

A Guide to the William Couper Papers, 1901-1964

William Couper Papers, 1901-1964
1901-1964

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

MS 0053

Language

English

Abstract

The papers consist largely of manuscripts (drafts, galleys, proofs), notes, and other research material relating to Couper's interest in the history of Lexington and Rockbridge County (Virginia), the Virginia Military Institute, and the Shenandoah Valley. Other topics include the construction of Fort Jackson, South Carolina in 1917, and General Stonewall Jackson.

Physical Characteristics

The papers are filed in 36 manuscript boxes (13 cubic feet) and also contain oversized material located in map cases.

Repository

Archives, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute

Administrative Information

Access

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

The bulk of the collection was donated by John Lee Couper in 1964.

Preferred Citation

William Couper Papers, MS 0053, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, VA.

Additional Descriptive Data

Items on Loan

In 1974, at the request of the Fort Jackson (SC) Museum, selected Couper papers relating to the construction of Fort Jackson were placed on indefinite loan to the Museum.

Related Materials at VMI

Researchers should note that, because Couper served in several different positions at VMI, many of his professional papers are located in various record groups in the VMI Archives. These include records of the Business Office, Alumni Association, and various administrative subject files (e.g. Southern Conference).

Related Manuscript Collections in other Repositories

The Virginia Historical Society (Richmond, Virginia) holds additional William Couper and Couper Family papers.

Biographical/Historical Information

William Couper spent the majority of his professional life devoted to the Virginia Military Institute and to the study of VMI, Lexington and Rockbridge County, and Virginia history. His terms as VMI's Business Executive and Historiographer encompassed thirty years, but before, during and subsequent to that period he served in many other official and unofficial capacities. He was a noted authority on local and regional history, and on the life and times of General Stonewall Jackson. At VMI, in addition to his official duties, he was responsible for the initial organization and preservation of the Institute's rich historical holdings, including its unique collection of alumni biographical and genealogical materials.

William Couper Chronology. Significant Events. 1884 Born November 16 at "Oakland" in Norfolk, Virginia. 1901 Graduated from the Norfolk Academy and entered the Third Class at the Virginia Military Institute. 1904 Graduated from VMI with distinction (Engineering course). 1906 Received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering (railroad option) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 1906 - 1917 Worked with the Pennsylvania Railroad at New York City on construction, operating and harbor work; he played a major role in the construction of the railroad tunnels and terminals for NYC. 1912 Published "History of the Engineering, Construction and Equipment of the Pennsylvania Railroad New York Tunnels and Terminals. " 1917 June Commissioned Major in the United States Army Quartermaster Corps and assigned as Construction Officer at Camp Jackson, Columbia, South Carolina. 1918 March Promoted to Lt. Col., in charge

of the building of the camp that became Fort Jackson. 1920 Completed Army service in March; prepared on request a plan of development for the future of VMI, which was adopted by the VMI Board of Visitors in June. 1920 - 1921 Assistant General Manager of the Associated General Contractors of America 1921 - 1924 Employed jointly by the Texas Company and the Southern Acid and Sulphur Company as an engineer to develop sulphur properties in Brazoria Co., Texas. 1924 Appointed Business Executive in charge of the business activities at the Veterans's Bureau Station at Perry Point, Maryland, where a supply depot, hospital for neuropsychiatric patients, rehabilitation schools and automobile reconditioning shops were operated. 1925 Appointed Business Executive at the Virginia Military Institute. 1931 - 1933 Secretary and Treasurer of the VMI Alumni Association. 1933 Published *The VMI New Market Cadets* 1934 Appointed VMI Historiographer. 1934 - 1935 President of the Association of Military Colleges and Universities in the U. S. 1934 - 1945 Secretary and Treasurer of the Southern Conference (Athletics) 1936 Published *Claudius Crozet* 1939 Published *One Hundred Years at VMI* and *The Register of Former Cadets* 1946 -1948 Vice President and President of the Southern Conference. 1952 Published *A History of the Shenandoah Valley* 1954 Retired from his positions at VMI. 1964 Died February 15 at his home in Lexington, Virginia. Buried Norfolk, Virginia.

Scope and Content Information

The William Couper Papers document a portion of the life and career of a man notable for his research and publications about the history of the Virginia Military Institute; the Lexington, Rockbridge County and Shenandoah Valley (Virginia) areas; Virginia history and genealogy; Civil War General Stonewall Jackson; and Claudius Crozet.

