

McLean County Museum of History

Charles Edward Rice Collection

Processed by Torii Moré
Fall 2010

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Boxes
COLLECTION DATES:	1969-1979
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

Charles Edward Rice (October 5, 1949-October 17, 2008) was an Army veteran of the Vietnam War, a talented musician, and a close friend of Greg Koos, currently Executive Director of McLean County Museum of History.

Rice was adopted by his parents John and Helen Rice. The family came to Bloomington in Charles' early teen years, c. 1963. Charles attended a catholic boy's seminary in Indiana, a Belgium Mission Order. In September of 1966 Charles began attending Trinity High School, Bloomington IL, as a junior. He graduated in June of 1968, and in 1968 or 1969 Charles joined the Army. In Vietnam, Charles ended up in Long Bien Jail, a military prison, where he was forced to reenlist. When he eventually got back to the states he and long-time friend Greg Koos started a music commune that became a center for old time folk and bluegrass music, called The Locust Arms. Charles Rice was a gifted musician, able to play the organ and the fiddle. He traveled as a musician and

eventually worked in Cincinnati as an Assistant Director of Communications of Episcopal Diocese.

In 1966 while in high school Greg Koos, Charles Rice, and two other students started a “gag” or invented organization known as the Central States Political Science Institute. This gag lived on in the letters found in this collection. Also, Charles Rice had an alter-ego by the name of Pontificus Maximus XI, which came from his days in the Seminary. Many of the letters are written to “Len” which is a nick name for Greg Koos. KooRi, found in some of the letters and envelopes, is the name of the hand-rolled tobacco cigarettes that Koos and Rice blended themselves and sold in local shops, like the Phoenix Coffee House on IWU campus.

Charles died at the age of 59 on October 17, 2008 in Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Survivors included his son, Charles “Casey” Talcott Rice of Cincinnati; and a sister, Mary Mae of Monmouth Oregon.

Box & Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Obituaries

- 1.1.1 Obituary from the Kentucky Post
- 1.1.2 Obituary in e-mail form

Folder 2: Dated Letters in Envelopes

- 1.2.1 May 8, 1969 (Postmarked) - White envelope with black writing addressed to Gregory J. Koos, D.G. 2 papers inside, 1 hand written letter on Fort Sill. Oklahoma letterhead that has been altered to read “F.T.A. The Bird” around the crest, and “C.S.P.S.I. In Exile” under Fort Sill. Oklahoma. Letter regarding Oklahoma, behavior of those in Officer Candidate School, an enclosed note to Kristy (Bierman). Second paper is one typed sheet explaining ways soldiers can be discharged.
- 1.2.2 February 2, 1971 (Telegram)- Regarding an “emergency meeting” of the “council” of Central States Political Science Institute in Russell Hall at 9:00 pm.
- 1.2.3 November 14, 1971 (Air Mail, Postmarked)- envelope addressed to G. J. Koos, D.G. Dept. of Foreign Affairs. Return address- Office of the Director, Bureau of S.E. Asian Affairs, Cent. States Poli. Sci. Inst. Letter is on white paper with a sketch of the “Field Offices-Bureau of S.E. Asian Affairs-Vietnam” at the top. Letter begins “Dear Len: Greetings from ‘high’ atop beautiful hill #270-by-the-sea; a mere ten miles S.W. of downtown Da Nang.” As he was writing this letter he was waiting for a helicopter to take him and some others to Da Nang for “an assortment of personal business.” Later in the letter he says 24 hours have elapsed and he is now in Da Nang and it is early morning on the 1st of November. He describes a series of meetings he will be attending for the Bureau of S.E. Asian Affairs.

