especially Secretary of State Dean Acheson. When the Soviet Union developed atomic capabilities and war erupted between North and South Korea, Johnson was held responsible for the diminished readiness of the American military. His relationship with President Truman deteriorated and he resigned as Secretary of Defense at the President's request in 1950.

Again, Johnson returned to his law practice and he continued in that pursuit until his death in Washington, DC in 1966. In the years that followed, Steptoe & Johnson continued to grow and become an



Johnson with wife Ruth Frances Maxwell, ca. 1950. They had two daughters, Lillian and Ruth Katherine (known as Kay).



Louis Johnson (center) with American Legion commanders from Alabama, ca. 1932.

West Virginia Day Celebration 2018 **“Justice for All: Law and Lawyers in West Virginia”**

On June 20, 2018, please join the WVRHC’s annual celebration commemorating West Virginia’s birthday. This year’s program and exhibit will be devoted to the theme, “Justice for All: Law and Lawyers in West Virginia,” and will highlight landmark cases and major figures in West Virginia legal history.

The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a continental breakfast in the Milano Room. A speakers’ forum will commence at 9:30. Speakers will include former WVU President David Hardesty; former CEO and managing partner of Steptoe & Johnson, Robert Steptoe; West Virginia historian Ray Swick; attorney Gregory Hinton; former WVU College of Law Dean John Fisher; and WVU College of Law, Professor of Law and Technology, Marjorie McDiarmid.

Following the speakers, the West Virginia & Regional History Center will debut this year’s exhibit in the Davis Family Galleries. The exhibition will include documents and artifacts from the Center’s collections that reveal the intersections of law and major industries in West Virginia, the history of WVU’s College of Law and the West Virginia Bar Association, United States Supreme Court cases from West Virginia that had national impact, and profiles of major figures in West Virginia’s legal history, as well as a significant display of materials from the newly acquired Louis A. Johnson Collection. A commemorative poster will be distributed to all in attendance.

Following the exhibit opening, join us in the Downtown Campus Library Atrium for a slice of West Virginia birthday cake. The West Virginia Day Celebration is free and open to the public.

WVRHC Research Grants Assisting Scholars from Around the Globe



Soojin Chung

In 2016, the West Virginia & Regional History Center established a grant program to support research and scholarship using the Center’s collections. The grants offset expenses of researchers who must travel a significant distance to use the Center’s holdings. While research in all fields is considered, current

topics of special interest include West Virginia authors including Pearl S. Buck, Congressional Papers, the Civil

War, Minority Studies, Women’s Studies, West Virginia Labor History, and Folklore.

Since the beginning of the research grants program, the Center has awarded nine grants to scholars from across the United States and beyond. Recipients include: Soojin Chung, Boston University; Stephanie Ward, Cardiff University, United Kingdom; Michael Drexler, Bucknell University; Anthony Sparacino, University of Virginia; Benjamin Stanonik, California State University, Fullerton; Margaret Draper, University of Virginia; Cyrus Forman, University of Washington; Phyllis Lubin-Tyler, Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation; and Bettine Vriesekoop, Freelance Journalist, Netherlands.

In return for the Center’s assistance, grantees are asked to submit a brief post-visit report outlining their experience in visiting the Center. The following selections are from three such reports.

Soojin Chung, a Ph.D. candidate in mission history and world Christianity in the School of Theology at Boston University, visited the WVRHC in 2016 to use the Center’s extensive Pearl S. Buck collections. Chung’s interest in Buck centers on the changing nature of adoption. Chung writes:

My specific research interest is the role of female missionaries in the transnational adoption movement and how the historical roots of adoption differ from contemporary adoption practices. While my research is multifaceted and examines a number of missionaries, Pearl Buck is the focal point of my research project. As a humanitarian with a public voice, Buck paved the way for transnational adoption not only in Korea but in other parts of the world. I contend that in the midst of dire need on the part of mixed-race children, who were treated as inferior human beings, Pearl Buck played a pivotal role in combating racism in the United States and improving the children’s material circumstances by generating what we now call transnational adoption.

