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Guide to the John Merle Coulter Papers 1845-1929



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.COULTER
Title	Coulter, John Merle. Papers
Date	1845-1929
Size	1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract John Merle Coulter (1851-1928), botanist and chair of the Botany Department of the University of Chicago, 1896-1926. The Papers contain the correspondence and personal papers of Coulter's parents, relating mainly to a brief missionary tour to China. The collection also includes letters and school mementos, drafts of many of Coulter's postwar lectures and articles, and miscellaneous papers relating to his activities during the last five years of his life.

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Coulter, John Merle. Papers

Biographical Note

John Merle Coulter (1851-1928), was born in China to Presbyterian missionaries Moses and Caroline Coulter. He received an AB (1870) and an AM (1873) from Hanover College, then completed a PhD at Indiana State University in 1882.

Coulter served as Professor of Natural Sciences at Hanover College from 1874 to 1879 and Professor of Biology at Wabash College from 1879 to 1891. From 1891 to 1893, he was President of Indiana State University, then of Lake Forest College, from 1893-1896. In 1896, he became Chair of the Botany Department at the University of Chicago, where he remained until his retirement in 1925. In retirement, Coulter worked with the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research in Yonkers, New York.

In addition to his academic appointments, Coulter served as Assistant Geologist and Botanist for the Hayden Survey of what is now Yellowstone National Park (1872) and, in 1875, co-founded the Botanical Bulletin, soon renamed the Botanical Gazette. A staunch evolutionist and Presbyterian, he had a particular interest in the correlation of science and religion.

Scope Note

The John M. Coulter Papers contain the correspondence and personal papers of Coulter's parents. These items relate mainly to the brief missionary tour of the Coulters at the Presbyterian Mission at Ningbo, China, which was terminated by Moses Coulter's death in 1853. The collection also includes letters and school mementos, drafts of many of Coulter's postwar lectures and articles, and miscellaneous papers relating to his activities during the last five years of his life. These activities included a trip to China and Japan in 1923, a project to write biographies for college students of important men of science, and the directorship of Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research at Yonkers, New York. The Collection is divided into two series.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Coulter, John Merle, 1851-1928
- Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories (U.S.)
- Yellowstone National Park
- Botanists
- Missionaries
- Missionaries -- China

INVENTORY

Series I: Moses and Caroline Coulter Papers

This series includes letters and personal papers evidently preserved by Mrs. Caroline E. Coulter. They relate mainly to the brief missionary tour of the Coulters at the Presbyterian Mission at Ningbo, China, which was terminated by Moses Coulter's death in 1853. The highlight of this portion of the collection is a small group of letters written to Mrs. Coulter by friends still in Ningbo following her return to the United States in 1854 with her two small sons, John and Stanley (sometimes referred to as "Diddi" in the letters). These letters describe the continuing activities of the mission in the mid- and late 1850's and early 1860's and give some picture of the attitudes of the missionaries themselves.

Box 1

Folder 1

Commonplace Book: "To Mrs. Cara E. Coulter from her Affectionate Husband Moses S. Coulter." Contains: 1) Essays by Moses Coulter, June-July, 1845. 2) Journal of a Voyage

from New York to China kept by Caroline Coulter, 1849. 3) "The Battle," a poem by Moses Coulter, 1846.

Box 1

Folder 2

Diaries of Moses Coulter, Sept. 4, 1848-Jan. 1, 1849: Lettered "A" and "B".

Box 1

Folder 3

Will of Moses S. Coulter, Sept. 30, 1851.

Box 1

Folder 4

Letters to and from Moses S. Coulter.

Box 1

Folder 5

Fragment of a letter describing Moses Coulter's last illness, c. 1853. (The letter is unsigned, but it appears to be in Caroline Coulter's hand.)

Box 1

Folder 6

Mr. and Mrs. H. V. Rankin. 15 letters, 1854-1861.

Box 1

Folder 7

Joseph K. Wright. 6 letters, 1853-1859.

Box 1

Folder 8

Mr. and Mrs. R. Q. Way. 9 letters, 1854-1870.

Box 1

Folder 9

Dr. and Mrs. D. B. McCartee. 8 letters, 1855-1874.