A significant portion of the papers consist of publication manuscripts (drafts, galleys, proofs), notes, and other material related to Couper's major historical research projects (many of which were published). These include *One Hundred Years at VMI*, a four volume comprehensive history of the Institute from it's founding in 1839 through 1939; *The VMI New Market Cadets*, containing biographical information about the VMI students and staff who fought in the Civil War battle on May 15, 1864; *Claudius Crozet*, a biography of the notable 19th century Virginia Civil Engineer; *History of the Shenandoah Valley*; and "Stonewall Jackson Day by Day," a chronological account including events, anecdotes, clippings, transcribed correspondence, notes, and maps.

Couper's passion for the history of Lexington and Rockbridge County (VA) is evident in the substantial amount of local history research material found in his papers. Included are notes on a wide range of local history topics, as well as extensive research material (notes and maps) concerning the history of many local properties and the Lexington cemetery.

The papers also include material concerning the construction of Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Couper's speeches and addresses; maps; scrapbooks; photograph albums; and miscellaneous correspondence.

Organization

The papers are organized into 12 series.

1. Books and Articles by William Couper-- Research, drafts, related materials.
2. Stonewall Jackson Research Materials.
3. Lexington and Rockbridge County (Virginia) History.
4. Genealogy
5. Gen. William Harvie Richardson Subject File.
6. VMI Class of 1904.
7. Fort Jackson, South Carolina, construction.
8. Correspondence.
9. Speeches and Addresses.
10. Maps.
11. Photograph Albums.
12. Printed Material.

Contents List

Books and Articles by William Couper. Research, drafts, related materials

One Hundred Years at VMI 1935-1939

Box 1 - 7

Scope and Content

Materials relating to the research and publication of Couper's four volume history of the Virginia Military Institute, published in 1939. Related items are located in oversized.

Galley Proofs

Box-folder 1:1-2

Page Proofs

Box-folder 1:3 - 2:1

Manuscript

Box-folder 2:1 - 4:2

Research notes related to manuscript

Box-folder 4:3 - 7:5

Research notes: Miscellaneous VMI-related.

Box-folder 28:1-8;

The VMI New Market Cadets 1930-1933

Box 8 - 9

Scope and Content

Notes, correspondence, and financial records related to the publication of Couper's book about the VMI cadets who fought at the Battle of New Market (Virginia) in May 1864. This book was published in 1933.

Notes - The VMI New Market Corps.

Box-folder 8:1

Notes - correspondence of Cadet J. Beverly Stanard

Box-folder 8:2

Reference file - Battle Accounts

Box-folder 8:3

Scope and Content

Thom, Morton, Sturm.

Reference file - Notes on opposing commanders

Box-folder 8:4

Scope and Content

Notes by Joseph Reid Anderson, Jr., Torbett and Echols, re: Gen. Breckinridge and Gen. Sigel.

Reference file - printed materials

Box-folder 8:5

Correspondence 1933-1934

Box-folder 8:6-8

VMI New Market Cadets

Box-folder 8:9

Scope and Content

Paperback copy of the final publication

Financial Records

Box-folder 8:10-11

Scope and Content

Bank books, account book, balance sheets relating to the publication of the New Market book.

Speech May 15, 1939

Box-folder 9:1

Scope and Content

New Market anniversary address delivered in Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hall. Typescript draft.

New Market pamphlet 1942

Box-folder 9:2-3

Scope and Content

Correspondence re: publication of the pamphlet; printed copies with corrections by William Couper.

Reinterment of New Market Cadets; Headstones

Box-folder 9:4

Claudius Crozet 1936

Box-folder 9:5-7

Scope and Content

Galley proofs, manuscript, notes

History of the Shenandoah Valley 1952

Box 12-14

Manuscript for publication

Box 12-13

Research material

Box-folder 14:1-6

Scope and Content

Materials related to the manuscript and publication, including notes, correspondence, and newspaper clippings.

Articles by or about William Couper

Box-folder 30:4-5; 32-5

Stonewall Jackson. Stonewall Jackson Day by Day, Research Material.

Box 10-11

Scope and Content

Unpublished research material concerning the life of Thomas J. Jackson (General Stonewall Jackson).

Stonewall Jackson- chronological notes

Box 10

Scope and Content

Detailed notes regarding Jackson's life, proceeding chronologically from birth to death

Detailed notes regarding Jackson's life, proceeding chronologically from birth to death.

