

A Guide to the Charles Vaill Laughlin Papers, 1940-1983

Charles Vaill Laughlin Papers 1940-1983
1940-1983

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There are no restrictions.

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There are no restrictions.

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Biographical/Historical Information

Charles Vaill Laughlin (1907-1985) was born in Pittsfield, Illinois on May 26, 1907. He married Hope Loraine Edson in 1948. They had one adopted son. Laughlin was educated in public schools in Hopkinton, Iowa, and attended Lennox College in that same city. He earned both an L.L.B. in 1929 and an A.B. in 1930 from George Washington University. In 1940 he received an L.L.M. degree from Harvard University. He added a Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.S.D.) degree from the University of Chicago to his credentials in 1942. In 1957, he attended the Academy of International Law at the Hague, Netherlands.

Laughlin practiced in law firms in Washington, D.C. and Chicago during the years 1929-1938. He taught political science at Lennox College in 1931-1932 and again in 1938-1939. In 1940 he began teaching law at Washington and Lee University. In 1942 Laughlin joined the U.S. Army seeing active duty with the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps from 1943 to 1946. He continued his service with the JAG corps as a reservist from 1946 to 1960. Returning to the W & L Law School in 1946, Laughlin was made full professor in 1950. He taught there until his retirement in 1977 when he was named professor emeritus. Laughlin's fields of teaching specialization included evidence, jurisprudence, and labor law. Widely known as an authority in labor arbitration, he served as a federal labor arbitrator from 1973 to 1981.

He accepted several visiting professorships during his career, most notably as a Fulbright lecturer in American law at the University of Helsinki, Finland in 1963-1964. Laughlin was published in numerous law reviews, and he wrote nineteen articles for the ABA Journal. He was a major contributor to the 1982 book *Legal Education in Virginia, 1779-1979: A Biographical Approach* published by the University Press of Virginia.

A life-long Republican, Laughlin held positions in local and state party organizations throughout his career. He was twice a delegate to Republican state conventions (Iowa in 1932 and Virginia in 1952.) In 1932, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Iowa state legislature. He also served as chairman of the Lexington (Virginia) Electoral Board. He served as a U.S. Commissioner (later called U.S. Magistrate) during the years 1962-1974.

Professor Laughlin died on January 29, 1985. The faculty lounge in the W & L law school is named in his honor. In 1977, the Law School Association announced the establishment of the Charles V. Laughlin Award, which is given each year to the outstanding oral advocate in the Burks Moot Court Competition.

Scope and Content Information

The Charles V. Laughlin Papers consist of five cubic feet of papers from the years 1940-1981. They are arranged in seven series: Biographical Materials; U.S. Army Service; Washington and Lee School of Law; Research and Writing; Clerkship with Judge H. Emory Widener; U.S. Commissioner & Magistrate Records; and Arbitration Cases.

The Biographical Materials include a summary of Laughlin's war record, a biographical statement, and various membership cards.

The U.S. Army Service is arranged in four series: "201 File," diary, "log/meetings" of USAR School, and notebooks. These materials document Laughlin's activities while an active and reserve member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. The "201 File" contains Laughlin's personal copies of documents from his official Army personnel file. The contents are well enumerated in the container list. The last element of this series is the History of the JA Section of the Headquarters Central Pacific Base Command, which Laughlin wrote for

the JAG. This history discusses the mission, personnel, administrative decisions, military justice, claims and legal assistance of the JA. The diary and the other small notebooks document daily activities, meetings and courses attended.

The Washington and Lee School of Law materials deal with Laughlin's service on the curriculum committee, Dean's search committee and as a recipient of the Robert E. Lee Research Grant.

The Research and Writing materials related to two projects: Legal Education in Virginia, 1779-1979: A Biographical Approach and "Theory of a Two Party System". The Legal Education in Virginia materials include correspondence, biographical sketches, photocopied articles, and research notes pertaining to Washington and Lee Law School and its faculty. Laughlin collected information, including letters he had solicited from former students, and drafted biographical sketches of deceased W & L law professors. Twenty-six of these sketches were included by editor W. Hamilton Bryson when this work was published in 1982 by the University Press of Virginia. Among the research materials gathered here is a copy of a draft of "Chapter XXIV School of Law" from Ollinger Crenshaw's General Lee's College The Rise and Growth of Washington and Lee University, 1969.

The never published "Theory of a Two Party System" was written between 1961 and 1963. The work deals with political party dynamics in modern democratic society, particularly in the United States and England. An abstract of this work appears both in the "prospectus" and "preface."

The record of proceedings documenting Laughlin's time as a United States Commissioner (1962-1971) and Magistrate (1972-1974) consists of forms summarizing the facts of each case and giving Laughlin's judgement. These are arranged chronologically. There is also one case file associated with Laughlin's service as commissioner.

The series concerning Laughlin's Clerkship with Judge H. Emory Widener (1974- 1979) of the U.S. 4th Circuit Court begins with one folder of materials concerning the uniform commercial code. The remainder of the materials consists of research, writing and correspondence relating to each case that Laughlin work on. These are arranged by the case docket numbers. This was, apparently, a "clerkship by mail", as there is no evidence that Laughlin--who was on the faculty when Widener was a student at W & L law school--was every in residence in Judge Widener's chambers. This index lists 55 arbitrated cases, only 26 of which are represented in these papers. The index provides a notification number, date of notification, source of notification, source number, reason for continuance, grievant, employer, union, issue, hearing number, date of hearing, place of hearing, date of deposition, type, remarks and citations. An annotated explanation and comments sheet accompanies the index of cases.

The Labor Arbitration materials consist primarily of records of Laughlin's work as an arbitrator for the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. These records are arranged by case number. Each file contains a worksheet; correspondence; depositions and transcripts; exhibit;, briefs; and union agreements. An index to the docket of cases arbitrated precedes all of the case files.

These case files are followed by five cases in which Laughlin acted as a consultant or as an arbitrator, but not, apparently, under the auspices of the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. Finally, there are papers concerning Laughlin's labor relations consulting work with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Willemstad, Curacao, Netherlands Antilles.

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