

REGISTER OF THE HESTER PAPERS,  
1945-1983

Hugh Bryan Hester, 1895-1983

Mss 51, 5 cu. ft.

## REGISTER OF HESTER PAPERS, 1945-1983

Hugh Bryan Hester, 1895-1983  
Mss 51, 5 cu. ft.

### INTRODUCTION

Hugh Bryan Hester served as an officer in the United States Army from 1917-1951. He saw active duty during the First and Second World Wars. Upon retirement, he became a frequent critic of American foreign policy and an advocate of peace. This collection was given by Hester and his niece, Mrs. Katherine Watson, between 1982 and 1984. This register was prepared in 1984 by Michael Kohl.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Hugh Bryan Hester was born in Hester, North Carolina on August 5th, 1895. He attended schools in Stem, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro, North Carolina. Hester attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1912-1917 and received an AB degree in 1916. Abandoning his study of law, Hester volunteered for the Army in 1917.

Serving as a Second Lieutenant in the Twelfth Field Artillery of the Second U.S. Regular Army, Hester was wounded in action. In 1918, he was promoted to First Lieutenant and then Captain. The following year he saw service during the occupation of Germany. He was decorated for valor by the United States.

After the war, Hester continued his career in the Army. He served at various military bases in the United States during the 1920's and 1930's and graduated from a number of training programs. Between 1924 and 1928, Hester was a ROTC instructor at the University of Missouri. He also supervised Civilian Conservation Corps workers in Silver City, New Mexico in 1933-1934. In 1938, Hester attended and graduated from Babson Institute. From 1939 to 1942, he served on the General Staff of the War Department as an officer in the Quartermaster's Corps. In 1941, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and then Colonel.

During the Second World War, Hester served as General Staff and Supply Officer (Southwest Pacific Theatre) under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. In this capacity, Hester worked with the Australian government to procure supplies for the American forces under the Reverse Lend-Lease Program. In 1945, he was promoted to Brigadier General and was awarded the United States Distinguished Service Medal.

After the war, Hester served in Germany, 1945-1947, in the Office of United States Military Government and was Chief of the Food and Agricultural Branch, Economic Division, U.S. Zone. He was elected to the French Legion of Honor for his work in Germany. During part of 1947 through 1948, Hester was Military Attache' to Australia. Returning to the United States, he served at the Army Supply Depot in Philadelphia until his retirement in 1951.

Upon retirement, Hester spent the next three years working with the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Between 1954-1957, he attended the University of Pennsylvania without receiving a degree. Even before resigning from the Army, Hester had become concerned over the direction of American foreign policy which was entering the period of confrontation with the Soviet Union known as the Cold War. He believed that the confrontational nature of American foreign policy could be avoided and lasting peace established.

Hester began to lecture and write concerning the need for new directions in American foreign policy. In 1959, he co-authored with Dr. Jerome Davis On the Brink. The period of the Vietnam War (1965-1973) was the high point of his activism. He spoke at numerous peace rallies, wrote letters-to-the-editor, and published several articles. In 1971, he published Twenty-six Disastrous Years a general critique of American foreign policy. Hester continued to advocate disarmament, world government, and weapons control during the period after the Vietnam War.

Hester married Pauline (Polly) Hester Green in 1935. They moved to Asheville, North Carolina in 1970. Mrs. Hester died on January 8, 1981. Hugh Hester died on November 25, 1983.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers of Hugh Hester document primarily the period 1968-1983. There is little information about his career in the Army or his personal life. Rather, the papers focus upon his numerous activities related to influencing the direction of American foreign policy. The collection has some correspondence, 1951-1983; copies of articles written by Hester, 1956-1983; letters-to-the-editor, 1945-1983; and printed material concerning the causes which he supported or was interested in. The correspondence includes letters from Congressmen and Senators and some prominent peace activists. The articles, letters-to-the-editor, and correspondence are arranged in chronological order. The printed material represents over half the collection and serves as a sample of criticism of American policies from the perspective of the Left. Of particular interest are typescript copies of a book by Morris Kominsky, The Congressional Innocents, and an outline to another book by Kominsky, America Faces Disaster. There is a considerable number of publications from Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, North Vietnam, and other communist states. The printed material is organized alphabetically in a subject file.

#### SEPARATION LIST

##### 1. Books.

Sixty-seven books have been added to the general collections of the Library and forty-nine have been added to the holdings of Special Collections. There is a listing of these books located in the donor file.

2. Photographs.

Ten positive prints of Hester and his wife, Polly, and sixteen postcard photographs of scenes of the Army of the German Democratic Republic have been placed in the manuscript photograph file.