Notes for period 1818-1853

Box-folder 10:1

Notes for period 1854-1860

Box-folder 10:1A

Notes for period 1861 Jan-1862 May 14

Box-folder 10:2

Notes for period 1862 May 15-Aug 26

Box-folder 10:3

Notes for period 1862 Aug 17-Nov 30

Box-folder 10:4

Notes for period 1862 Dec 1-1863 May 15

Box-folder 10:5

Stonewall Jackson- Subject files and supplementary materials

Subject index to supplement

Box-folder 11:1

Addresses and articles about Jackson

Box-folder 11:2

Abilities - Correspondence

Box-folder 11:3

Estimates - Letters

Box-folder 11:4

Maps - Poems

Box-folder 11:5

Portraits - Sundays

Box-folder 11:6

Miscellaneous notes

Box-folder 11:7

Addresses by William Couper re: Jackson

Box-folder 11:8

Correspondence (misc.) re: Jackson

Box-folder 11:9

Jackson genealogical material

Box-folder 11:10; 36:00

Map by Couper, Movements of Gen. T. J. Stonewall Jackson, 1861-1863(printed copies).

Box-folder 11:11; 36:00

Photocopies- Jackson's report of the Battle of Port Republic.

Box-folder 11:12

Clippings.

Box-folder 11:13

Lexington and Rockbridge County (Virginia) History

Scope and Content

One of Couper's primary research interests was the history of the Lexington and Rockbridge County area. This series, including notes, clippings, & other material, covers a wide range of local history topics. In addition to the files listed below, related material is located separately in oversized (map cases).

For related series, see Maps.

Subject Files, Local History topics.

Misc. local history topics, articles, clippings

Box-folder 14:7

VMI and Washington and Lee University

Box-folder 14:8

Churches

Box-folder 14:9

Troubadour Theater

Box-folder 14:10

Post Office

Box-folder 15:1

Prison Bounds

Box-folder 15:2

Mills

Box-folder 15:3

New Stonewall Jackson Hospital

Box-folder 15:4

Rockbridge Historical Society - notes

Box-folder 15:5

Rockbridge Historical Society - proceedings, 1939-1960.

Box-folder 15:6

Property Files

Scope and Content

Research material concerning local properties, including notes on plats, deeds, lots, property owners.

Large Plats

Large Fials

Box-folder 15:7

Scope and Content

Rockbridge, Augusta, Botetourt Counties

Notes-Lexington/RC Property

Box-folder 15:8

Scope and Content

Concerning lots, deeds, grants, early lots and annexations, maps.

Notes-Lexington/RC Property

Box-folder 15:9

Scope and Content

Concerning property owners, "old places", "development So. of Lexington".

Notes-Lexington R/C property, old deeds

Box-folder 15:10

Notes-Lexington R/C property; maps on deeds, grants.

Box-folder 16:1

Index of deeds in my notebooks; Notebooks #16-#21.

Box-folder 16:2

Notes re: 106 White St; misc. notes.

Box-folder 16:3

Notes re: Lexington zoning.

Box-folder 16:4

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #1 - #2.

Box-folder 16:5

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #3 - #6.

Box-folder 16:6

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #7 - #8.

Box-folder 17:1

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #9 - #10.

Box-folder 17:2

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #11 - #12.

Box-folder 17:3

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #13 - #14.

Box-folder 17:4

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #15 - #16.

Box-folder 18:1

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #17 - #18.

Box-folder 18:2

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #19 - #20.

Box-folder 18:3

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #21 - #22.

Box-folder 18:4

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #23 - #24.

Box-folder 19:1

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #25 - #26.

Box-folder 19:2

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #27 - #28.

Box-folder 19:3

Notes from Rockbridge Co. Property Books #24 - #25.

Box-folder 19:4

Lexington Cemetery (Stonewall Jackson Cemetery)

History of the Lexington Cemetery

Box-folder 20:1

Index to Cemetery Notebooks (1962); alphabetical listing of names

Box-folder 20:2

Cemetery Notebooks, #1-2

Box-folder 20:3

Cemetery Notebooks, #3-5

Box-folder 20:4

Notebook- grave locations

Box-folder 20:5

Cemetery Maps (hand drawn by Couper).

Box-folder 20:6

Local History- clippings and scrapbooks. 1890-1962

Box 31-32; 34-35

Genealogy Notes

Lexington and Rockbridge County families.

Box-folder 21:1

Virginia Families

Box-folder 21:2

William Harvie Richardson Subject File.

Scope and Content

General William Harvie Richardson had a long and close association with VMI. He served as the Adjutant General of Virginia and on the VMI Board of Visitors from 1841-1876. The transcriptions of correspondence

are of letters found in the official correspondence of VMI Superintendent Francis H. Smith. The original letters are located in the VMI Archives, Records of the Superintendent.

