



The Wittliff Collections

Southwestern Writers Collection

Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection

Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos

A Guide to the Wick Fowler Collection

1944-1991 (Bulk dates: 1944-1945, 1965-1978)

Collection 124

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Wick Fowler
Title:	The Wick Fowler Collection
Dates:	1944-1991 (Bulk dates: 1944-1945, 1965-1978)
Abstract:	Journalist and chili enthusiast Wick Fowler (1909-1972) was born Homer Thomas Wilson Fowler in Big Sandy, Texas and grew up in Victoria, Texas. The Wick Fowler papers span 1944-1991 (bulk dates: 1944-1945, 1965-1978) and document Fowler's journalism work as well as the Chili Appreciation Society International and Fowler's 2-Alarm Chili product.
Identification:	Collection 124
Extent:	3 boxes and 4 oversized boxes (9.25 linear feet)
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Biographical Sketch/Historical Sketch

Journalist and chili enthusiast Wick Fowler (1909-1972) was born Homer Thomas Wilson Fowler in Big Sandy, Texas and grew up in Victoria, Texas.

Fowler began his newspaper career at the *Austin American Statesman*, then joined the *Dallas Morning News*, and later became editor of the *Midland Reporter Telegram*. During World War II he served as the only Texas news correspondent, writing for the *Dallas Morning News*, and was awarded a Purple Heart after being wounded in Italy with fellow journalist Ernie Pyle. He followed the 36th Infantry Division, which was partially comprised of men from his former National Guard unit.

During the Vietnam War Fowler shipped out to Vietnam as a war correspondent for the *Denton Record Chronicle*. Again Fowler told the story of Texan soldiers. He returned later to cover the local boys for 15 Texas newspapers, and again with Texas businessman H. Ross Perot in attempts to return prisoners of war.

Fowler helped found the Chili Appreciation Society International and created Wick Fowler's 2-Alarm Chili product, both of which are still active. Both ideas were born of a chili cook-off first held in Terlingua, Texas in 1967, in which Fowler competed against Francis X. Tolbert, a friend and colleague at the *Dallas Morning News*.

Fowler was also a humorist, writing columns such as the "Towering Texan," "Fowler Fare," and "The World's Fare" from 1947-1968. He brought Wick Fowler's 2-Alarm Chili on his trips to Vietnam, and was called on to cheer the troops in World War II. Fowler also wrote on local issues such as the John F. Kennedy assassination in Dallas in which Texas governor John Connally was injured, crime and safety, and boating.

Sources:

Wood, Sam, "A tribute to Wick Fowler..." *Texas State Directory*, ca 1973, page 33.

Handbook of Texas Online, Alice M. Shukalo, "Fowler, Homer Thomas Wilson [Wick]," accessed August 18, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ffo50>.

Scope and Content Note

The Wick Fowler papers span 1944-1991 (bulk dates: 1944-1945, 1965-1978) and document Fowler's journalism work as well as the Chili Appreciation Society International and Fowler's 2-Alarm Chili product. The collection is arranged in 7 series: Biographical Information, Writings, Chili, Correspondence, Audio Recordings, General Newspapers, and Printed Material. The largest series, Chili, documents the chili cook-off in Terlingua, the Chili Appreciation Society International, and Wick Fowler's 2-Alarm Chili product, and contains articles and clippings, a scrapbook, promotional materials, photographic materials, and artifacts. Note that the while the scrapbook largely contains Chili-related clippings, awards, posters, advertisements, and a draft by Fowler, it also contains articles by Fowler on World War II, the Vietnam War, crime, and boating.

The second series, Writings, documents Fowler's career as a journalist. Subseries are World War II, Vietnam War, Humor, John Connally Assassination Attempt, Crime and Safety, and Boating. Each subseries contains clippings and columns by Fowler, including his "Vietnam Diary," a special insert for the *Dallas Morning News* on February 27, 1966. Other items of note include articles on journalist Ernie Pyle, clippings documenting Fowler's trip to Vietnam with Texas businessman H. Ross Perot, photographs of daily life in Vietnam and published photographs by Fowler. Also of note are two folders of notecards containing jokes, one-liners, and subject matter for speaking engagements.

The Correspondence series is also divided into periods, which are World War II, Vietnam, Chili, and family condolences. An exception to this is the Letters to Fowler, found in Writings-World War II, which includes hand-written and typed notes from various colleagues.

Many materials have been placed in oversized boxes. Researchers should note the box number on the container list as they are not always consecutive.

Index Terms:

Fowler, Wick, 1909-1972 Archives

Chili

Chili con carne

World War II, 1939-1945

Vietnam War, 1961-1975

Journalism

Humor

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Research access by appointment only. Please request a research appointment by using the form at <http://www.library.txstate.edu/about/departments/swwc/research-req-form.html>.

Preferred Citation

Wick Fowler Collection, Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Acquisition Information

Donated by Gordon Fowler & Marcia Ball in 2016.

