

PURDUE

UNIVERSITY



FINDING AID TO THE RICHARD J. COFFEE PAPERS, 1934-1953

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Processed by: Gene Ann Fausett, June 8, 2017

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Coffee, Richard, 1916-2010
Title	Richard J. Coffee papers
Collection Identifier	MSA 323
Date Span	1934-1953, predominant 1934-1939
Abstract	Letters, photographs, clippings, and material artifacts documenting the student life of Richard J. Coffee, 1934-1939. Also included are items from his professional life after graduation
Extent	1.25 cubic feet
Finding Aid Author	Gene Ann Fausett, 2017
Languages	English
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research
Acquisition Information:	Donated by Barbara Coffee, October 28, 2011, addition received February 22, 2013.
Accession Number:	20111028, 20130222.1
Preferred Citation:	MSA 323, Richard J, Coffee papers, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Purdue University per deed of gift

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Coffee, Richard, 1916-2010

Coffee, James

Topics

Purdue University. Army ROTC

Purdue University --Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity

Purdue Boilermakers (Football Team)

Purdue University—Students

Purdue University--Students--Social life and customs--20th century

Form and Genre Types

Class schedules

Correspondence

Dance cards

Magazines

Newspapers

Patches

Photographs

Report cards

Scrapbooks

Textbooks

Biography of Richard J. Coffee

Richard J. Coffee was born on May 13, 1916 in Decatur, Indiana to Claude M. and Frances (Butler) Coffee. He went by the nickname "Dick." A graduate of Purdue University in 1939, he received his degree in Civil Engineering. As a student, he was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Phi Kappa Theta fraternity and the Purdue University Army ROTC. He married his high school sweetheart, Alice Mae Seibold, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. They had one daughter, Barbara Jean. Alice died in 2001.

Starting in 1939, Coffee worked for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company. He entered the U.S. Army Air Corps at the start of WWII. He served in Italy, New Guinea, and the Philippine Islands. Subsequent assignments in the Air Force included Tonopah, Nevada.;Tokyo, Japan; during the Korean conflict; the US Air Force Academy Construction Agency as Chief of Operations; the Pentagon; Oslo, Norway for NATO; Vietnam as Red Horse commander at Bien Hoa; Fairbanks, Alaska; and Colorado Springs for ADC. His military awards include a Legion of Merit and a Bronze Star, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit, and Vietnam Service Medal with three Stars. He retired from the Air Force in 1974.

Personal interests included skiing, woodworking, model railroading, gunsmithing and stamp collecting. He was a member of St. Joseph's parish in Salida, CO. As a member of NRA and Trout Unlimited, he pursued his lifelong passion for hunting and fishing.

Sources: "Fort Wayne Newspapers", Obituaries. Dec. 7, 2010.
"The Gazette" from Dec. 7 to Dec. 11, 2010.

Collection Description

Scope

The Richard J. Coffee papers (1934-1953; 1.25 cubic feet) document student life in the 1930's. This collection contains a variety of materials pertaining to the class schedules, report cards, academic works, expenses incurred and social life of a male student in the 1930's at Purdue University. Highlights of this collection include a scrapbook of the Boilermakers Football team with each clipping pasted in place along with handwritten identifications and illustrations from 1935-1938, dance cards, fraternity paddles, membership cards, expense cards and photographs taken while a student. Of particular interest, are the items related to the tragic accident that occurred in September of 1936; a fire claimed the lives of 2 star members of the football team and injured 4 other players. Mr. Coffee donated his blood in hopes of saving the life of his fraternity brother, Tom Mc Gannon. Mc Gannon did not survive. Included in the collection is a poem written by Coffee about Tom and a thank you letter from the McGannon family.

A series of photographs taken by Coffee document Purdue University buildings, fraternities and the training exercises of the Army ROTC students. The second series contains Coffee's Army ROTC patches and pins are some examples of the artifacts contained within the collection.

Additional items include organizational membership cards and a few items that belonged to Coffee that relate to his professional career. The papers are organized into two series.

Arrangement

1. Papers, 1934-1953

(.40 cubic feet)

This series contains student identification cards, schedules, expenses, photographs, a final thesis, and diplomas received by Coffee. The photographs are of the Purdue campus and buildings as well as military training camps Coffee attended while a student. Of particular interest is the poem Coffee wrote for his fraternity brother and former roommate, Tom McGannon, who died in a fire on September 11, 1936. Materials in the series are arranged by type and in chronological order.

2. Artifacts, 1927-37

(.85 cubic feet)

This series contains military pins, patches, books, paddles, and a large, panoramic photograph.