- 1.2.4 January 31, 1972 (Air Mail, Postmarked) - Envelope has a sketch of Pontificus Maximus saying "Free by the Grace of God." Addressed to G.J. Koos & Co. return address is Beloved XI Pontificus Maximus. The letter is a short comic about a hero guiding his 2,000 lb. marshmallow through an oil slick.
- 1.2.5 February 11, 1972 (Postmarked)- Envelope has 19 postmark stamps on it. Letter inside is a sheet with numerous post office stamps on it and the bottom says "ON IT'S WAY Beloved XI etc." Also inside is a receipt for the letter.
- 1.2.6 February 13, 1972 (Postmarked)- Envelope addressed to "1 Lt. Christopher C. Koos, Int. Retired. Bureau of Grand Designs and Metaphysical Hooches, Central States Political Science Institute." Return address is "Office of the Grand Tutor Phu Loi Vietnam" Inside is a letter with crests hand-drawn on the top of the page representing the Central States Political Science Institute and bottom of the page is the seal of the Grand Tutor with a drawn banner that says "Graduation is a State of Mind." The letter consists of two quotes: "It is Right Improper; Fitting in Jest -Founders school 25:16" and "Generally and unlikely assemblage of curve and line..."
- 1.2.7 March 11, 1972 (Postmarked)- Addressed to Dept. of Foreign Affairs C.S.P.S.I from the Bureau of South East Asian Affairs Viet Nam. Inside letter is an invitation to attend a ticker-tape parade on July 30, 1972, followed immediately by dinner at Lucca Grill (Bloomington).
- 1.2.8 April 11, 1972 (Postmarked) - Addressed to Chris Koos & Co. Inside are Pacex Mail Order forms that have been filled out, to be sent to John W. Rice, costing \$484 and \$257.
- 1.2.9 October 10, 1972 (Postmarked)- Addressed to Gregory J. Koos, DG. Opposite side of Envelope has big stamped words reading "Matter of Faith and Morals" twice, and written between says "Via Normal Koo-Ri Channels". Inside is an official-looking typed letter with the subject being "Notification of Termination of Reciprocal Agreement between the Dept. of the Army and the Central States Political Science Institute" Letter is for Robert Hendon, PhD. (Hendon was Assistant Professor of Education at ISU). Body of the letter asks Dr. Hendon to write a commemorative poem. Signed by Edward Rice, DG. Letter has two stamps on it, one large "Matter of Faith and Morals" and one smaller "Urine-Negative for opiates, barbiturates, and amphetamines"

Folder 3: Letters in Undated Envelopes

- 1.3.1 April 8, 1970 (date on letter). Air-Mail envelope addressed to Robert Hendon, PhD, and has the word "Free" where the stamp should be. Letter regarding welcoming Dr. Hendon to the Central States Political Science Institute's Bureau of South-east Asian Affairs.
- 1.3.2 September 15, 1971 (date on letter). Letter addressed to G. J. Koos, "Free" written where stamp would be. Letter regarding getting out of the army.

- 1.3.3 Undated. Envelope addressed to Central States Political Science Institute. “Free” written where stamp should be. Letter inside is lyrics about Rome written to the tune of “Home on the Range”
- 1.3.4 Undated. Envelope addressed to The Great Council Central States Political Science Institute. “Free- KooRi Post” written where stamp would be. Opposite side “Urgent-Matter of Faith and Morals” is written. Letter inside written on Red Cross paper in blue marker, asking “all honoured members of the Great & Privy councils to gather and otherwise assemble in the Holy City of Bloomington before the shrine of Ash of the Phoenix” to pray for a new democratic president (Phoenix Coffee House, IWU).
- 1.3.5 November 14, 1972 (date on letter). Envelope addressed in pencil to G. J. Koos. “Free” written where stamp would be. Inside is a Christmas card signed Beloved XI Pontificus Maximus, and a letter regarding the enclosed Christmas card, travels to Da Nang, Saigon, Long Bink and Phu Loi, where he was while writing the letter, working at the post office.