The most useful materials were in Series 2. Non-fiction, dating from 1936-1972. I discovered two particular themes during the research. First, Buck’s extensive articles on anti-racism showed that her motivation for transnational and transracial adoption was more than an ordinary child-welfare activism. While adoption was already practiced in the United States prior to Buck’s public ministry, her essays and articles showed that she was the first one to educate the American public on how to fight racism through transracial adoption. What separated her from other adoption agencies from her time was her emphasis on race and fighting racial barriers through adoption. Moreover, her articles and autobiographies on her experience in the United States and China showed her vital role as a cultural bridge between the East and the West. During the research, I discovered that she founded and was actively involved with the East and West Association: an organization working against colonialism and racism in Asia and the United States during the World War II.

Second, the Pearl S. Buck Papers (1921-1970s) showed that she was heavily influenced by the Protestant liberalism and ecumenical Christianity that emerged during the 1920s and 1930s. Particularly enlightening was Series 11. Addenda—Correspondence with William E. Hocking, a liberal Congregationalist and a Harvard professor who wrote *Re-Thinking Missions— A Laymen’s Inquiry After One Hundred Years*. While reading through the correspondence between Buck and Hocking, I discovered that during Hocking’s investigation in China, he had visited Buck as part of his research. They both reflected a unique mission theory that emerged during the rise of liberal, post-racial Protestant mission thought and the withering of evangelistic missionary disposition. Around the time Hocking’s report was published, they exchanged courteous correspondence, and decades later became close friends. In the later years of their lives, they became romantic partners until Hocking’s death in 1966. Ecumenical Christianity’s emphasis on social work and humanitarianism was one of the main impetuses for Buck’s pioneering role on international adoption. Overall, my visit to the West Virginia & Regional History Center proved extremely helpful in shaping the direction of my dissertation.

my needs, mention of a campaign for a John Brown memorial and a John Brown Professorship.

I am planning two projects that will make use of references from your collections. Foremost is a novel I am writing about the Gibson mansion. My reading helped me to appreciate the complexity of the issues I hope to address in the novel. My other project concerns how better to integrate texts by fugitive and formerly enslaved writers into the canon of American Literature. The debates about whether slavery should be foundational for the struggle for full civil rights should be an important piece of my work as they create a new context for understanding the circulation and reception of slave narratives during the time that American literary studies were entering college curricula for the first time. Though teaching African American writing did not burst onto campuses until the late 1960s and still has yet fully to be incorporated into “mainstream” degree requirements for English majors, we may better appreciate the aesthetic and political considerations of how or whether African American authored work was read and valued.



Michael Drexler

In 2017, grant recipient Dr. Michael Drexler, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the English Department at Bucknell University, came to the Center to study the Frances Packette Todd papers and the Storer College archives. Drexler summarizes his research experience:

My primary interest in both collections concerned events related to or in the context of the construction of the John Thomas Gibson mansion (Gibson-Todd House). Though I did not find much relating to the structure itself, I gained a deeper understanding of the Gibson families’ personalities and activities. In the Storer Papers, I surveyed boxed materials and the college’s student newspaper for the years 1880-1892. These were momentous times for students, who were reacting to debates among the nation’s African American citizens about how best to proceed with gaining or simply maintaining post-Civil War rights. Again, there was no mention of the Gibson family in any of the college’s materials—telling in itself. But I did realize I will need to come back to the Center to look at the newspapers, in particular, in greater detail. There was mention of Frederick Douglass’s and Alexander Crummel’s visits to the college as well as, most interesting for



Anthony Sparacino

Anthony Sparacino, 4th year Ph.D. candidate in the Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics at the University of Virginia, visited the WVRHC in 2018 to consult the Governor Arch Moore Papers. Sparacino explains his research:

The documents I found in Morgantown came from the Governor Arch A. Moore papers and concerned the activities of the Republican Governors Association during the Nixon and Reagan administrations. The documents contained transcripts of the RGA’s semi-annual meetings; memos concerning the RGA’s role in helping to elect Republican gubernatorial candidates, the development of new services for the party’s governors, and the expansion of RGA staffing; letters between Governor Moore and other governors, RGA staff and members of Congress concerning the affairs of the national party. It also included papers concerning the interaction between the RGA, individual governors, and the White House.