Processing Information

Processed by Lauren Goodley in 2016.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Biographical Information

Box	Folder	
		Obituaries
1	1	<i>Austin American</i> , 1972
1	2	<i>Austin Statesman</i> , 1972
1	3	<i>Dallas Morning News</i> , 1972
1	4	Other newspapers, 1972
1	5	Clippings, 1972
1	6	Publications, 1972, 1978
1	7	Clippings scrapbook, 1972
		Newspapers
1	8	<i>Sparks</i> , 1944-1946, 1963 (<i>Dallas Morning News</i> -WFAA-KGKO Employees Roundtable)
1	9	Newspapers, 1944-1972
1	10	Clippings, 1944-1972
1	11	Small clippings, 1959, undated
1	12	Publications, 1969-1979
1	13	Articles on family, 1946, 1962-1973, 1989, undated
1	14	<i>Dallas Morning News</i> ad, 1945
1	15	Political ads, 1971, undated
2	1	Press Club of Dallas documents, 1965, undated
2	2	Writings on Victoria, Texas, undated
2	3	Awards, 1971, undated
2	4	Photographic material, undated (4 5x7 b&w prints, 8 8x10 b&w prints, 6 4x5 b&w prints, negatives, digital photographs-printouts available for access)

Series II: Writings

Box	Folder	
		World War II
2	5	Notes, ca 1945

2 6 Articles by Fowler, 1945

Series II: Writings, cont.

Box	Folder	
2	7	Articles by Fowler (scrapbook), 1945
2	8	Documents, 1944, undated (cartoons, military documents, war correspondents meeting documents)
2	9	Ernie Pyle articles, 1944-1945
2	10	"Tribute to Ernie Pyle" audio reel, undated
		Oversized
3	1	Articles by Fowler (oversized, scrapbook), 1945, undated
3	2	Articles by Fowler (oversized), 1944-1945
3	3	Articles by Fowler (oversized), 1970
3	4	Letters to Fowler, ca 1945
3	5	General newspapers, 1945, 1947
		Vietnam War
		Oversized
3	6	"Vietnam Diary", <i>Dallas Morning News</i> special insert, Feb. 27, 1966
3	7	Clippings by Fowler, 1966-1969, undated
3	8	General newspapers and maps, 1965
2	11	Photographs, ca 1960s (scenes of daily life, airplane; 17 3 ½x2 ½ b&w prints, 2 5x7 b&w prints)
2	12	Newspaper photographs by Fowler, 1966-1969, undated
2	13	Clippings on Fowler, 1966, 1970, undated
2	14	Clippings on Ross Perot, 1970, undated
2	15	Fowler event schedules, 1966, 1970, undated
		Humor
2	16-17	Notecards, undated (2 folders)
2	18	"Towering Texan" column, Feb. 1947-April 1947
2	19	"Fowler Fare" column, 1963-1969, undated
2	20	"The World's Fare" column, Jan. 25-July 25, 1967, 1968, undated
2	21	"The World's Fare" column, 1968, undated
2	22	Other columns, 1963, 1968
		Oversized
3	9	Columns, 1967, undated
3	10	"Star Bright" column, 1971 (<i>Austin American-Statesman</i> insert)

Series II: Writings, cont.

Box	Folder	
		John Connally assassination attempt
3	11	Articles by Fowler, 1963
3	12	General articles, 1963
5	1	Notes and inauguration invitation, 1963, 1965
		Other writings
5	2	Crime and Safety, 1968-1969, undated (speech, clippings, documents, political ad)
5	3	Boating-article by Fowler, 1963

Series III: Chili

Box	Folder	
		Articles
4	1	Magazine articles, 1967-1968, 1982
4	2	Clippings, 1964-1968
4	3	Clippings (large), 1964-1967
4	4	Clippings (large), 1968
4	5	Clippings, 1969
4	6	Clippings (large), 1970
4	7	Clippings, 1970
4	8	Clippings (large), 1971
4	9	Clippings, 1971-1974
4	10	Clippings (large), 1972-1978
4	11	Clippings, undated
4	12	Scrapbook, 1945, 1965-1970 (Chili clippings, also award, posters, advertisements, draft by Fowler; and Fowler articles on World War II, Vietnam War, crime, boating)
		Promotion
4	13	Tabloid and broadsheets, 1962, undated
4	14	Poster, undated
Mapcase Drawer 9		Poster, 1981 (2 copies)

Series III: Chili, cont.

Box	Folder	
		Photographic material
5	4	(7) 8x10 b&w prints, circa 1960s
5	5	(40) 3.5x3.5 and 3.5 x 4.5 b&w and color prints, circa 1960s
5	6	"Terlingua 1968," (93) 3.5x3.5 prints, 1967, undated
5	7	"Terlingua 1969," negatives
5	8	"Terlingua Nov. 71" negatives
		Artifacts
5	9	Documents, 1968-1975 and undated (press release, proclamation, speech)
5	10	Printed materials, 1975 and undated (business cards, cooking guide, label, letterhead)
5	11	"Wick Fowler's Famous 2-alarm Chili" packaging, undated
5	12	Bumper stickers (2), 1975, undated
5	13	"Mis amigos hambrientos" cookbook by Allegani Jani Schofield, 1972 (includes memory of Fowler, page 22)

Series IV: Correspondence

Box	Folder	
6	1	World War II correspondence, 1944-1946, undated
6	2	Vietnam War correspondence, 1965-1972
6	3	Chili correspondence, 1967-1980
6	4	Condolences to Fowler family, 1972
6	5	Various, 1968, undated
6	6	Envelopes, 1945-1970

Series V: Audio Recordings

Box	Folder	
		¼ in reel-to-reel tape
6	7	"#1", undated
6	8	"McDonalds 1/70"
6	9	"Barbershop / November 12, 1967"
6	10	Unlabeled, undated
6	11	Unlabeled, undated

Series VI: General Newspapers

Box	Folder	
7	1	Clippings, 1966-1972, undated
7	2	Newspapers, 1967-1974, 1991
7	3	<i>The Victoria Advocate</i> , Historical Edition, 1968

Series VII: Printed Material

Box	Folder	
7	4	Humorous dollar bill, 1952; Headliners Club seal, undated