Box 1

Folder 10

Mrs. E. A. Goddard. 2 letters and one fragment, 1856-57.

Box 1

Folder 11

Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Hopper. 2 letters, 1859.

Box 1

Folder 12

Other missionary letters: Caroline A. Cobhold[?]. 1 letter, June 13, 1855. Unsigned. 1 letter, May 29, 1863.

Box 1

Folder 13

Jane Coulter to her daughter-in-law (Caroline) and her grandson, letters, 1853-1868.

Box 1

Folder 14

Postcards addressed to Caroline Coulter from John Coulter and members of his family. 18 cards, none dated.

Box 1

Folder 15

John Coulter's children to their grandmother, Caroline Coulter, none dated.

Box 1

Folder 16

Miscellaneous. 3 letters, 1 telegram.

Box 1

Folder 17

Letters by Caroline Coulter. 3.

Series II: Papers of John M. Coulter

This series comprises the principal portion of the collection is made up of letters and school mementos preserved by John M. Coulter's mother and his mother-in-law, Anna M. Gaylord, drafts of many of Coulter's postwar lectures and articles, and miscellaneous papers relating to his activities during the last five years of his life: a trip to China and Japan in 1923, a project to write biographies for college students of important men of science, and the directorship of Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research at Yonkers, New York.

Box 1

Folder 18

Letters addressed to John Coulter by friends of his mother and by relatives. 4 letters, 1859-76.

Box 1

Folder 19

John M. Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter. 9 letters, 1872-79. 1862-70.

Box 1

Folder 20

John M. Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter and Georgie Gaylord Coulter. 3 letters, 1879-84.

Box 1

Folder 21

John M. Coulter to Georgie Gaylord [Coulter]. 7 letters, 1872-73.

Box 1

Folder 22

John M. Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter. 11 letters, 1872-73.

Box 1

Folder 23

John Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter. 6 letters, May-June, 1903.

Box 1

Folder 24

John Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter. 9 letters, July-August, 1903.

Box 1

Folder 25

John Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter. 12 letters, Sept.-Nov., 1903.

Box 1

Folder 26

Others in family to Caroline Coulter. 8 letters, June-Oct., 1903.

Box 1

Folder 27

Georgie Coulter to her mother, Anna M. Gaylord. 18 letters, May-Oct., 1903.

Box 1

Folder 28

John M. Coulter to Caroline Coulter. 22 letters, Oct., 1905 - March, 1906.

Box 1

Folder 29

Other members of family to Caroline Coulter. 2 letters, Nov., 1905.

Box 1

Folder 30

Georgie Coulter to Anna M. Gaylord. 21 letters, 1905-06.

Box 1

Folder 31

John M. Coulter to Caroline E. Coulter. 3 letters.

Box 2

Folder 1

Compositions by John M. Coulter: "Lines dedicated to my mother on her 34th birthday, Mar. 24, 1862." "Description of Waveland Collegiate Institute." Feb., 1863.

Box 2

Folder 2

Student Notebook: English Literature.

Box 2

Folder 3

Reports of Standing: Hanover College, 1866, 1868, 1870 (5 reports)

Box 2

Folder 4

Certificate of Marriage: John M. Coulter to Georgie M. Gaylord. Jan. 1, 1874. Pasted in front of a copy of The Marriage Gift by James Petrie.

Box 2

Folder 5

Botanical Gazette, edited by John M. and M. Stanley Coulter: Mailing list for 1889 and miscellaneous papers.

Box 2

Folder 6

Notebooks (2). Notes made on European trips of 1903 and 1905. (Back of 1905-06 notebook contains cancelled draft of an article on Asa Gray.)

Box 2

Folder 7

China -Japan Trip (1923-24): Itinerary.

Box 2

Folder 8

China-Japan Trip (1923-24): Postcards, photographs, and clippings.

Box 2

Folder 9

Boyce Thompson Institute: Birthday greeting, Nov. 20, 1926, signed by members of staff.
Copy of Contributions, Jan. 1, 1925.

Box 2

Folder 10

Encyclopedia Britannica, correspondence concerning articles for. Sept., 1928.

Box 2

Folder 11

Notices.

Box 2

Folder 12

Telegrams of sympathy. Testament of Hyde Park Men's Club.

