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John Marion Lofton Papers

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John Marion Lofton, Jr., Papers

Author: Lofton, John

Date Range: 1919-1990

Extent: 7.5 linear ft.

Location: Annex (Library Use Only)

Restrictions: Materials stored offsite; advanced notification required.

Background: South Carolina journalist, author, educator, and civil libertarian

CHRONOLOGY

- 1919 Apr 11** Born McClellanville, South Carolina, son of John Marion Lofton, Sr., and Vivian Lucas Lofton
- 1925-1937** Attended McClellanville Public Schools (grades 1-12)
- 1940** Graduated College of Charleston, B.S. in English
- 1942** Graduated Duke University, LL.B, and admitted to South Carolina Bar
- 1942-1945** U.S. Army military service
- 1945-1947** Employed by several small South Carolina newspapers
- 1948 Dec** Associate editor, Arkansas Gazette, Little Rock, Arkansas
- 1952 Feb** Editorial writer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 1954 Dec 27** Married Anne O'Neil Watson
- 1956** Graduated University of Pittsburgh, M.A. in History
- 1960 June** Lofton and Post-Gazette awarded "American Bar Association Gavel" award
- 1961 Jan** Published Pittsburgh's First Unitarian Church...1820-1960
- 1962 Dec** Associate Editor, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- 1964 July** Published Insurrection in South Carolina
- 1966 Nov** Published Justice and the Press
- 1968** Anne Watson Lofton died
- 1969 Aug 23** Married Priscilla Alvarado
- 1971** Associate Professor of Speech, University of Pittsburgh
- 1971 May** Editorial writer, St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- 1975 Feb** Divorced Priscilla Alvarado
- 1980** Published The Press as Guardian of the First Amendment

- 1981 Apr** Awarded distinguished service award from the Society of Professional Journalists
- 1983 Apr** Married Dr. Joanne B. Lyon
- 1985** Retired from St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- 1988 Mar** Awarded second distinguished service award from the Society of Professional Journalists
- 1990 Mar** Died at Graniteville, Kansas
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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers of John Marion Lofton, Jr. (1919-1990), span the years 1909 through 1990 although the bulk of the collection falls between 1940 and 1980. Included in the papers are correspondence, writings, press releases, bulletins, newsclippings, and newsletters. Units of material in the collection reveal Lofton's involvement in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Unitarian Church, political events during the tumultuous years of racial integration and Vietnam War protests, and such related issues as the environment, disarmament, and world peace.

The principal focus of the collection is Lofton's professional career as a journalist and writer, working for two newspapers, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, both of which espoused left-wing, liberal viewpoints. Lofton divided his time among family, career, and personal interests in the ACLU, both national and local, and the Unitarian Church. He transcended his Southern roots to attain a national reputation as a writer and defender of the press as guardian of civil liberties.

The collection reflects the progress of Lofton's thought and interests from his formal and practical education as a boy growing up in lowcountry South Carolina to his retirement in 1985 as a senior editorial writer for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Revealed in his papers and letters is a serious concern for a broad spectrum of issues--legal, political, social, scientific--as well as the stylistic virtuosity of his writing, which ranged from free-lance articles and biographical sketches to editorials and essays.

Lofton's intellectual pursuits were lifelong. He graduated from the College of Charleston with a B.S. degree in English in 1940 and from Duke University with an LL.B. degree in 1942. In 1956 he received an M.A. degree in history from the University of Pittsburgh and did further graduate study at Stanford University. Other files attest to Lofton's adjunct role as a professor at such institutions as the University of Pittsburgh, Washington University, and Webster College.

It was Lofton's career as a journalist that generated much of the interesting and significant material in the collection. Following a wartime enlisted stint in the U.S. Army, Lofton began to canvass various newspapers for employment as a writer. His early postwar employment correspondence files contain letters from such newspapermen as Jonathan Daniels (Raleigh News and Observer), Thomas L. Robinson (Charlotte News), Herbert Elliston (Washington

Post), Frank Bear (PM Daily), and Harry S. Ashmore (Arkansas Gazette). Lofton's first professional newspaper experience began on William Townes' Spartanburg Herald in 1946, and in 1948 he was hired by Harry Ashmore as an editorial writer for the Arkansas Gazette. After four years in Little Rock, Lofton became an editorial writer with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and in 1971 he joined the editorial staff of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Correspondence and topical files form the major series in the collection. The correspondence series consists chiefly of personal correspondence and family correspondence revealing the love and devotion among members of a southern family despite their substantive differences with regard to social issues of integration and religion. Prominent correspondents represented by correspondence include James F. Byrnes, James A. Dombrowski, J. William Fulbright, Brooks Hays, Hubert H. Humphrey, Burnet R. Maybank, L. Mendel Rivers, Hugh Scott, and Hugo S. Sims, Jr.

The collection also documents the publication of Lofton's major books, two of which mirrored his primary concern for journalistic freedom and the relationship between the press and the bar: *Justice and the Press* (1966) and *The Press as Guardian of the First Amendment* (1980). His 1964 book, *Insurrection in South Carolina*, resulted from a long-held interest in the history of the 1822 Charleston slave rebellion led by Denmark Vesey. Among Lofton's other writings are a church history, *Pittsburgh's First Unitarian Church...1820-1960*, and numerous editorials for the *Arkansas Gazette*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Lofton's early writings illustrate a concern with conservation of the environment and preservation of endangered species.