Biographical information, correspondence about Richardson, misc. notes.

Box-folder 21:3

Correspondence to VMI, 1863 - transcriptions

Box-folder 21:4

Correspondence to VMI, 1864 - transcriptions

Box-folder 21:5

Correspondence to VMI, 1865-1870 - transcriptions

Box-folder 21:6

Miscellaneous notes

Box-folder 21:7

Virginia Military Institute Class of 1904

Arrangement

Couper graduated from VMI in 1904, and maintained contact with his classmates throughout his life.

Correspondence regarding reunions 1909-1910; 1914; 1918-1919; 1924

Box-folder 22:1

Notes regarding the Class

Box-folder 22:2

Form letters re: reunions

Box-folder 22:3

Reunion book correspondence, 1925

Box-folder 22:4

Class book letters and reunion books. 1907-1924

Box-folder 22:5

Class reunion photograph. June 13, 1954

Box-folder 22:6

Scope and Content

The photograph includes the following individuals: Robert B. Allport, Samuel K. Funkhouser, Alfred P. Upshur, Thomas C. Gordon, William Couper, Paul R. Camp, James S. Easley, Ellis C. Caldwell.

Fort Jackson, South Carolina, construction. 1917-1923

Scope and Content

Fort Jackson was constructed in 1917 to meet Army training needs during World War I. Couper served as construction Quartermaster.

Ft. Jackson Suspension File, 1923

Box-folder 23:1

Reports. 1917-1918

Completion Report, Camp Jackson, Columbia SC. January 17, 1918

Box-folder 23:2

Scope and Content

Written by William Couper

Financial Report

Box-folder 23:3

Scope and Content

"Analyses of Costs. Original Cantonments. From start to Dec. 31, 1917." Camps Custer, Grant, Jackson, Lee, Sherman.

Consolidated Daily Report of Cars Handled. Jan-Oct 1917

Box-folder 23:4

U. S. Army Base Lighter Construction. 1918

Box-folder 23:5-6

Final Report on Lighter Construction

Ft. Jackson Printed Materials

Manual for Constructing Quartermasters

Box-folder 24:1-2; 4

Specifications for the sale of thirteen Army camps.

Box-folder 24:3

Organization and Operation of the Mobilization, Procurement, and Delivery System of the Construction Division of the Army

Box-folder 24:5

Manual for Field Auditors

Box-folder 24:6

Report of the Board of Review of Construction. 1920

Box-folder 24:7

The Work of the Construction Division of the Army. 1920

Box-folder 24:8

50th Anniversary History, Ft. Jackson, SC, 1917-1967

Box-folder 24:9

Correspondence.

Henry Peck Fry letters, Incoming. 1942-1945

Box-folder 25:1-3

Scope and Content

Fry (VMI Class of 1901) was a newspaperman and writer.

Miscellaneous correspondence. 1930-1960

Box-folder 25:4

Speeches and Addresses. 1926-1956

Arrangement

Index, notes and/or full-text of Couper's speeches.

Index to addresses

Box-folder 26:1

Scope and Content

Typescript list of speeches, compiled by Couper.

Speeches- notes and/or text

Box-folder 27:2 - 28:4

Scope and Content

Topics include: VMI history, Stonewall Jackson; Claudius Crozet; Battle of New Market; Rockbridge County maps; early Rockbridge County history; other local history topics (Lexington/Rockbridge Co. Virginia).

Maps

Scope and Content

Many of the items in this series were hand drawn by William Couper and are annotated, and/or are accompanied by related correspondence and notes. Some additional maps are filed separately in oversized (map case).

Virginia Military Institute Maps

Box-folder 29:1-2; 36.

Scope and Content

Includes notes, keys

Lexington (Virginia) Maps

Arrangement

Many of these, particularly the plat maps, were drawn by William Couper.

Lexington- lots, street maps, Campbell Farm

Box-folder 29:3

Lexington - printed

Box-folder 29:4

Lexington street map

Box 36

Scope and Content

City limits drawn in for 1778; 1847; 1850; 1877.

Lexington street map. 1912

Box 36

Scope and Content

Drawn by J. A. Champe, Jr. (1912); reprinted 1952.

Lexington street map, unmarked. 1958

Sketch from aerial map of Lexington

Box 36

Lexington in the Benjamin Borden Grant. 1955

Box 36

Scope and Content

By D. E. Brady, with notations by William Couper.

Borden's Grant. September 1927

Box 36

Scope and Content

By D. E. Brady

Lexington, 1932 Charter.