Box 2

Folder 13

Letters of sympathy.

Box 2

Folder 14

Coulter's lapsed life insurance policy. Correspondence with Mutual Life Insurance, by Merle Coulter (son), Dec., 1928-Jan., 1929.

Box 2

Folder 15

Letter to Merle Coulter, concerning his share in estate.

Box 3

Folder 1

List of addresses and papers

Box 3

Folder 2

The Botanical Opportunity

Box 3

Folder 3

Botany as a National Asset

Box 3

Folder 4

Development of Botany in the United States

Box 3

Folder 5

The Evolution of Botanical Research

Box 3

Folder 6

The Evolution of Plants

Box 3

Folder 7

The Future of Botany

Box 3

Folder 8

The New Botany

Box 3

Folder 9

The Biological Background of Religious Education

Box 3

Folder 10

The Case for Religions

Box 3

Folder 11

Christianity and Science

Box 3

Folder 12

The Cooperation of Science and Religion

Box 3

Folder 13

Evolution and Christianity (another version of folder 12)

Box 3

Folder 14

Evolution and its Explanations (reprint from Christian Century, May 22, 1922.)

Box 3

Folder 15

The History of Organic Evolution

Box 3

Folder 16

The Meaning of Evolution

Box 3

Folder 17

The Methods and Results of Science

Box 3

Folder 18

The Need for Cooperation

Box 3

Folder 19

Original Exploration of Yellowstone National Park

Box 3

Folder 20

Our National Park

Box 3

Folder 21

The Personal Faith of a Scientist

Box 3

Folder 22

The Present Status of Organic Evolution

Box 3

Folder 23

The Role of Science in Modern Civilization

Box 3

Folder 24

The Science of Religion

Box 4

Folder 1

Welcoming talk: "It is a great pleasure to the Institute Staff to welcome this group of Chemists..."

Box 4

Folder 2

Welcoming talk: "It is a great pleasure to welcome this group of pathologists..."

Box 4

Folder 3

Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research

Box 4

Folder 4

Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research (another version)

Box 4

Folder 5

Research at the Boyce Thompson Institute

Box 4

Folder 6

Work of the Boyce Thompson Institute

Box 4

Folder 7

Correspondence: Otis Caldwell to John M. Coulter.

Box 4

Folder 8

Correspondence with scientists concerning source material for biographies.

Box 4

Folder 8.5

Writings, 1896-1916

- "The Botanical Outlook," 1895
- "The Embryo Sac and Embryo of Gnetum Gnemon," 1908
- "Evolutionary Tendencies among Gymnosperms," 1909
- "Inheritance Through Spores," 1916
- "Some College Fallacies," 1900

Box 4

Folder 9

Liberty Hyde Bailey, Ms of Coulter's biography.

Box 4

Folder 10

Hugo De Vries, Ms of Coulter's biography.

Box 4

Folder 11

Rafinesque, Ms of Coulter's biography.

Box 4

Folder 12

The International Mission of Universities.

Box 4

Folder 13

The New Spirit.

Box 4

Folder 14

Book reviews for Science: General Botany by C. Stuart Gager Flora of the Panama Canal Zone by Paul C. Stanley.

Box 4

Folder 15

Report: International Congress of Plant Sciences.

Box 4

Folder 16

Report: Philadelphia Symposium.

Box 4

Folder 17

Report: American Electrotherapeutic Association, 37th Annual Meeting.

Box 4

Folder 18

Report: Winter Potatoes (about Dr. F. E. Denny)

Box 4

Folder 19

Daily Science News Bulletin, May 15, 1926 (notice of an article by Coulter in Science.)

Box 4

Folder 20

List of Books from the Library of John M. Coulter.

Box 4

Folder 21

Miscellaneous Newspaper Clippings.

Box 4

Folder 22

Miscellaneous Photographs.

Box 4

Folder 23

Part of a letter, unaddressed and unsigned (8 pages, unnumbered) describing "a short visit to Pootoo." (Probably to Caroline Coulter).

Box 4

Folder 24

Letter: C. F. Cowan to Leila Garritt, with Photograph (unidentified).

Box 4

Folder 25

Miscellaneous fragments and sheets: most in JMC's hand, but back of one drawing bears note with signature M.S.C.