

Finding Aid for the Ted Carlson Letters and Documents, 1944-1947

MS-3498

Collection Processed by:
Chris Krause, 17 March 2010

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OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION:

Origination/Creator: Carlson, Ted
Title of Collection: Ted Carlson Letters and Documents
Date of Collection: 1944-1947
Physical Description: 1.0 linear foot
Identification: MS-3498
Repository: **University of Tennessee Special Collections Library,
Knoxville, TN**

Abstract: 70 records constituted as the personal correspondence and professional paper trail of Manhattan Project engineer Ted Carlson. Carlson's correspondence with family, military personnel and colleagues are effective at painting a vivid picture of the man's life and achievements, as well as the seminal period in which he lived. The bulk of the collection consists of personal correspondence between Ted Carlson and his parents, focusing on routine reviews of his weekly life, his aspirations, research, achievements and service record.

RIGHT AND RESTRICTIONS:

Access Restrictions: **Collection is open for research.**
Copyright: **The copyright interests in this collection remain with the creator. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library.**
Acquisition Method: Private manuscripts dealer, January 4, 2006

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORY NOTE:

Ted Carlson was born in Connecticut into a family of Swedish immigrants. He attended Wesleyan College in 1944 and graduated with an honors undergraduate chemistry degree, consequently enlisting as a graduate student at Iowa State College. While still enrolled in

classes he was drafted and employed as an engineer involved in the Manhattan Project. The nature of his work is never revealed specifically in the letters, but he was stationed at the Chrysler Corporation in Detroit.

Following the deployment of the atomic bombs Carlson returned to active duty and was stationed at various military bases (see Series II, Subseries A). After the war he worked at Monsanto Chemical Company in Dayton, Ohio.

Some of the dispatches in 1946 seem to suggest that Carlson returned to school yet again to study medicine at Cornell, although this cannot be justified conclusively. His mother passed away in 1947.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

The Ted Carlson Letters and Documents collection includes papers and manuscripts detailing the life and times of the creator during the mid 1940s during World War II.

Most records comprising the collection are the regular correspondences of Ted Carlson from the time he studied for his undergraduate degree, his summons to fight for his country, time in the army and post-war employment and research. The collection is constituted as two series, with two respective subseries of records. The record structure has been arranged chronologically where possible.

Series I concerns Carlson's correspondence. Subseries A concerns outgoing correspondence, while Subseries B concerns incoming dispatches. The vast majority of the letters written by Carlson are addressed to his "mother and father" (also sporadically referred to as "folks") and detail his daily routine, major life developments, experiences in the service and later on in the record chronology tend to include little commentaries on politics, philosophy and the meaning of life. A few letters are addressed to military and academic personnel, and these are of a mostly professional nature. Clearly, home life preoccupied the mind of Carlson as he was out in the world developing his professional credentials.

While we have many incoming dispatches from a variety of figures including "Sam," "Bob," "Rog" and "Gabriel," Carlson's responses to these letters are absent. Accordingly, a skewed picture is presented: a great deal of unanswered correspondence from friends and a great many outgoing letters addressed to family.

Series II concerns the paper trail left behind by Carlson as he served in the army (Subseries A) and attended both undergrad and graduate institutions of higher education, eventually working at Monsanto Chemical Company (Subseries B). These documents help to buttress the comprehension of Series I records.

Records deemed to be especially useful for research purposes have had emphasis added in the container list, such as the invaluable March 11, 1946 item.