Descriptive Rules Describing Archives: A Content Standard, Second Edition.

Processing Information

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. All materials have been housed in polyester sleeves, acid-free folders, and acid-free boxes. Some clippings containing images of people or color graphics, or front pages of newspapers, have been preserved for display purposes, with photocopies made available for research. Oversized maps, blueprints, diagrams, certificates, and other printed materials, photographs and artifacts have been separated and grouped for preservation purposes.

Additions and Revisions

One addition to the original collection was donated by Barbara Coffee on February 22, 2013. These items have been combined with the original donation received on January 28, 2011.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1. Papers, 1934-1953

(.40 cubic feet)

Box 1 *Student Identification, schedules, expenses, photographs, social activities, thesis, diplomas*

Folder 1

1. Pledge Dance program, 1934
2. Schedule Card, 9-11-34
3. Schedule Card, 9-10-35
4. Schedule Card, 9-19-36
5. Schedule Card, 9-19-36 (duplicate)
6. Schedule Card, 2-3-37
7. Schedule Card, 6-17-37
8. The Universal Students Expense Book, 1934-35
9. The Universal Students Expense Book, 1935-36
10. The Universal Students Expense Book, 1936-37
11. Purdue University Identification Card, 1937-38
12. American Society of Civil Engineers; Student Chapter, Membership Card, 1937-38
13. Expense book, 1938-39

Folder 2

1. Black and white photo of Coffee in a suit in front of his Fraternity, Phi Kappa.
2. Black and white photo of Coffee and two males sitting on steps and one female standing in front of his fraternity, Phi Kappa.
3. Black and white photo of Fraternity, with a mock still displayed and containing the title "PURDUE – SCOTCH DISTILLERY NO. 1"
4. Black and white photo of University Hall
5. Black and white photo of Heavilon Hall
6. Black and white photo of The Armory
7. Black and white photo of The Memorial Gymnasium
8. Black and white photo of The Union Hotel
9. Black and white photo of The executive Building no known as Hovde Hall
10. Black and white photo of football game, title "Purdue-Indiana '38"

Folder 3

1. Black and white photo of men receiving military training
2. Black and white photo of man walking in front of tent/barracks

3. Black and white photo of tents, back of photo says "Ft. Knox June 38 (taken with yellow glass in front of the lens)."
4. Black and white photo of boats on water titled "PONTOON BRIDGE"
5. Black and white photo of men and cars lined up along a paved road titled "ENROUTE TO THE CAVE."
6. Black and white photo of cave entrance
7. Black and white photo of airplane
8. Black and white photo of men shooting, target practice
9. Black and white photo of military training
10. Black and white photo of military training

Folder 4

1. Black and white photo of six men in military uniform seated. Titled " Aug. 9-22, 1938 ORC- Ft. Benj. Harrison." Back of the photo lists " LT. Pearson, LT. Phil Hennin, LT. Kowalski."
2. Black and white photo of military training
3. Black and white photo of military training
4. Black and white photo of military training
5. Black and white photo of tents/barracks
6. Black and white photo of men standing in front of tents/barracks

Folder 5

- 1 Black and white photo of men in military uniform standing and marching
2. Black and white photo of men in military uniform marching with a flag
3. Black and white photo of men in military uniform marching with two flags
4. Black and white photo of men in military uniform standing and marching

Folder 6

- 1 Black and white photo of man in military uniform shooting target. Back of the photo says "FT. KNOX '38"
2. Black and white photo of tent/barracks. Back of photo says " FT. KNOX JULY 31, 1938; Tent Mates; Russ Cassidy-Rushville, Ind; Ed Gross, River Forest
3. Black and white photo of Coffee in military uniform

Folder 7

1. Student fee and deposit cards 1936
2. Student fee and deposit cards 1937
3. Student fee and deposit cards 1937
4. Student fee and deposit cards 1937
5. Student fee and deposit cards 1937