Ultimately, my trip to Morgantown has not only provided me with a wealth of primary source material but allowed me to further develop my argument. These documents indicate that governors have indeed become more important actors in national party politics. They help to shape the national party program, are in constant dialogue with the party’s national leadership in Congress and the White House, and are seen

as important partners by these leaders. The RGA promotes consistent interaction between national party elites and the party's governors and has, thus, contributed to a more nationally programmatic party.

Reports like the above reveal both the value and diversity of scholarship that the Research Grants have supported to date. They indicate that the WVRHC's investment in encouraging research in West Virginia history is money well spent. It will be the Center's goal to increase the grant resources available in the coming year.



Research grantees during their visit to the Center in May 2018. Back Row, Director John Cuthbert and grant recipient Phyllis Lubin Tyler; Front row, Ted Badoux and grant recipient Bettine Vriesekoop.

Selected Recent Acquisitions

Chapman Revercomb, Politician, Biography. 1942-1987 and undated, 7 ft. 6 in., Gift in 2018. Addendum to A&M 3357.

Research materials and copies of primary sources as well as drafts of the book, *A Conspiracy of Events: Senator Chapman Revercomb and West Virginia Politics, Immigration Reform, and the Eisenhower-Taft Conflict*, by Stephen Jones and Ann Bradley.

Maggie Anderson, Poet, Papers. 1981-2017, 14 ft. 5 in., Gift in 2017. Addendum to A&M 3956.

Papers of Appalachian poet Maggie Anderson. Includes correspondence, poems in anthologies, reviews, articles, clippings, posters, and project files.

Judith Stitzel Papers. ca. 1960-2013, 24 ft., Gift in 2017. Addendum to A&M 5039.

Variety of materials related to Dr. Stitzel's career. Includes material on Morgantown City Planning, Stitzel's students' work, AV material, women's studies related material, material related to a book she wrote, and more.

Visiting Committee

West Virginia University Libraries

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John E. Stealey, III, Shepherdstown, WV, Chairman

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Etta Haught Beckley, Schoolteacher, Collection of Plays and Recitations for Children. 1907-1950, 10 in., Gift in 2017. A&M 4282.

Collection of booklets belonging to Etta Haught Beckley containing plays, poems, and dialogues for school children. Includes booklets for Christmas, Thanksgiving, and other holidays, the end of school, and other themed plays and recitation exercises.



Group portrait of Big Isaac Baseball Team, Harrison County, ca. 1900.

Les Carpenter, Collector, Photographs of Town of Big Isaac in Doddridge County. ca. 1860-1920, 123 photographs, Loan in 2017. A&M 4284.

Photographs documenting Big Isaac in Doddridge County. Includes images of members of the Hinkle and West families. There is a portrait of Civil War soldier Abraham Hinkle in uniform as a member of Company E, Third Virginia Cavalry. Photos of Big Isaac include images of their baseball team, the butcher shop of John Jackson West, construction crews and derricks of the local oil company, students of Laurel Run School, and of local residents. There is also extensive photo documentation of

the flood of May 1918, and a photocopy of a hand-drawn map showing the community of Big Isaac in the period ca. 1902-1918. There are a total of 78 images.

Nuzum Family Photographs. 1890-1975, 1 ft. 3 in., Acquired in 2018. A&M 4288.

Collection of photographs from the Nuzum family of Fairmont and related families, including the Reed, Ferguson, Ostrowske, Winslow, and Diven families. The photographs include portraits and candid shots of mostly children, but also other family members. There are also portraits and candid shots of men in military uniform from World War I and World War II. Also contains greeting cards and the funeral book of Iva Nuzum. Most of the photographs include identifications and dates, though not all of them.

Herman Godes, Pianist, Audio Files. ca. 1955-1990, 1115 digital files, Transfer in 2017. A&M 4289.

