

MSS. Collection #15

**Alexander W. McAlister Collection of O. Henryana, ca. 1911-ca. 1945 [bulk 1930-1945].
1 box (15 folders), 54 items.**

INTRODUCTION

This collection of items relating to William Sidney Porter (O. Henry) was compiled by his childhood contemporary and long-time admirer, Alexander Worth McAlister. It consists primarily of magazine and newspaper articles, many of which were written by McAlister, as well as other printed materials and an engraving.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged into five series by material type. The series are: **Printed Materials**, 1911-ca. 1945; **Literary Productions**; **Newspaper Clippings**, ca. 1914-1942; **Photographs**; and **Magazines**.

Provenance: This collection was donated in 1982 by Dr. Jean McAlister, daughter of A. W. McAlister, and assigned accession number 1982.1028.27.

Processing: This collection was processed by Karen C. Carroll, and the finding aid was completed in October 1983.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

For a biographical sketch of O. Henry, see the finding aid for the William Sidney Porter Papers at <http://archives.greensborohistory.org/manuscripts/porter-ws>.

Alexander Worth McAlister (1862-1946) moved to Guilford County from Randolph County in the 1890s. He founded Pilot Life Insurance Company, which grew out of a family insurance business. Involved in the original development of Irving Park in Greensboro, he built his home there around 1919.

McAlister “brought golf to Greensboro” and helped establish the town's first course on Summit Avenue. He founded the Greensboro Board of Public Welfare, and was a member of the N.C. Board of Public Welfare from 1916 until 1944. He was active in the First Presbyterian Church and instrumental in founding the Community Church of Greensboro. A.W. McAlister and his wife Sara Little married in 1894 and had five children.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists chiefly of magazine and newspaper articles, most of which are duplicates of items in other collections about William Sidney Porter. The major strengths of the collection are the research and items written by A. W. McAlister. The calendar and engraving, because of their condition and exhibit potential, are also worth mentioning. The Bob Davis

reminiscences are an interesting research source. The weakness of this collection is that it contains no original William Sidney Porter items.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Printed Materials. 12 items. 1911-ca. 1945. Arranged by type.

These items are basically duplicates of ones in other collections dealing with William Sidney Porter. Non-repetitive items include an O. Henry calendar (1923) and an "O. Henry – Apothecary" flyer, with poems, shaped like a mortar and pestle. Other items include four postcards and six booklets.

2. Literary Productions. 15 items.

These articles about William Sidney Porter and/or his family members were written by A. W. McAlister. Several were published in the *Greensboro Daily News* (see 3:8). Also included are four carbon copies of "O. Henry in Capsules," a draft for a book contemplated by McAlister.

3. Newspaper Clippings. 15 items. ca. 1914-1942. Arranged by subject.

These clippings are about William Sidney Porter and/or his family, and were written by various people. Also included is information on Edgeworth Female Seminary and a reminiscence about William Sidney Porter by Robert Davis, editor of *Munsey's Magazine*.

4. Photographs. 1 item.

This engraving by Williams and Brothers, New York, is of a Van der Weyde portrait. William Sidney Porter's signature is also etched.

5. Magazines. 11 items. Arranged by type.

This series includes three magazines and eight articles torn from magazines. The articles are about William Sidney Porter and were written by Sara Coleman Porter, Shirley Porter, and others. The magazines are: *Southern Woman's Magazine* (April 1916, "O. Henry -- A bit of retrospect and appreciation," by C. Alphonso Smith); *The Bookman* (July 1913, "Little Pictures of O. Henry," by Arthur W. Page); and *The Mentor* (February 1923, "Special O. Henry Number").

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Printed Materials	-- Booklets
	2	“	-- Calendar (1923)
	3	“	-- Postcards
2	1	Literary Productions	
3	1	Newspaper Clippings	-- W.S.P., Texas years
	2	“	-- Lina Porter
	3	“	-- Mary Jane Virginia Swaim Porter
	4	“	-- Other Porter family members
	5	Newspaper Clippings	-- Reminiscences
	6	“	-- W.S.P. Stories
	7	“	-- W.S.P. celebration and memorial
	8	“	-- by A.W. McAlister
4	1	Photographs	-- Engraving
5	1	Magazines	
	2	“	-- Miscellaneous articles