Two major subjects represented in the topical files are the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), with which Lofton was affiliated as a member of the National Advisory Board and local chapters in Pittsburgh and East Missouri, and the Unitarian Church. Other files of interest include: College of Charleston, Integration Issue; Vietnam Moratorium; and Alabama tour with Gov. George Wallace.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

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| Box 1 | Biographical
Including newspaper clippings documenting Lofton's winning of journalism awards, biographical sketches submitted for publication, and résumés submitted to prospective employers |
| Box 1 | Biographical
Including vitae, obituary notices, newspaper clippings, and other biographical materials documenting the life of Hallie Covington. Also containing genealogical information on the Covington and allied families. |
| Boxes 1-2 | Correspondence, 1909-1990 and undated
Consisting chiefly of personal correspondence and family |

correspondence pointing up substantive differences between members of a southern family with regard to social issues of integration and religion. Also including correspondence relating to Lofton's military service and applications for employment. Prominent correspondents represented include James F. Byrnes, James A. Dombrowski, J. William Fulbright, Brooks Hays, Hubert H. Humphrey, Burnet R. Maybank, L. Mendel Rivers, Hugh Scott, and Hugo S. Sims, Jr.

Boxes 2-3 **Education, 1925-1961**

School records, grade reports, notes, and student papers relating to Lofton's studies as a primary/secondary student at McClellanville, S.C., undergraduate at the College of Charleston, and graduate student at Duke University, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, University of Pittsburgh, and Stanford University.

Box 3 **Teaching, 1970-1982**

Course bibliographies/schedules, student papers, school correspondence, and other materials relating to Lofton's teaching career at University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.; and Webster College, St. Louis, Mo.

Boxes 3-6 **Topical Files**

Newspaper clippings, press releases, committee reports, correspondence, and miscellaneous materials documenting Lofton's involvement in legal, political, social, and religious causes. Two major topics represented are the American Civil Liberties Union, with which Lofton was affiliated as a member of the National Advisory Board and local chapters in Pittsburgh and East Missouri, and the Unitarian Church. Other files of interest include: College of Charleston, Integration Issue; Vietnam Moratorium; and Alabama tour with Gov. George Wallace. Included among materials relating to the Alabama tour are editorials by Lofton and letters received by Lofton in response to his articles.

Box 6 **Writings**

Including both published and unpublished writings. Lofton was the author of four books, Pittsburgh's First Unitarian Church...1820-1960, Insurrection in South Carolina, Justice and the Press, and The Press as Guardian of the First Amendment, as well as numerous editorials for the Arkansas Gazette, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Early writings illustrate Lofton's concern with conservation of the environment and the preservation of endangered species. Files of Lofton's free-lance articles and editorials are augmented by reviews of his books and a manuscript copy of The Press as Guardian of the First Amendment.

CONTAINER LIST

- Box 1 Biographical Information Folders 1-150
- Correspondence
- 7 April 1909-11 July 1967
- Box 2 1 August 1967-29 March 1990 Folders 151-220
and undated
- Education
- Primary/Secondary, 1925-1936
B.S., College of Charleston, 1940
- Box 3 LL.B., Duke University, 1942 Folders 221-281
University of North Carolina, 1948
M.A., University of Pittsburgh, 1956
Stanford University, 1960-1961
- Teaching
- University of Pittsburgh, 1970-1971
Washington University, 1972
Webster College, 1982
- Topical Files
- Alabama Tour with Gov. George Wallace
Correspondence, 30 April-23 August
1965 and undated
Newspaper Clippings, 8 May-16 July
1965
Response to Lofton articles, 8-23
June 1965
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Eastern Missouri, 22 March 1972-
29 August 1984 and undated
National Affiliation

Activity Reports,
December 1970-June 1978

Box 4	Biennial Conferences, 1968-1983 Board of Directors, 1973-1984 Brochures, 1945-1980 Constitution, 1969-1974 Correspondence, 1951-1980 and undated National Advisory Board, 1969-1981 National Convocation on Free Speech News Releases, 1952-1980 Newspapers clippings, 1949-1978 Nominating Committee, 1971-1983 and undated Pittsburgh Executive Committee, 1955-1970 and undated Minutes, 1963-1972 Miscellaneous Newsletter Pennsylvania Affiliates, 1959-1975 Pennsylvania State Board, 1957-1971 College of Charleston, Integration Issue "Committee of 100" Council for a Livable World Cuban Confrontation Roundtable Environment: Pittsburgh Focus on Greater Pittsburgh Forum for Contemporary History National Research Council, Twin Registry Project Peace Pilgrimage Committee Peace Race Committee Pittsburgh Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy	Folders 282-348
Box 5	Pittsburgh Peace Information Center Planned Communities, Inc. Southern Conference for Human Welfare Southern Regional Council, Association of Scientists for Atomic Education Unitarian Church Pittsburg: First Unitarian Church Annual Meetings Board of Trustees	Folders 49-398

Agenda & Memoranda/minutes
Book
By-laws
Church Council
Church School
Correspondence
Finance Committee
History
Interim Canvass
Long-range Planning Committee
Memorial Trust
Outreach, Elaine Rubinoff
Personnel Committee
Presidency
Public Affairs Committee
Religious Education Committee
75th Anniversary Committee
Sunday Program Committee
Unitarian Universalist Association

Box 6

St. Louis

Folders 399-461

Board of Trustees
By-laws and Constitution
Clark Lecture Committee
Forum Committee
General/Miscellaneous
Joint Community Board
Newsletter
Social Responsibility Committee
Vietnam Moratorium, 15 November 1969
World Disarmament

Writings

Arkansas Gazette Editorials, 1949-1952
Free Lance Articles, 1938-1987
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Editorials, 1952-1970
Special Features, 1954-1970
Press As Guardian Manuscript
Reviews
Insurrection In South Carolina
Justice and the Press
Press As Guardian
St. Louis Post-Dispatch Editorials, 1971-1983
Topical
Apportionment Mandate
Civil Defense

Family Court
Nixon Impeachment

Administrative Notes

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