CONTAINER LIST:

Key: TC = Ted Carlson

M/F = "Mother and Father"

ASF = Army Service Forces

SC = Service Command

F = "Folks"

Series I: Correspondence

Subseries A. Outgoing Correspondence

Box 1

Folder 1 (1944):

30 January. TC to M/F. Discusses his intellectual inspirations. 2 pages. Manuscript.

2 April. TC to F. TC has the measles. 2 pages. Manuscript.

16 April. TC to M/F. 2 pages. Manuscript.

25 June. TC to M/F. Concerning graduation of Iowa State College. 2 pages. Manuscript.

26 July. TC to M/F. New York trip; reflections on joining the army. 2 pages. Manuscript.

29 July. TC to F. 2 pages. Manuscript.

3 August. TC to F. On settling into army life. 2 pages. Manuscript.

8 August. TC to F. Army life, notice of deploying to Detroit, Michigan. 2 pages. Manuscript.

11 August. TC to M/F. Update of address. 1 page. Manuscript.

25 August. TC to F. Mentions receiving gifts for birthday. 2 pages. Manuscript.

10 October. TC to M/F. Political opinions. 2 pages. Manuscript.

8 November. TC to M/F. **Details plans for the future.** 2 pages. Manuscript.

Folder 2 (1945):

January 20. TC to M/F. Some comments on his mother's health. 2 pages. Manuscript.

February 13. TC to M/F. 2 pages. Paper and manuscript.

April 17. TC to M/F. Commentary on abilities as a dancer. 2 pages. Manuscript.

May 8. TC to M/F. Victory in Europe day. Mentions "Sam's Birthday." 2 pages. Manuscript.

July 9. TC to M/F. TC mentions he has no credits toward discharge. 2 pages. Manuscript.

August 7. TC to M/F. TC dictates his philosophy on science, the use of nuclear power and comes out to his family as being involved in a dependency of the Manhattan Project at the Chrysler Corporation in Detroit, Michigan. 2 pages. Paper.

August 14. TC to M/F. Reflections on his nuclear work and the end of the war. 2 pages. Paper and manuscript.

August 31. TC to 1LT William Z. Harmen, Chief Enlisted Military Personnel Section, Manhattan Engineer District. TC requests information about transferring to medical college in the fall of 1946. 1 page. Manuscript.

September 21. TC to M/F. Reflections on being called to active duty. 1 page. Manuscript.

October 21. TC to M/F. TC updates M/F of his new address on base. 1 page. Manuscript.

November 14. TC to M/F. 2 pages. Manuscript.

November 25. TC to M/F. Comments on a new living arrangement in Dayton, Ohio. 2 pages. Manuscript.

Folder 3 (1946):

March 5. TC to M/F. Discusses his wish to discharge from the army and explains his justifications later posited in March 11. 2 pages. Manuscript.

March 11. TC to Area Engineer, U.S. Engineer Office, Manhattan District. **Request for discharge, summary of service, notification of job offer, summary of professional achievements, history of residence. Marginalia present: "Discharged 4-7-46."** 2 pages. Paper.

April 16. TC to M/F. Concerning what school he will be studying at after discharge from the army. 1 page. Paper.

May 7. TC to M/F. Mentions he works in a hospital. Mentions Swedish ancestry and family. 1 page. Paper.

June 18. TC to M/F. Using the GI Bill to fund research, informing of M/F of his intent to move to New York. 1 page. Paper.

July 23. TC to M/F. TC documents his attempts at supporting the McMahon Bill on Atomic Energy. 2 pages. Paper.

August 20. TC to F. TC is returning to Connecticut and discussing moving his belongings home. 1 page. Paper.

October 16. TC to M/F. 1 page. Paper.

December 11. TC to M/F. Laundry woes. 1 page. Paper.

Folder 4 (1947):

(empty)

Subseries B. Incoming Correspondence

Box 2

Folder 1 (1944):

January 18. Henry Gilman, chemistry department at Iowa State College to TC. Concerning TC's professional development and research. 3 pages. Paper.

February 4. "Sam" to TC. 2 pages. Manuscript.

February 17. G. Albert Hill to TC. Regarding deferments. Note: Mentions "Professor Gilman" in an implied advisory role over TC. See: January 18. 2 pages. Paper.

February 24. Fred B. Millet to TC. Congratulations on honors and graduation. 1 page. Paper.

