

Jacob Devers, York County's 4-star World War II General was born in 1887 in York on West York Ave, now known as Roosevelt Avenue. He graduated from York High in 1905 and lived up to his school class prophecy "General Jacob Devers". In 1909, he graduated from West Point 39th in a class of 103, 7 higher than classmate George Patton. Devers became the youngest general at age 53 during the summer of 1941. He helped plan and organize the invasion of southern France following Normandy. He served in the Army for 44 years retiring in 1949.

In 1962, Jake presented his official papers; both military and personal to the Historical Society of York County; over pressure to place them elsewhere. Released in stages, this collection consists of 110 feet of material; including 136 5" acid free boxes, 90 photo albums, 14 scrapbooks and over 60 oral histories. In one of these interviews he attributes his "strength as coming from York and that is why he placed his papers here". These papers; consisting of correspondence, military orders and telegrams were de-classified and organized on a very basic level. Original letters from this collection include from Generals George Marshall, George Patton and a general, future president and Gettysburg resident Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower. The beauty of this collection is that it is well-rounded encompassing both his military as well as his personal life.

In 1968, the organization of these papers advanced to the point to begin conversations with a potential author of a biography on General Devers. Colonel Thomas E. Griess, a professor of Military Art and Engineering at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, directed research for the book. According to the HSYC 1970 annual report, this task was estimated to take five years. "The Colonel would write the Devers book and arrange for its publication, in exchange for anticipated royalties on sale of the volume. The Society will finance research activities."

A 66 page finding guide was created and copies were placed at other repositories, such as the Army War College in Carlisle Researchers from various levels and capacities have accessed this material over the years; from the amateur historian to the professional and fruits of their efforts abound. A prime example of use of this material is the recently written *General Jacob L. Devers the War Letters 1943-1945* by recent York College graduate Sarah Zimmerman. She completed this work as her project for the Millard E. Gladfelter Trust Award which provides a grant for research into some aspect of York County history.

Correspondence between retired General Griess, June Lloyd, YCHT Librarian/Archivist as well as John D. Zimmerman, former YCHT board member continued during the 1990's. General Griess spent several days in York during the spring of 1998 to gather further information and chapter one had been shared with June Lloyd and John Zimmerman. Unfortunately, General Griess passed away in February, 2004 prior to the books completion.

Over consideration of the U. S. Army Military Institute and West Point, Mrs. Griess was advised to place her husband's research; 32 5" Hollinger boxes of papers etc. on General Devers in the YCHT Library/Archives. Placement of his research on Devers combined

with the current holdings of General Devers Collection will facilitate historians research and increase the chances of a good biography on Devers being completed.

York and York County have continued to honor their native son; continuing to Save General Devers. In 1940, the Devers School opened in York. The Historical Society of York County published *Jake the General from West York Avenue* by Michael Markey in 1998. The following year PHMC and the Historical Society of York County placed a State Historical Marker in front of his birthplace on Roosevelt Avenue. A mural *York's Defenders of Freedom* honoring General Devers and York County World War II veterans was completed in 2001.

DEVERS COLLECTION –

Library collection

110 feet of material includes

- 136 – 5” Hollinger boxes of papers
- 90 photo albums
- 14 scrapbooks

4 personal photo albums purchased from Sid Stoen (Devers personal photographer)

The materials were organized by the Historical Society of York County many years ago. The papers were then organized on a very basic level and placed into Hollinger acid free boxes. Due to the depth and importance of this collection; with numerous military orders and correspondence that contain famous signatures, it requires a complete inventory. Another priority is proper placement into acid free folders with the transfer of the identification as well as the removal of metal paper clips. 2000 Hollinger legal size acid free folders and archival clips need to be purchased to accomplish this. Copies of the more valuable documents would be made with the originals being placed into the YCHT's Rare Book Room.

The 90 photo albums are in varied conditions; most of these albums were typical of the time using the black very-acidic paper. The bindings of many of these albums are separating. Each item needs to be evaluated individually to determine the proper archival methods to be taken. Some contain the identification of the photograph on the acidic black paper while others have the identification written on the back of the photograph. The 60 oral histories were transcribed but the original cassette tape recordings need to be transferred to digital WAV format which is a non-compressed audio file retaining its audio quality.

Upon completion of this reorganization, a detailed finding aid would be created for placement on our website, informing all of its location here.

Curatorial department

112 objects catalogued: 65 medals, 5 swords

- 1986.108.48.1 - Silver medal with petal-like rays radiating out to different lengths; surface is raised and multifaceted; white enameled star sits over top of this surface and star has a gold circle in center with Egyptian writing in blue; gold crown attached at top of star between 2 rays. "Lattes" is stamped in center of back.
- 1986.108.48.2 - Smaller but similar medal to 1986.108.48.1. Gold crown is not on star but is attached at top of medal and it is turn attaches to the blue and yellow ribbon.
- 1986.108.54 - Circular gold medal; front pictures two profiles of a man's head and shoulders with "Soldier / Statesman" at lower right; around medal reads - "George Catlett Marshall Medal * A. U. S. A." Reverse reads - "Presented / to / Jacob L. Devers / For / Selfless Service to / the United States / Of America".
- 1986.108.52 - French Legion of Honor. Ten prong silver medal with woman's head in center and wording around it reads - "Republique Francaise *1870* Honneur Et Patrie."
- 1986.108.50 - bronze medal in the shape of a stylized cross and two swords crisscrossed behind it; center of medal had profile of man's head and wording around it reads - "Republique Francaise". Reverse reads - "1939 / 1940".
- Cane of his grandfathers Jacob Loucks unaccessioned :
- 4-star helmet unaccessioned :