

MSS. Collection #133

**Alexander Stoesen Collection, 1790-1995 [bulk 1942-1946; 1975-1976].
2½ boxes (53 folders), 453 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

This collection is comprised largely of materials collected by Dr. Alexander (Alex) R. Stoesen during his research on Basic Training Center #10 (B.T.C.#10) and the Overseas Replacement Depot (O.R.D.). Located within Greensboro city limits, this military base was a training and processing center for the Army Air Forces during World War II, and a catalyst for Greensboro's transformation from a small town to a modern city. The collection also includes several drafts of Stoesen's unpublished paper, "The Elixir of War: Greensboro as an 'Army Town,' 1942-1946." In addition, it contains publications relating to the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976. Researchers looking for information about Greensboro during the World War II or the American Bicentennial will find this collection useful.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into two groups by subject, with series and folders arranged by document type and date. The groups are: **Bicentennial**, 1971-1983 [bulk 1976]; and **O.R.D.**, 1790-1995.

Provenance: Some of the O.R.D. materials were donated by Dr. Stoesen in the 1990s, with an addition by him in 2001 that was assigned accession number 2001.38.1. Dr. Stoesen donated the Bicentennial materials in December 2011, and they were assigned accession number 2011.40.1.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was completed by intern Travis Souther in July 2014. The biographical note was updated with information from Dr. Stoesen's obituary after his death in November 2017.

BIOGRAPHICAL / HISTORICAL NOTE

Born in Austin, Texas, Alexander R. Stoesen (1932-2017) grew up in Pensacola, Florida, and received a Bachelor of Arts in History from the Citadel in 1954. After serving as a division ammunition officer at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, he earned a Master of Arts from the University of Rochester in 1958 and his Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1965. He was employed as a professor of history at Guilford College from 1966 until his retirement in 1999. During the 1970s, he evaluated many academic works as a regular book reviewer for the *Greensboro Daily News*. He also authored several books, including *Guilford College: On the Strength of 150 Years* (1987) and *Guilford County: A Brief History* (1994). His extensive research on the O.R.D. was heavily used in "Army Town: Greensboro, 1943-1946," an

exhibit that detailed Greensboro's contributions to the Allied war effort during World War II. In later years, Dr. Stoesen wrote numerous articles for the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*.

An advocate for highway historical markers, Dr. Stoesen served on North Carolina's Marker Advisory Committee for 15 years and successfully lobbied for the installation of at least seven markers around the state, including those for Charles M. Stedman, Major George Preddy Jr., Mary Nicholson, the High Point Market, the Woolworth Sit-Ins, New Garden Friends Meeting, and O.R.D. Dr. Stoesen received numerous awards for his contributions to North Carolina history, with local history being a major focus for his work. These awards included the History Book Award from the North Carolina Society of Historians in 1994, an Excellence in Teaching Award from Guilford College in 1995, the Christopher Crittendon Memorial Award in 2000, and the Voices of a City Award from the Greensboro Historical Museum in 2013.

Much of Dr. Stoesen's local history research was centered on the O.R.D. On March 1, 1943, the Army Air Forces opened Basic Training Center #10 (B.T.C. #10) near the intersection of Summit and East Bessemer avenues in Greensboro. The camp encompassed 652 acres, making it the largest military base in America within the boundaries of a city. By 1944, the Air Forces had reached its projected capacity and so the base became the Overseas Replacement Depot (O.R.D). The O.R.D. prepared and processed servicemen for overseas duty. In February of 1945 it took on the function of Redistribution Station Number 5, placing over 30,000 men in the Far East. After V-J Day, in September of 1945, the base began assisting in the separation of personnel as they became eligible for discharge.

During its existence, as many as 40,000 soldiers were stationed at the Greensboro base. It consisted of 964 buildings that included five hundred barracks, fifty-five recreation rooms, fourteen mess halls, ten post exchanges (PXs), five chapels, four movie theaters, three libraries, two service clubs, and a hospital. The base printed its own newspaper, the *BTC 10-Shun*, which was renamed *ORD News* and then *The Rotator*. The base closed on September 15, 1946.