Audio files of performances by pianist Herman Godes, who taught at West Virginia University. Includes index to works that appear in these recordings.

The Coal Trade Journal. 1888-1904, 1 ft. 1/2 in., Acquired in 2017. A&M 4293.

125 issues of The Coal Trade Journal spanning the years 1888-1904. The Coal Trade Journal was established in 1869, and was published in New York under editor F. E. Saward for coal dealers. It contains coal retailer advertisements, notes on the coal market in specific regions, and the current prices of coal domestically and internationally, among other topics.

Ronald Ondish Collection. 1920-1972, 1 ft. 1 in., Gift in 2017. A&M 4296.

Papers of Ronald Ondish (1925-2014). This collection includes two photo albums, a scrapbook, and other material. There is a photo album of what appear to be family members with some identification (ca. 1920s); a photo album of Ronald Ondish with who appear to be friends and family, including many pictures featuring military service uniforms from the WWII era (ca. 1940s-1960s); and a baby book for Ronald Robert Ondish junior that includes greeting cards (such as birthday, valentines, Easter and Christmas), newspaper clippings, photographs (ca. 1947-1957). The collection also includes letters, photographs, and other documents relating to Ronald Ondish's service in the Navy during World War II aboard the USS Princeton, which was sunk in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. In addition to these items, the collection contains other portraits and photographs of members of the Ondish family (ca. 1920s-1930s), a marriage service program for William H. Dubene and Lillian Sherman (1928), and a corsage (undated).

Thurman I. Miller Papers. ca. 1930-2017, 2 ft. 5 in., over 5700 digital files, Gift in 2017. A&M 4297.

Papers of Thurman Irving "T.I." Miller (1919-2017), a native of southern West Virginia who served in the Marine Corps from 1939-1945, worked as a master electrician in the coal mining industry, and authored multiple books about both those experiences later in life. The collection includes research material, genealogical material, drafts of his books, and other material. Formats include correspondence, clippings, ephemera, photographs, research materials and interviews, handwritten and typed book drafts and newspaper pieces, maps, schematics, audiovisual files, and more. Subjects include Miller's participation in UMWA; his and others' time serving overseas in World War II, especially in Miller's unit, the K Company, Third Battalion, Fifth Marines; the Helen/Tams area of Raleigh County, WV; Coyne Electrical School which Miller attended; and more.

Alice Cartledge Cornett, Journalist, Papers. 1945-2017, 2 1/2 in., Gift in 2017. A&M 4298.

Papers of journalist Alice Cartledge Cornett, including newspaper articles authored by or regarding Cornett, photographs, and copies of her obituary. The majority of material in the collection regards Cornett's career in journalism, which began during her time living abroad in the Netherlands in the 1970s (please note that Cornett was named "Alice Drago" during this period of time). During her time in the Netherlands, she wrote articles for a number of publications and founded the first English-language newspaper, titled "The Hollander". Cornett later returned to the United States and continued her journalistic career, writing for "The Sentinel Echo" of London, Kentucky, as well as for other newspapers.

Coopers Rock Foundation Records. 1989-2013, 4 ft., Gift in 2018. A&M 4300.

This collection includes meeting minutes, correspondence, newspaper clippings, articles of incorporation, and copies of newsletters from 1957 until 2013, although most materials date to after the establishment of the Coopers Rock Foundation in 1989. Also includes historical literature and slides relating to Coopers Rock State Park and the Henry Clay Iron Furnace. In addition, there is material related to the Civilian Conservation Corp, a photograph exhibit dedicated to Camp Rhododendron, and a reunion of CCC members who worked at Coopers Rock State Park held in 1996.

John Edward O'Neal Papers Regarding World War II Service and Other Material. ca. 1940-2008, Gift in 2018. A&M 4302.

Papers of John Edward O'Neal (June 23, 1916-December 8, 2001), Virginia native and World War II veteran. He served in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, where he was taken prisoner following the Battle of the



Group portrait of John O'Neal's Field Engineering Crew in Bataan, Philippines, ca. 1942.