6. Purdue University Second Semester Registration Instructions to Students – Part 1-a and Part 1-b
7. Permit to Register September, 1935
8. Permit to Register September 1936
9. Permit to Register September 1937
10. Permit to Register September 1938
11. Grade card, Chem 1b, 1935
12. Grade card, Math 1 Div. 1, 1935
13. Grade card, Math 2 Div. K, 1935 (handwritten note: “The first course I ever flunked in school.”)
14. Grade card, Math 2 Div. E., 1936
15. Grade card, Math 3, Div. E, 1936
16. Grade card, C.E. 21, 1937
17. Grade card, Geology 3, 1937
18. Semester grade report, June 8, 1935
19. Semester grade report, January 25, 1936
20. Semester grade report, June 6, 1936
21. Semester grade report, June 12, 1937
22. Semester grade report, Aug 14, 1937
23. Semester grade report, June 11, 1938
24. Registrar’s Office delinquency report, Nov. 14, 1935
25. Registrar’s Office delinquency report, April 2, 1936
26. Registrar’s Office delinquency report, Nov. 9, 1936
27. Registrar’s Office delinquency report, Nov. 6, 1937
28. Registrar’s Office failure report, Jan. 29, 1938
29. Registrar’s Office delinquency report, Mar. 26, 1938
30. Student’s Semester Report of Failure, 1-28-37
31. Student’s Semester Report of Failure, [Jan. 1938]

Folder 8

1. Typed poem and thank you card (from the McGannon Family) regarding funeral of star football player, Tom McGannon. 1936.
2. Handwritten “Bank-Nite” awards letter from John Francis Kent to Richard Jerome Coffee, 1938
3. Typed letter from Director of Personnel, J.E. Walters, October, 28, 1937
4. Typed letter from Director of Personnel, J.E. Walters, November 5, 1938
5. Personnel Record (background, test results used with letters above)
6. Field Artillery Reserve Officers Training Corps Certificate, February 1938
7. Department of Military Science and Tactics Certificate, June 11, 1938
8. Job opportunity letter from Ben H. Petty, Professor of Highway Engineering, February 14, 1939

9. Letter of congratulations on securing a position with the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company from Ben H. Petty, Professor of Highway Engineering, March 14, 1939
10. Phi Kappa Fraternity Alumni Chapter Membership Card, 11/19/45
11. Purdue Alumni Association membership card, 07/2011
12. Card, "TO HELL WITH OLD PURDUE," undated

Folder 9

1. Newspaper, "The Purdue Patrol" December 9, 1938
2. Newspaper, "The Purdue Patrol" Vol. 1. No. 3, October, 1943
3. Newspaper, "The Purdue Patrol" Vol. 1, No. 7, February 1944
4. Newspaper, "The Scroll" Vol. XV, No. 2, April 1953
5. Certificate, 60th Anniversary of the graduation of Richard J. Coffee, April 23, 1999.

Folder 10

1. Military Ball program, 1937
2. Military Ball program, 1938 [Autographed by Band Leader, Bob Crosby]
3. Junior Prom program, 1938
4. Leather bookmark

Loose Items

1. Thesis, "Belt Line Connection, Aluminum Plant to Big Four and Nickel Plate." by Richard J. Coffee.
2. Diploma, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with diploma fee card. January 28, 1939.
3. Diploma, copy. Written request for copy of original diploma. January 24, 2001.

Box 2 *Scrapbook*

Items

1. Scrap book, Purdue University 1935-1938.

Series 2. Artifacts, 1927-37

(.85 Cubic feet)

Box 3 Artifacts

1. Military pins, 5
2. Military patches, 5
3. Silver buttons, 4
4. Pins, 3
5. Pin, Purdue with eagle
6. Pins, brass with "made by machine shop" on the back

Box 4 Books

1. Potter, Andrey and Catherwood, James. *Elements of Steam and Gas Power Engineering*. 3rd ed. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1930.
2. Chambers, Sherman Daniel. *Mechanics of Engineering*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.
3. Matthews, John H and Soneson, Phillip E. *Analysis of Framed Structures*. 1st ed. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1935.
4. Poorman, Alfred P. *Strength of Materials*. 2nd ed. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1929.
5. Allen, C. Frank. *Railroad Curves and Earthwork*. 7th ed. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1931.
6. Breed, Charles B. and Hosmer, George L. *The Principals and Practice of Surveying; Volume 1. Elementary Surveying*. 6th ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1934.
7. Breed, Charles B. and Hosmer, George L. *The Principals and Practice of Surveying; Volume II. Higher Surveying*. 4th ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1934
8. Davis, Raymond E, et al. *Surveying Theory and Practice*. 1st ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1928.
9. Cast Iron Pipe Research Association. *Handbook of Cast Iron Pipe*. Chicago, Illinois., 1927.
10. Trautwine, Company. *The Civil Engineer's Reference-Book*. 21st ed. London: Chapman & Hall. Ltd.,1937.
11. Purdue University. Debris Yearbook.,1938.

One small wooden paddle labeled "Zeta Chapter", 1935

Oversized Items *Photograph, Paddle*

Folder 1

1. One oversized photograph titled "Ross Camp" 1935

Item 1

1. One wooden paddle titled "to Dick from Jimmy," 1937.