March 1. Wesleyan University, Office of the President, to TC. Congratulations on honors and election to Phi Beta Kappa. 1 page. Paper.

April 2. M/F to TC. Mentions TC being accepted to college. M/F also mentions taking out a "hospitalization plan." 3 pages. Manuscript.

July 4. "Sam," Cornell University Medical College, to TC. Reminiscences and well-wishing. 2 pages. Paper.

October 29. M/F to TC. Mentions receiving letters "every Thursday." Last page has a telegraph/telegram stamp. 4 pages. Manuscript.

November 5. "Rog" to TC. Possibly a fellow alumnus of Iowa State College, as he mentions "I.S.C." and how he will see TC at the end of the war in Iowa. 2 pages. Manuscript.

November 18. "Bob" to TC. Catching up on life developments. 2 pages. Manuscript.

November 24. "Sam" to TC. 1 page. Manuscript.

December 27. M/F to TC. 2 pages. Manuscript.

Folder 2 (1945):

February 18. From "AE" (possibly "EE") to TC. Concerning life in the Navy. 2 pages. Manuscript.

February 26. From "Sam" to TC. 2 pages. Manuscript.

March 11. "Sam" to TC. 1 page. Manuscript.

April 5. M/F to TC. Implies that Jean (TC's later wife) was introduced to him by or through M/F. 2 pages. Manuscript.

April 8. "Bob" to TC. Discussing professional developments, graduate work and research. Includes scribbled chemistry diagrams. 2 pages. Manuscript.

April 26. "Chet" to TC. Discussing TC's research, study program and catching up on life developments. 2 pages. Manuscript.

May 2. M/F to TC. 2 pages. Manuscript.

May 6. "Gabriel" (?) and "Dot" to TC. Casual discussion. Lamentation by "Dot" that FDR was unable to see the "finish" before he died. Written in two hands. 2 pages. Manuscript.

Folder 3 (1946):

8 May. Charles A. Tidd, Captain, Corps of Engineers to TC. Regarding employment at the Monsanto Chemical Company. 1 page. Paper.

Folder 4 (1947):

8 May. "Father" to TC. Mentions "mother's grave" – possibly referring to TC's mother. 2 pages. Manuscript.

Series II: Miscellaneous Documents

Subseries A. Military Service

Box 3

Folder 1:

March 16, 1944. Selective Service System summons. 5 pages. Paper.

July 18, 1944. Selective Service System to TC. Order To Report For Induction. 1 page. Paper.

August 28, 1944. ASF, Seventh SC to TC. Transfer orders of TC to work on the Manhattan Project. 1 page. Paper.

April 24, 1945. ASF, Headquarters First SC to TC. Request for update of employment information. 1 page. Paper.

July 6, 1945. ASF, Headquarters First SC to TC. Notice of Adjusted Service Rating. 2 pages. Paper.

November 5, 1945. ASF Training Center, Seventh SC to TC. Notice of transfer. 1 page. Paper.

c. December 10, 1945. "Class 'A' Pass" (for leave from the Manhattan District) for 10 December 1945. 2 pages. Paper.

March 9, 1946. Commissary Card. Mentions TC having a dependant wife. 1 page. Paper.

March 26, 1946. ASF, United States Engineer Office to TC. Notice of promotion to Technician Fourth Grade. 1 page. Paper.

April 6, 1946. ASF, Sixth SC to TC. Concerning discharge. 1 page. Paper.

Subseries B. Professional Documents

Folder 2:

c. 1944. Iowa State College ID Card. 1 page. Paper.

c. Spring 1944. Iowa State College Timecard, course load, declaration of major. 1 page. Paper.

c. May 1945. Employees Inter-Plant Pass. From the Engineering department of plant "L.R." to all departments and plants from the May 1 to May 30. Signed by Alan von (unintelligible) and Eric. J. Carlson. 1 page. Paper.

June 24, 1946. The Dayton Scientist. *Bulletin of the Dayton Association of Scientists*. Edited by TC. 3 pages. Paper.