Horse and buggy outside Thompson Sisters Milliners shop, specific location unknown, but likely in the vicinity of Ritchie, Doddridge, or Wood County, West Virginia, ca. 1910.

Paul Daugherty, Collector, Family History and Photographs. ca. 1850-1950, 2 ft. 8 in., Gift in 2018. A&M 4304.

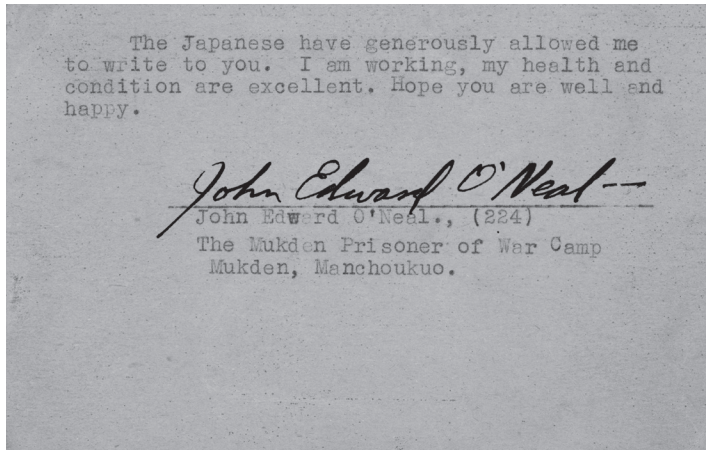
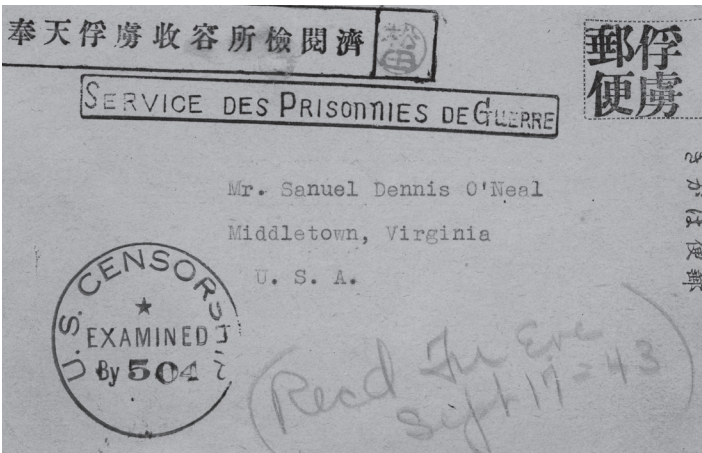
Records collected by Paul Daugherty regarding family history. Includes materials documenting the Taylor, Broadwater, Lantz, Collins, Carmichael, and Ingraham families in the region of the counties of Ritchie, Doddridge, and Wood. The Taylors arrived in Ritchie County in 1842. The Broadwater family resided in Toll Gate, W. Va. in Ritchie County. There are family histories and genealogies, scrapbooks, photographs, and other material.

Hal Scrugham, Collector, Photographs of Town of Gary and of Local Coal and Coke Plant. 1920-1928 and undated, 1/4 in., Gift in 2018. A&M 4306.

Thirteen black and white photographs collected by Hal Scrugham, a Lexington, Kentucky, native and an engineer with U.S. Steel who lived briefly in Gary, WV. Most show images of Gary, West Virginia (in McDowell County) or exterior views related to the United States Coal and Coke Company, which was a subsidiary of US Steel that operated out of Gary.

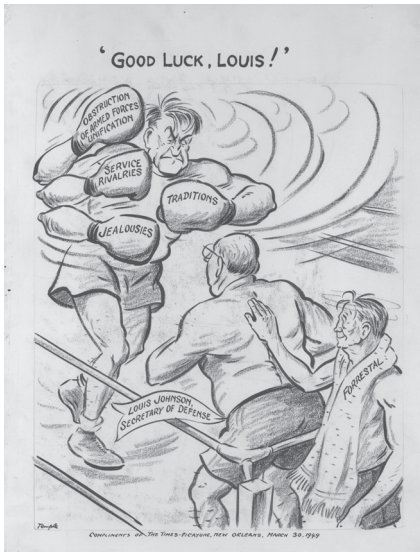
Frank Buckles Papers. 1900-2006, 1 ft. 1 1/2 in., Gift in 2018. A&M 4307.

Papers of Frank Woodruff Buckles (born Wood Buckles, February 1, 1901 - February 27, 2011), a United States Army corporal and the last surviving American military veteran of World War I. During World War II, he was captured by Japanese forces in the Philippines as a civilian prisoner. After the war, Buckles married in San Francisco and moved to Gap View Farm near Charles Town, West Virginia, where he worked until age 105. Collection includes incoming correspondence, photographs, military records, ephemera from his travels, clippings, notes, magazines, menus, and more. Subjects include Buckles' biography, his interest in genealogy and his



Postcard from John O'Neal to his father while in Japanese captivity, 1943.

Philippines in 1942. He survived the Bataan Death March, was imprisoned for three years in Japanese prison camps, and was freed by American troops during the Great Raid of 1945. The collection contains military records, medals, correspondence, photographs, and a diary he kept while a prisoner of the Japanese.

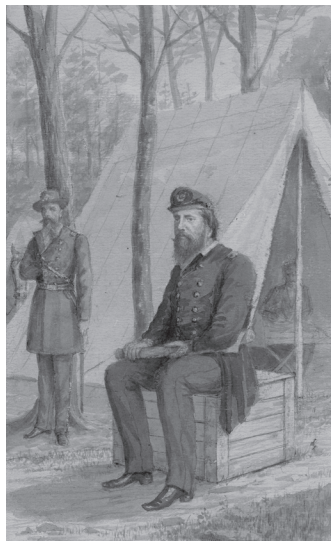


Political cartoon depicting Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson in his fight for unification and efficiency in the U.S. military after World War II with previous Secretary of Defense James Forrestal encouraging him from behind. From the Times-Picayune, New Orleans, March 30, 1949.

local historical society, Chateau Carolands/Remillard, the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Bataan Day, and more. The collection includes very little material from the World War I era, some materials from World War II, and more materials from Buckles' life after the wars.

**Joseph Hubert Diss Debar
Drawing of David Hunter
Strother. 1862-1874, 1 1/2
in., Gift in 2018. A&M
4308.**

Drawing of David Hunter Strother by Joseph Hubert Diss Debar (1820-1905) (5 1/2 in. by 8 1/2 in.). Strother is in the company of General John Pope, on whose staff he served as a topographer (while commissioned a Lt. Col. of the 3rd West Virginia Cavalry) from June to August, 1862. Also includes source document from Anderson Galleries establishing provenance from an auction in 1903.



Drawing of David Hunter Strother by Joseph Hubert Diss Debar. Strother is standing near the tree, while General John Pope is seated, ca. 1862-1874.

This collection also includes two prints of Harpers Ferry entitled "Harpers Ferry (From the Potomac side)" by William Henry Bartlett (undated) and "Harpers Ferry by Moonlight" by Granville Perkins (1874).

**Taylor County Day Book. 1851-1852, 1 item, Acquired
in 2018. A&M 4310.**

Day book or ledger, likely from a general store located at Section 101 of the route along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Valley River, Taylor County, (West) Virginia. Names of potential owners/creators of the day book are Simeon J. Snider, John Snider, and someone named Rogers. The store sold everything from coffee and cigars to buttons and nails. Entries are dated October 9, 1851 to February 25, 1852. During this time, the railroad was being constructed. It did not open service to Grafton, the county seat, until 1853.

**West Virginia University, Health Sciences Center,
Communications and Institutional Relations,
Publications, Photographs, and Clippings. ca. 1983-
2010, 7 ft. 1 in., Transfer in 2017. A&M 5236.**

Records of the Communications and Institutional Relations department of the Health Sciences Center. Includes publications, photographs, and clippings.