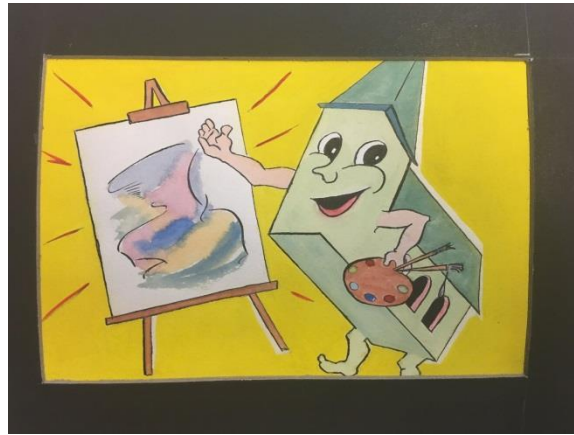


**The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary,
Columbia University in the City of New York**

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

Max Alden Coots Papers, 1953



Credit: Slide 5, "Thinking It Through" M.A. Thesis Cartoon. Max Alden Coots Papers, 1953, Series 1, box 1, folder 1, the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Rebecca Nieto, June 2016

With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Max Alden Coots, 1927-2009
Title: Max Alden Coots Papers, 1953
Inclusive dates: 1953
Bulk dates: 1953
Abstract: UTS/Columbia alum 1953; Unitarian Universalist minister, writer, artist, and cartoonist who spent much of his life in upstate New York. One scrapbook comic entitled "Thinking It Through", submitted in partial fulfillment of the M.A. from Union/Columbia.
Size: 1 box, 0.5 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Email: burkespecial@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: The provenance of this collection is unknown. It was part of a large group of unprocessed material that was organized in 2015 during an archival processing project funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkespecial@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, Max Alden Coots Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Max Alden Coots was born in Canisteo, New York on June 10, 1927 to Dr. Carl Alden Coots and Mabel G. Brownell Coots. Demonstrating an early acumen for art, Coots majored in art while attending high school in his hometown of Waverly, New York, and took up art history again in college after a brief stint and honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy from February to August of 1945. Coots attended art school briefly before pursuing his undergraduate degree, at first spending two years at Elmira College and then at Bucknell University, where he graduated with a B.A. in 1950. From there, Coots pursued religious education at Teachers College at Columbia and a Master of Divinity degree at Union Theological Seminary, where he graduated with a joint degree in 1953.

Coots was ordained a Unitarian Universalist minister at the Universalist Church of the Divine Paternity in 1953, the same congregation Coots served as Assistant Minister while in seminary. Following his stay in New York, Coots served as minister of the First Universalist Church in Cortland, New York from 1953 to 1958, and later at the Canton Universalist Church in 1958, a congregation Rev. Coots would remain with until retiring in 1992. In addition to his ecumenical work, Coots taught a course on contemporary social problems at Clarkson College in Nebraska and continued speaking in Universalist settings well into retirement, including the Unitarian Church of Bareveld in New York, the Unitarian Fellowship of Kingston in Ontario, and the Central Square New York Universalist Church. Among Coots' awards and honors are a Doctorate of Sacred Theology accorded by Starr King School for the Ministry (1978), the Human Services Award from the State University of Potsdam (1983), and a North Country Citation through St. Lawrence University in 1990.

Coots tended to his lifelong love of art through sculpture, a medium he returned to in retirement, and through his writings on Unitarian Universalist teachings. In partial completion of his joint

M.A. from Columbia and Union, Reverend Coots submitted a 62-slide cartoon with full-color illustrations depicting aspects of a youth-oriented Unitarian Universalist education. In 1999, a selection of Coots' sculptures were featured at an exhibition at St. Lawrence University titled "The Sublime and the Ridiculous". Reverend Coots authored three books during his life: *Seasons of the Self* (1971), *View from a Tree* (1989), and *Leaning Against the Wind: A Selection of Sermons* (1992).

A community gardener with a particular fondness for wild edible plants, church handyman and active participant in his North Country community, Reverend Coots was beloved in and beyond the Unitarian Universalist Church. Coots married three times and had three sons, a stepdaughter and three stepsons. Reverend Coots died at home in Canton, New York on March 3, 2009. He was 81 years old.

Sources:

"In Memory... Max Alden Coots, 1927-2009" by Jessica Cambio and "Max Alden Coots, 1927-2009", Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, uuma.org

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, NY. uucantonny.org

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Coots Papers consists of one box of full-color cardstock illustrations created and submitted as part of his masters' thesis while at Union.

Processing

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Materials were previously housed in a slumping position, and attempts were made to safely flatten materials before refolding.

Contents list

Series 1: Union/Columbia M.A. Thesis Cartoon, 1953

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
--------	-----	--------	----------

1	1	1-5	Columbia/UTS M.A. Thesis – “Thinking It Through”, 1953
---	---	-----	--