Folder 4: Letters without Envelopes

- 1.4.1 Undated paper with drawing of Beloved XI. Writing unable to be read, possibly a kind of code.
- 1.4.2 April 18, 1971. Top of letter has drawing representing the building of Bureau of South-east Asian Affairs, letter regarding notification of shipment of a BSEAA field cap
- 1.4.3 May 21, 1971. Letter regarding how intolerable Vietnam is: the officers and sergeants are egomaniacs, enlisted men drug themselves with heroine and alcohol and believe violence is the only answer, the local people are treated horribly by the Americans, and, even when treated nicely “they take you for a ride and look for a chance to make a buck off you”
- 1.4.4 c. June 1971. Letter with drawing at the top of two tall buildings representing the Bureau of South-east Asian Affairs
- 1.4.5 July 30, 1971. Regarding pressing his release from the Army
- 1.4.6 c. July 1971 Assemblage of the Institute’s Great Council in Solem High Conclave at Bloomington Illinois
- 1.4.7 August 10, 1971. 4 legal-size pages, regarding his application to the Department of the Army to be discharged. Signed “For the present we remain, Yours for the Revolution, Beloved XI pontificus maximus, His Holiness the Eleventh-Pontificus Maximus”
- 1.4.8 October 24, 1971. Top says “Greetings from high atop scenic hill 270, new home of the C.S.P.S.I.’s Bureau of Southeast Asian Affairs” with a drawing of a soldier atop hill. “Confidential” letter regarding the possibility of a visit home in November or January
- 1.4.9 Circa 1972. Letter with drawing of a sun, whale, and God-like figure in a cloud looking out over a rainbow. Letter is regarding the closing of the Bureau of South-east Asian Affairs
- 1.4.10 July 14, 1972. Letter regarding possibly re-opening the Bureau of Indian and Army Affairs in Oklahoma

- 1.4.11 Undated. Koo-Ri Tobacconists letter to customer regarding shipment of Koo-Ri green box.
- 1.4.12 2 blank sheets of paper
- 1.4.13 Undated. Plans to publish C.S.P.S.I. Quarterly Report with sections by Greg Koos, Danny Fitzgerald, Robert Hendon, PhD, and comic by Beloved XI
- 1.4.14 Undated. Note saying “Len- if Stevenson (Adlai III that is) asks for bread for the liberal senators fund tell him we gave at the Bureau”
- 1.4.15 December 30, 1971. Receipt for registered article addressed to Senator Adlai E Stevenson III
- 1.4.16 Undated. The Old Phase II Economic Blues lyrics. To the tune of Jug Band Music.

Folder 5: Envelopes

- 1.5.1-11 11 undated envelopes, some with artwork, most say “free” where stamp would be.
- 1.5.12-16 4 Envelopes ranging from May 1969 to March 1972

Folder 6: Communication with Vance Raye (Oklahoma Attorney)

- 1.6.1 Letter to Vance Raye from Gregory J. Koos asking him to examine the enclosed statement regarding the arrest of C. Edward Rice at Lawton Oklahoma.
- 1.6.2 Letter to Vance Raye from C. Edward Rice asking him to read a signed statement regarding his arrest and his friends arrest
- 1.6.3 Statement detailing the controversial events that led to the arrest of C. Edward Rice and 4 others

Folder 7: Photographs, Drawings, and Booklets

- 1.7.1 Safe-conduct pass turned in by an N.U.A who surrendered to Charles Edward Rice’s battery
- 1.7.2 Booklet: A Pocket Guide to Vietnam
- 1.7.3 Pencil drawing of Rice as Beloved XI, as mentioned in item 1.3.5
- 1.7.4 11 photographs of army soldiers in Vietnam, 5-6 are of Rice
- 1.7.5 Drawing in marker of “Strength in Reverse- Captain Imel Iffer U.S.A.R.”

Folder 8: Charlie Rice Bluegrass Poster

- 1.8.1 Poster for Labor Day Bluegrass Festival September 1, 2, and 3, 1979