Biographical Sources: Much of the biographical information was found through a search of the *Greensboro Daily News* and from the records of the educational institutions from which Dr. Stoesen earned his degrees. See the Appendix for full citations.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection encompasses two distinct groups of materials. An avid collector of memorabilia from the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, Dr. Stoesen collected a wide variety of printed materials, including advertisements, children's materials, local publications, pamphlets, and numerous periodicals (6:1-3). Of these, a preliminary and final report from the Guilford County American Revolution Commission will be of greatest interest to researchers looking for information about local Bicentennial celebrations (6:1). While most publications in this group were nationally circulated and have little local relevance, they do provide general American perspectives during a time of increased patriotic interest.

The second group relates to the history of the O.R.D, with much of the correspondence detailing Dr. Stoesen's efforts to gain access to the official records of the O.R.D. (1:1-9). The group also contains drafts of a student paper detailing race relations in Greensboro during the

war years (2:1) and various drafts of Dr. Stoesen's unpublished work (2:2). Miscellaneous materials highlight the O.R.D.'s role as an Army Air Forces installation (3:1).

The vast majority of this group is comprised of copies of official O.R.D. records and photographs (4:1-8). Dr. Stoesen collected oral history materials with first-hand accounts of O.R.D. (5:1-11), as well as city, census, and newspaper reports (6:1-4). In order to compare and contrast Greensboro with other military areas, Dr. Stoesen collected materials describing the socioeconomic effects of the war on both the regional and national levels (6:5-6). A particular area of interest within his research appears to have been the racial segregation of military facilities. The O.R.D. group has great potential for those researchers seeking information relating to military activities in and around Greensboro during World War II.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. Bicentennial

1. Advertisements. 2 folders (3 items). 1971-1976.

This series contains advertisements for medals cast for the Bicentennial celebration. One from the American Bicentennial Administration is a poster marketing a series of gold, silver, and bronze medals featuring the Statue of Liberty. Two copies of an advertisement from the Franklin Mint promote a series of silver medals with images of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

2. Almanacs. 1 folder (1 item). 1976.

This almanac from the Equitable Life Insurance Company contains a calendar featuring illustrations of events from the American Revolutionary War, some of which are famous paintings. Each day details a historic colonial event that occurred on that date. The almanac also contains reproductions of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. In addition to paintings, other images include American presidents from Washington through Nixon, colonial currency, and the various national and state flags.

3. Atlases. 1 folder (1 item). 1976.

This series is comprised of a single travel atlas produced by the Texaco oil company. In celebration of the Bicentennial, the cover shows a 1799 Philadelphia street with a prominent image of Christ Church. Within the atlas are road maps, historic images, and details of scheduled Bicentennial celebrations for each state.

4. Books. 1 folder (1 item). 1975.

A paperback publication from the Continental Insurance Companies, *Our Nation's Heritage 1776-1976*, contains reproductions of historical paintings. Each painting is accompanied by a detailed description of the events it depicts and their impact on the American Revolutionary War.

5. Children's Publications. 3 folders (4 items). 1976.

This series is made up of publications for youth that feature educational activities and age appropriate literature. *Eastern's Bicentennial Fun Book* (5:1), published by Eastern Airlines, provides educational games to engage children through word searches, crossword puzzles, and matching. Two volumes of the periodical *Jack and Jill* provide readers with various fictional stories, articles, and educational activities (5:2). Finally, *Seek-a-Word* contains word search puzzles with vocabularies based on American history (5:3).

6. Local Publications. 3 folders (8 items). 1975-1983.

Within this series are publications from Greensboro and surrounding towns that detail local celebrations of the Bicentennial and provide general area information. Materials from Greensboro include minutes from the Bicentennial Advisory Council, a city map with reproduced historical images, a basketball program from Guilford College, an issue of *Greensboro* magazine from July 1976, and an early history of the Bicentennial Garden (6:1). A visitor's guide describing High Point (6:2) and a program highlighting Bicentennial celebrations in Randleman (6:3) can also be found in this section.

7. Pamphlets. 2 folders (5 items). 1974-1977.

Pamphlets from the United States Air Force Academy scrutinize the military history of the United States (7:1), while those from the American Enterprise Institute think tank contain printed lectures examining the influence of the American Revolution on national and world history (7:2).

8. Periodicals. 5 folders (5 items). 1976.

This series holds periodical publications from July 1976. Articles in the *American Artist* detail the work of various painters, with the cover article describing a bicentennial print by Norman Rockwell (8:1). A Captain America comic book contains reprints of previous issues about Captain America's exploits against "foreign menaces" (8:2). An issue of *National Geographic* features an article regarding George Washington and provides American perspectives of the time (8:3). Articles in an issue of *Playboy* look at contemporary topics (8:4), while an installment of *Time* provides details on the life of Thomas Jefferson and selected topics in colonial American history (8:5).

9. Programs. 1 folder (1 item). 1976.

This souvenir program from the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus showcases the various circus acts and performers during the bicentennial year.

II. O.R.D.

1. Correspondence. 9 folders (19 items). 1971-1993.

This series encompasses correspondence related to Dr. Stoesen's efforts to gain access to the official records of the O.R.D. at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama.¹ Much of this correspondence contains directives for Dr. Stoesen to obtain specialized clearance since the records were housed at a military archives. The correspondence includes a letter of rejection from the *North Carolina Historical Review* expressing regret at not being able to publish Stoesen's paper (1:7). It also contains several letters highlighting his coordination with then archivist Stephen Catlett for the creation and installation of the exhibit "[Army Town: Greensboro, 1943-1946](#)" at the Greensboro Historical Museum (1:9).

2. Drafts. 2 folders (5 items). 1979-ca. 1990.

This series consists of drafts of unpublished papers by Guilford College student Meg Breeden and Dr. Stoesen. The two drafts of Breeden's work, "[Greensboro, N.C.: 1942-46: Blacks and Whites Embrace the Newcomers But Not Each Other.](#)" address race relations in Greensboro during the war years, stressing the effects of segregation on local citizens and military personnel (2:1). She cited Stoesen's unpublished paper as a source.

A second folder within the series contains three drafts of Stoesen's unpublished work, "[The Elixir of War: Greensboro, N.C. as an 'Army Town,' 1942-1946.](#)" Although his paper was never published, Stoesen's research proved an invaluable source for the exhibit, "Army Town: Greensboro 1943-1946," produced by the Greensboro Historical Museum in the mid-1990s.

3. Miscellaneous. 1 folder (5 items). 1940-ca. 1995.

Miscellaneous materials include the service history of Samuel E. Anderson, a high-ranking airman born in Greensboro, and a short poem written about Greensboro, presumably by a soldier stationed at O.R.D. This series also contains a letter published in book format from a fallen airman of the English Royal Air Force.

4. Official Records. 8 folders (337 items). 1942-1975.

This series is comprised of photocopies of the official records of Basic Training Center #10 / O.R.D. These documents describe the history of the military post from its inception in 1942 to its closure in 1946, including details regarding construction, daily activities, and interactions with local citizens. The official records often mention deplorable conditions such as lack of electricity, heat, and plumbing (4:1, GB 235). As a result, the first trainees had to build much of the installation themselves (4:8, GB-38, 59). Torrential downpours in March 1943 turned large sections of the camp into quagmires (4:1 271; 4:1 GB 448; 4:1, GB 692; 4:8, GB-35). At the conclusion of the war, the O.R.D. served as a redistribution center for troops transitioning back to civilian life (4:3, GB 120-124; 4:3 GB 139, 185-186).

¹ Most of these records are now held by the National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

Of particular interest are the many ways in which local citizens extended hospitality towards soldiers stationed at the O.R.D. The people of Greensboro are often noted for their welcoming attitude towards the troops (4:1, GB 142-144; 4:2, GB-C, GB-D). The populace hosted such morale-boosting functions as dances, dinner parties, sporting events, radio programs, and movies (4:1, GB 114-115, 117; 4:2, Greensboro O.R.D.: Its Past & Present p. 5). Also of note is the repeated mention of an increased incidence of venereal disease and the intensive efforts by civilian and military personnel alike to combat it (4:1, GB-84; 4:2, GB 002-003; 4:3, GB 248; 4:3, 428-444). The official records note the hiring of recent graduates and students from Woman's College for administrative duties (4:1, GB 692; 4:2, GB 054). Numerous records detail segregated facilities and the establishment of a USO club for African American troops (4:1, GB 142; 4:2, GB-C; 4:2, GB 242).

This series contains copies of photographic images depicting commanding officers, camp buildings, conditions, training exercises, a mock invasion of Greensboro, and local public relations events such as parades, dances, and concerts (4:4). Associated with these photographs are detailed descriptions for 16 images (4:5) and negatives (4:6)

The Station History report describes in depth the preliminary planning for B.T.C. #10/O.R.D. The report discusses the reasons Greensboro was selected for the military installation (GB-4, 9-10) and provides city demographics from 1942 (4:7, GB 13-20). Furthermore, it details the primary phases of construction, the acquisition of local properties for military use (4:7, GB 33-45), and efforts to attract civilian workers (4:8, GB 47-48). The official account ends with a description of the training regimen for soldiers entering basic training (4:7, GB 51-60).

A final portion of the official records documents the experience of members in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) stationed at the O.R.D. Although initially treated with contempt by male soldiers, WAC members slowly gained respect through dedication to their duties (4:8).

5. Oral History. 8 folders (20 items). 1978-1982, n.d.

This series consists of oral history materials that shed light on the experiences of Greensboro residents during the war. Materials include interview notes, cassette tapes, and transcripts of selected interviews. The oral history interviews were conducted by both Guilford College student Meg Breeden and Dr. Stoesen.

Within this series are notes that Dr. Stoesen made from telephone interviews with Greensboro residents Huger King and Lacy McAlister. Mayor of Greensboro from 1940 to 1942, King details the reasons why the Army wished to build a training center and the benefits that modernization brought (5:1). A former office manager with Pilot Life Insurance, McAlister describes appropriations of office space by the Army Air Forces and the inconveniences such appropriations caused (5:2).

The oral history materials also include recordings of Greensboro residents, including former city manager Henry Yancey, describing life during the war years. Selected transcripts are filed with their respective tapes. Mrs. Jool describes her employment at the O.R.D. as a mail clerk as well as local events, interactions with prisoners of war, and the responsibilities of women during the war (5:4). [Mrs. Katherine Ravenel](#) recounts her hospitality towards soldiers by providing them shelter, food, and lodging (5:5). [An interview with Mrs. Eula Whitley and Mrs. Rosa Vines](#) provides an African American perspective with a particular emphasis on segregated facilities and the roles of women (5:7).

6. Research Materials. 6 folders (38 items). 1790-1995, n.d.

This series contains photocopies of reports and articles regarding the socioeconomic impacts of military bases on civilian populations. These documents are grouped according to their relevance to local, national, and regional standpoints.

The census records (6:1) provide various Guilford County population figures from the First Census of the United States in 1790 through the Nineteenth Census in 1970. These records were used for documenting local population change as a result of the O.R.D.

City reports (6:2) describe daily life in Greensboro before, during, and shortly after World War II. A pre-war assessment of real estate values notes the lack of modern facilities. Further reports document civilian efforts to reduce absenteeism and provide a critical analysis of extended childcare services for workers in war industries. This folder also contains three copies of a general city map circa 1973 showing annexations since 1956.

Clippings and photocopies of local newspapers detail various interactions that occurred between soldiers stationed at O.R.D. and the civilian populace (6:3). A copy of an article from the *Guilfordian* highlights relationships between O.R.D. soldiers and girls attending Guilford College. Photostatic reproductions from the *Greensboro Record* describe the naming of a WAC platoon for a local citizen who perished serving abroad, local war industries, and improvements for the city at the war's end. A 1977 clipping from the *Greensboro Daily News* describes the fate of former O.R.D. buildings, and an article in the *Hamburger Square Post* provides a personal recollection of a wartime dinner party with O.R.D. soldiers.

Further local records describe the establishment and activities of USO Clubs for both white and African American troops (6:4). These USO reports contain descriptions of the physical buildings; lists of administrators, committee members, and volunteers; and a brief club history for each.

Included in this series are photocopies of reports, published articles, and book reviews describing the societal and economic impacts of World War II on a national scale (6:5). These materials detail such items as compensation rates for soldiers, give a pre-war assessment of living conditions near military installations, and document the need for collaboration with civilian services. An extensive analysis of wartime production controls is also included. Later articles and reviews analyze the transformational effects of war on a nation's economic policies.

Additional research materials include photocopied articles documenting the economic and social effects of war on North Carolina and the South (6:6). Such articles describe the regional economy slightly before and during the war with an emphasis on textile production. Of interest is an article describing the many contributions of North Carolina citizens, with many mentioned by name. Articles also describe the displacement of rural African Americans and the changing nature of race relations.

FOLDER LISTING

I. Bicentennial			
Series	Folder	Contents	
1	1	Advertisements	-- American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (1976)
	2	“	-- Franklin Mint (1971, 2 copies)

I. Bicentennial			
Series	Folder	Contents	
2	1	Almanacs	-- Equitable Life Insurance Co. (1976)
3	1	Atlases	-- <i>Texaco Travel Atlas</i> (1976)
4	1	Books	-- <i>Our Nation's Heritage 1776-1976</i> (1975)
5	1	Children's Publications	-- <i>Eastern's Bicentennial Fun Book</i> (1976)
	2	"	-- <i>Jack and Jill</i> (April-June/July 1976)
	3	"	-- <i>Seek-a-Word</i> (Summer 1976)
6	1	Local Publications	-- Greensboro (1975-ca. 1983)
	2	"	-- High Point (1976)
	3	"	-- Randleman (1976)
7	1	Pamphlets	-- Air Force Academy (1975-1977)
	2	"	-- American Enterprise Institute (1973-1974)
8	1	Periodicals	-- <i>American Artist</i> (July 1976)
	2	"	-- <i>Captain America's Bicentennial Battles</i> (1976)
	3	"	-- <i>National Geographic</i> (July 1976)
	4	"	-- <i>Playboy</i> (July 1976)
	5	"	-- <i>Time</i> (July 1976)
9	1	Programs	-- Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus (1976)
II. O.R.D.			
Series	Folder	Contents	
1	1	Correspondence	-- Atkinson, Gloria L. (March 25, 1975)
	2	"	-- Bach, Maj. Shirley (April 10, 1975)
	3	"	-- Cone, Ceasar (August 22, 1980)
	4	"	-- Eastman, James M. Jr. (June 18, 1974)
	5	"	-- Hargett, Janet L. (May 30, 1974)
	6	"	-- Matloff, Maurice (January 19, 1971)
	7	"	-- Mitchell, Memory F. (September 28, 1979)
	8	"	-- Sherman, William F. (May 15, 1974)
	9	"	-- Stoesen, Alex (May 31, 1974 – June 8, 1993)
2	1	Drafts	-- Breden, Meg (April 27, 1983)
	2	"	-- Stoesen, Dr. Alexander (1979-ca. 1990)
3	1	Miscellaneous (1940-ca. 1995)	
4	1	Official Records	-- History of BTC No. 10, 1942, June 3 – 1944, March 1
	2	"	-- History of BTC No. 10, 1944, March 1 – 1946, June 30
	3	"	-- History of BTC No. 10, 1944, July 1 – 1945 September 2
	4	"	-- Photographs (ca. 1975)
	5	"	-- Photograph Descriptions (ca. 1943-1945)
	6	"	-- Photograph Negatives (May 1975)
	7	"	-- Station History (April 1942 – December 1943)
	8	"	-- WACS (ca. 1944)

II. O.R.D.			
Series	Folder	Contents	
5	1	Oral History	-- Interview Notes - King, Huger (August 22, 1978)
	2	“	-- Interview Notes - McAlister, Lacy (January 19, 1978)
	3	“	-- Carrington, Marietta and Anita Rivers (March 8, 1981)
	4	“	-- Mrs. Jool (ca. 1983)
	5	“	-- Ravenel, Katherine (February 25, 1983)
	6	“	-- Smith, Frankie and Floyd (n.d.)
	7	“	-- Whitley, Eula and Rosa Vines (February 24, 1983)
	8	“	-- Yancey, Henry (March 26, 1978)
6	1	Research Materials	-- Local -- Census (1790-1970)
	2	“	-- Local -- City Reports (1939-ca. 1973)
	3	“	-- Local -- Newspapers (1943-1987)
	4	“	-- Local -- USO (1945)
	5	“	-- National (1940-1992, n.d.)
	6	“	-- Regional (1942-1995)

APPENDIX

"Alumni News & Awards 2013–2014." Department of History at UNC Chapel Hill, 2014. Web. Last accessed 29 July 2014. <http://history.unc.edu/departments/news/alumni-news-awards-2013-2014>

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Harris, Harvey. "History Professor Making His Mark." *Greensboro Daily News* 26 July 1979, sec. B: 1. *Civil Rights Greensboro*, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Web. Last accessed 29 July 2014. <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/CivilRights/id/1839/>

"Miss Carol Annette Cronk Is Bride to A.R. Stoesen." *Wellsville Daily Reporter* 25 August 1959: 4. Web. Last accessed 29 July 2014. <http://www.newspapers.com/newspage/3133234/>

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"Stoesen, Alexander R." *News & Record* 3 December 2017. Web. Last accessed 15 December 2017. http://www.greensboro.com/obituaries/stoesen-alexander-r/article_09e675b3-7cdd-534e-93b5-3d6e3c6855a6.html