Box 36

Map showing Borden Grant Line

Box 36

Plat map. John W. Fuller, David McKinley, William Taylor.

Box 36

Plat Map. Land of John Hoffman, surveyed 9-2-1819.

Box 36

Plat Map. HH-356. 8-18-1860. Sold to Sally C. P. Miller. Col Alto. Survey by Jas. C. C. Moore (1853).

Box 36

Plat map, DB A-350. Isaac Campbell to George Brown.

Box 36

Plat map, B-460. William Moore to John Hoffman.

Box 36

Plat map, L-520. Elizabeth Hoffman and Daniel Hoffman to James McDowell.

Box 36

Plat map, NN-367. E. S. Tutwiler's lots. Recorded 1-3-1874

Box 36

Plat map. The James Campbell Farm.

Box 36

Plat map. The Campbell Farm, EE-229.

Box 36

Plat of Town Lots Laid Off and Sold by William A. Rhodes, 5th Oct. 1867.

Box 36

Plat map. DB 52-271. Survey made by James C. C. Moore in 1845. (McDowell St., Main, to Woods Creek, Jordan St. Sellers Ave.)

Box 36

Plat map. 27 Lots on Plat of 1845

Box 36

Plat map. Division of Campbell Land, East Area between South Main-Taylor-Houston Sts. By D.E. Brady.

Box 36

Plat map. W. A. Rhoads Development (Taylor St.)

Box 36

Sketch of street map of Lexington from Insurance maps.

Box 36

Plan for Defending Lexington when there was only four hours to do it in, from an attack of infantry.(3 copies- From National Archives).

Box 36

Reconnaissance Map, U. S. Geological Survey, reproduced 1923.

Box 36

Rockbridge County Maps

Map of Rockbridge County showing Highways, 1950.

Box 36

Sketch map of Rockbridge County, unmarked.

Box 36

Plat map, Richard Woods.

Box 36

Plat map, C-232. Lapsleys to Zachariah Johnson.

Box 36

Plat map, C-393. William Graham to Andrew Reid.

Box 36

Plat map, DB-5-257. Borden to Craighead to John Bowyer.

Box 36

Plat map. Sunnysidein 1858. Telford(Tedford).

Box 36

Plat map, A-7. Joseph Walker to William Graham.

Box 36

Plat map, DB 117-167. L. D. Hamric and Carolyn E. to T. B. Martin.

Box 36

Plat map. Will Book 20-280. Unidentified.

Box 36

Plat map. The Home Place. Ruff Estate. Will Book 20-280.

Box 36

Plat map. 1-103. C. W. Barger Estate. Attached EE-228.

Box 36

Plat map. DB 135-57. Surveyed for T. B. Martin. (1922).

Box 36

Plat map. C-431. Dower of Elizabeth Moore.

Box 36

Plat map. 1-104. Survey by D. E. Brady, 1953.

Box 36

Plat map. DB 130-477. White Farm.

Box 36

Plat of Area around Wilson Suphur Spring, compiled Dec. 1941 by D.E. Brady.

Box 36

Virginia/West Virginia Misc. Maps

Virginia counties, showing county lines.

Box 36

Jefferson Co., West Virginia.

Box 36

Berkeley Co., West Virginia.

Box 36

The Valley of Virginia.

Box 36

Clarke Co., Virginia.

Box 36

Botetourt County, Virginia. Survey and Drawn under the direction of John Wood, 1821. Photocopy.

Box 36

Geological Survey, Monterey Quadrangle, 1941.

Box 36

Geological Survey, Staunton, 1944.

Box 36

Photograph Albums

Personal Album 1901

Box-folder 33:1

Scope and Content

Topics include: Campbell family and home (1901); VMI and Lexington (1901); Col. and Mrs. Robert A. Marr; Willoughby Beach.

VMI Cadetship. circa 1901-1904

Box-folder 33:2

Scope and Content

Includes drawings, sports photographs

includes drawings, sports photographs.

A Book of Memories. 1902-1912

Box-folder 33:3

Scope and Content

Topics include: Richmond Hill, NY (1910); Norfolk, VA (1910); Washington, DC (1910, 1912); Willoughby Beach, VA (1910, 1911); Corps at Jamestown Exposition (1907); VMI (1910); International Aviation Meet, Belmont Park, Long Island, NY (Oct. 1910); VMI Football Squad (Nov. 1902); Family pictures; PA RR, NY Tunnel; Bear's Den, VA (1912); Trip through West (1911).

Printed Material, Misc.

Box 30

Archives, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute