Special Collections
St. Ambrose University Library
Davenport, Iowa

JOHN S. SMITH (1924-1987)

PAPERS, 1950s-1987
22 linear feet

Collection Overview

Acquisition: The papers (donor no. #27) were donated in 2004 when offices were being cleaned out. Smith’s manuscript was donated by Rev. Dawson in 2009.
Access: The papers are open for research.
Copyright: Copyright held by the donor has been transferred to St. Ambrose.
Photographs: In Photo Filing Cabinet listed under “Smith.”

Biography

John Spalding Smith was born June 11, 1924 in Rock Island, Illinois. He earned his B.A. in history from St. Ambrose College in 1945 (influences were Bill O’Connor and Fr. Charles Griffith) and went on to study at St. Paul (Minnesota) Seminary from 1945-49. It was there he received his M.A. in church history and was ordained in 1949 (known as Fr. Jack). He began teaching at St. Ambrose Academy that September and was appointed to the college faculty in 1957. From 1957-1960 he studied at the Catholic University of American in Washington D.C. and was awarded a Ph.D. in American history with minors in recent modern European history and political science in 1962. He completed post-doctoral work at St. Louis University in 1972. Jack led the opposition to the Vietnam War in the Quad-Cities by launching Quad-Citians for Peace in 1967. In 1969 he served a one-year appointment as University of Iowa campus apostolate and associate pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Iowa City, Iowa. When he returned to S.A.C. in 1970 it was as an associate professor and chairman of the department of history. During the 1970s he was active in the Quad-City community by founding and insuring state incorporation status of the Quad-City Center for the Study of Peace & Non-violence - originally located in Ambrose Hall;
eventually it moved to a nearby house. In 1976, S.A.C. decided to allow R.O.T.C. on campus and the
diocese neglected to pledge further support for his social justice work. As a result, by 1977 Smith had
both resigned from the priesthood and as a faculty member at the college (after 27 years of service). He
went on to run the Catholic Student Center at the University of Iowa, be arrested for praying/protesting
the nuclear arms race at the Rock Island Arsenal, demonstrate at the monthly vigils at the Ground Wave
Emergency Network (G.W.E.N.), and work as an aide to Illinois Senator Clarence Darrow. In 1981 he
became the Executive Director of Older Americans for Elderly Rights. Before his death on Dec. 4, 1987,
he completed a monumental book--a primer text on the history of peace and non-violence in the U.S.

Scope and Content Note

The John Smith papers date from the 1950s – 1987 and measure 22 linear feet. The papers have been re-
foldered and maintain John Smith’s originally classification or organization which was loosely
alphabetical by topic or name.

Major topics include: peace, social justice, non-violence, amnesty, disarmament, nuclear / military arms
race, conscientious objection, politics, elections, correspondence with speakers, editors, congressmen,
senators, the president, bishops, and items related to his ministry as a priest: documents related to the
Diocese of Davenport, happenings in the Catholic church and community, marriage preparation, divorce,
death and dying, etc. AND support material for his manuscript Peace and Nonviolence USA: A History

Related Collections

In addition to John Smith’s personal files, there are 5 scrapbooks of clippings, fliers, and
programs, and a box containing his manuscript Peace and Non-violence U.S.A.: A History.

Box List

Box 1  Amnesty; American Bishops; Arsenal; Berrigans; Black History; Baum-Liberation Theology; B-1
Bomber protest; BETA Committee to Save Lives; Boyd; Cornell, Tom; Curran, Charles; CCCO An
Agency for Military & Draft Counseling; Catholic Worker Davenport; Chavez, Cesar; Catholic Interracial
Council

Box 2  Capital Punishmen
t; Catholics & Conscientious Objection; Campus Ministry; Human Relations
Commission Ordinance; Civil Rights; Children & Bomb; Chile 1974; Peace Conversion; Civil Religion;
Congressional Record; Clark, Senator Dick; Constitutional Rights; Curriculum Notes; Community;
Conflict Resolution; Culter, S.; Quad-City Center for the Study of Peace and Non-Violence records;
Citizens Utility Board CUB; Draft & Draft Resistance; Depression, Economic; Des Moines Catholic
Worker; Death & Dying; Dozier, Bishop; Detroit Liberty & Justice for All Program 1976; Divorce;
Disarmament; Debris, Jean-Pierre; Dingman, Rev. Maurice J.
Box 3  Family Tree; Freedom Road; President Ford Clemency Program; Forest, Jim 1974; Gibson, Jean; Greenpeace; Hurst, Dr. Michael; Hiroshima 1977; Hayden, Tom; Hearts & Minds Documentary; Harrington, M.; Higgins, Tom; Human Rights Week 1976; Isaiah Home Brochure; Indian Culture Series 1975; Indochina 1974; Ivanov, Paul 1974; Institute of Social Order-New Orleans; Jackson, Jesse; Ku Klux Klan; Khan, Dr. Theodore; Kennedy, Senator Ed; Kennedy, Jane; Kischbaum, Klise, Tom; Allen, Kelly; Kent State; Korea; Peace & Non-Violence History course notes; Forman, James; Matusow; newspaper clippings for 1970s, 1980s; Percy, Walker WWI; Native Americans/Europeans History 367; British N.A. Colonies; Peace & War; Muste, A. J. (pacifist); Abolitionism/Reform 1800-1860; Civil War to Present class notes; Randolph, Philip; Vietnam

Box 4  Leonard, Fr. Dick; Luce, Don; Latin America Bishops Meeting 1971; Lakey, George-Friends Peace Committee; Liberation; Long, Jamai (civil rights advocate); Students for a Democratic Society; New American Movement; Mike Cullen Draft Refusal; Black Manifesto; Post Great War; Great War I & II; Civil Rights; Industrial Workers of the World; Abolitionism/Civil War; Citizens Second Class; Industrial Revolution & Labor Movements; Peace and Non-violence USA

Box 5  McCarthy, Eugene (independent presidential candidate 1976); McGovern, George (democrat presidential candidate 1984); Multinational Corporations; Military Budget; Militarism in Education; Marriage Preparation; McDonald, Don; Mezvinsky, Ed; Monahan, Mike; Mullen, Peg; Mobilization for Survival; Mysticism; Nuclear Power & Weapons, Cordova, IL.; News Media; Non-violence; manuscript by Smith on the Peace Movement; Native Americans; Quad-City Center for the Study of Peace & Non-violence news releases 1974-75; Nixon; Peace Pastoral; Plato; Pacifism; Paris Peace Agreement 1973; History Course “Peace & Non-Violence U.S.A.”; Iowa City Peace & Justice Center; Peace & Justice Rally; Peace Studies Seminar; Penance; Prison Reform 1970s; Police; Poverty; Piepers, Bernadine; People’s Bi-Centennial; Priests; Prayer; Palo, IA nuclear protest

Box 6  Utility Bills; Utopias / Alternative Communities; United Nations; Christian Peace Fellowship; Television; Telephone Bills; Trident Nuclear Submarine & Missile System; Tax Resistance; Schuele, Fr. John; Study of Power and Peace; Solar Energy; Socialism; Security and Privacy Committee; St. Louis Peace Institute; Sisters for the Christian Community; Stodt, Francine; Solitude; Socially Responsible Scientists; St. Ambrose / Marycrest Merger 1971; Sundin, Rick K. Jr.; Sinnot, James P.; Solzhenitsyn; Anti-nuclear Scientist; Salstrom, F.P.; Sharp, Gene; St. Anthony; Resistance News; Richards, Randy

Box 7  Vietnam; Draft; Violence in America; Vietnam Veterans; Quad Citians for Peace; WIN Magazine; Women’s Ordination; Water Policy; Watergate Tapes; Women & Women’s Liberation; World Without War Council; World Order Studies; Wolowitz, Stephen; Xerox Exchange; CCCO Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors; Humanities; Dad; Self-Study Instructional 1970; Marriage & Morality; Quarles; American Friends Service Committee; History Department Minutes; Religion in America; Pentecostals; Equal Rights; Catholic Worker; Detention Center; New Times publication

Box 8  Commager; Prayer; Racism; St. Thomas More Parish; Correspondence; History 327 Modern Russia; Priest’s Aid Society of Davenport; Pendergast, Jack; Student Power; Abortion; Energy Crisis; Ecology, Work Ethic; The Catholic Church Today; History Department Chair Records; CIC Catholic Interracial Council; Historiography; Radical History; Catholic Student Center Iowa City; Industrial Revolution; Nuclear Power & Weapons; Plowshares; Vietnam 10th anniversary; Nuclear “Freeze”; Kennedy’s Private War; Attica; History 202 & 201- Colonial U.S. to 1865; American Revolution

Box 9  History 201 Colonial U.S. to 1865; 202 U.S. since 1865; History 367; Civil War & Reconstruction; Interpretations of American History; Feminism & Marxism; Busing – Civil
Rights; History Course – U. S. Diplomatic; Cold War; History 338: 20th c. Europe; Popularum Progressio – Paul VI; Pacem in Terris

**Box 10** History 359: U.S. Economic; History 302: History of American Thought; History 333: Religion in America; History 365: Catholicism 1852-1908; Church History lectures; History 201 A; American Catholic Problem; Pope Pius XII, Supreme Court Law; Galileo; Neighbors; American Constitutional History; History 265

**Box 11** Priest’s Aid Society of Davenport; Local Catholic History 1950s-70s; History 334: Far East; History 337: 19th c. Europe; White Racism / Black Culture-History; Catholic Interracial Council; Board of Health; Camara, Dom Helder; Bishop O’Keefe correspondence

**Box 12** Housing Ordinances 1967; Peace Studies Seminar; New Times publications; Social Development course materials; CIC Catholic Interracial Council Committee; Cartoons