

Guide to the Virginia B. Greer Papers

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: Virginia Bradford Greer, 1919-2008.

Title: Virginia B. Greer Papers

Dates: 1942-1997 (bulk 1960-1968)

Quantity: 18.6 linear feet

Abstract: Contains copies of Greer's articles in various newspapers and magazines, as well as material related to her three books and unpublished short stories.

Accession: 07-09-465; 465-2007

Biographical Note:

Virginia Bradford Greer was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 30, 1919. At the age of three, Virginia's parents moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where she grew up and married John Robert Greer in 1936. The couple moved to Mobile in the summer of 1937 after John's employer, the Alabama Power Company, transferred him to that city. In 1952 Virginia took a writing correspondence course from the Newspaper Institute of America. Greer began sending short stories and poems to magazines in the early 1950s, and on September 16, 1954, began working for the Mobile Press Register. Her first assignment with the paper was to "liven up" the society pages, or what had come to be called the "Women's Department" of the paper. The following year she resigned her position with the Press Register, in part due to her disappointment with the types of articles her editors expected her to contribute to the page. In 1962 she returned to the paper, this time as a full-time staff reporter, contributing to more than just the women's page. One Greer story published by the paper that year was her interview with Alice Frazer, the last witness to Mobile's 1897 Yellow Fever epidemic.

In the years between her resignation from the paper in 1955 and her return to it in 1962, Greer continued her passion of writing. Her articles have appeared in such periodicals as *Woman's Life*, *Your Life*, *Success Unlimited*, *Modern Maturity*, *Home Life*, *Church Recreation*, and, under the pseudonyms Lee Bradford and Lee Hamilton, in *True Police Cases*. Her article

about Alice Frazer was later reprinted in Literary Mobile in 2003. Greer's Press Register stories won several awards, including the "Alma" from the American Home Laundry Association for outstanding journalism.

Greer was a member of the Mobile branch of Pen Women and the Toastmistress Club. She is also the author of four books. Give Them Their Dignity (1968) recounts the year that Greer spent teaching youth in a local church. The Glory Woods: A Hymn of Healing (1976), chronicles her personal battle with cancer. Emergency: The True Story of a Woman's Faith and Service as an Emergency Room Volunteer (1977) is also drawn from her personal experiences. Her final book, Mobile, Talk About Town! (1985) discusses some of Mobile's most memorable social and literary characters.

Virginia Greer died in California in February 2008.

Scope and Contents:

Consists of short stories, newspaper articles, manuscripts, and correspondence written by Virginia Greer. The papers also contain subject files on various authors and events, as well as research notes and photographs. In addition, the papers are comprised of various printed materials relating to Mobile General Hospital and the United States Department of State.

Arrangement:

Arranged into seven series:

Series 1. Correspondence, 1942-1997 (1.25 cubic feet);

Series 2. Manuscripts and Articles, 1951-1987 (2 cubic feet);

Series 3. Subject Files (1 cubic foot);

Series 4. Photographs (.25 cubic feet);

Series 5. Miscellaneous Printed Material (1.5 cubic feet);

Series 6. Autographed Books (3 cubic feet);

Series 7. Audio Cassettes.

Access Restrictions: This material is open to research.

Preferred Citation: Virginia B. Greer Papers, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL.

Series Description:

Series 1: Correspondence, 1942-1997

Personal and professional correspondence on a variety of topics, arranged chronologically. The series also contains two folders of undated greeting cards. A separate box contains date books and journals for sporadic years between 1968-1996.

Series 2: Manuscripts and Articles, 1951-1987 Comprising the bulk of the collection, this series contains correspondence and drafts of Greer's four books, as well as unpublished short stories and copies of her newspaper and magazine articles. The series also contains the manuscript of Greer's unpublished autobiography, *Confessions of a Peanut Butter Counter*.

Series 3: Subject Files Alphabetically filed material relating to Greer's writing and civic interest. The series contains correspondence and clippings of several well-known southern authors, such as Winston Groom, Hodding Carter, and Willie Norris.

Series 4: Photographs

The majority of photographs in this series were removed from her newspaper files. Interested researchers are encouraged to check the *Press Register* photograph files (arranged chronologically) for images included in Greer's newspaper articles. The series also contains prints and negatives for *Mobile: Talk About Town!*

Series 5: Miscellaneous Printed Material

This series contains copies of *The Pulse*, published for the staff of Mobile General Hospital, where Greer volunteered. Also included are materials from the United States Department of State, the Newspaper Institute of America, and two manuscripts given to Greer for editing.

Galley proofs of *Mobile: Talk About Town!* and several large promotional posters are also included.

Series 6: Autographed Books Three boxes of autographed books by various authors. All other books in this collection were donated to the University of South Alabama Library and may be found in the catalog at: <http://library.southalabama.edu/>

Content List:

Series 1: Correspondence, 1942-1997

Box 1

1-22. Correspondence, 1942-1947, 1950-1997, and undated 23-24. Correspondence, Greeting Cards **Box 2**

Date Books and Journals, 1967-1996 (coverage is very spotty)

Series 2: Manuscripts and Articles

Box 3

- 1-8. *Give Them Their Dignity*, Correspondence, 1961-1971, and n.d.
9. *Give Them Their Dignity*, Reviews and Press Clippings, 1968-1969
10. *Give Them Their Dignity*, Notes
- 11-19. *Emergency!* Correspondence, 1969-1971, 1975-1977, 1979-1981, and n.d.
- 21-24. *Emergency Room!* Manuscript, October 28, 1969
25. *Pink Lady in Emergency Room*, Manuscript (Short)
26. *Pink Lady in Emergency Room*, Manuscript (Long)
27. "Jesus Ain't Never Late:" *The Story of a Hospital Pink Lady*, Manuscript
28. *Emergency!* Final Manuscript, 1977
29. *Emergency!* Revision Notes
- 30-34. *The Glory Woods*, Correspondence, November 1973-October 1974, June 1975-June 1985, and n.d.
35. *The Glory Woods*, Excerpts
36. *The Glory Woods*, Reviews and Press Clippings
37. *The Glory Woods*, Notes 38. *The Glory Woods*, Contracts and Royalties
39. *Mobile: Talk About Town!* Correspondence, 1981-1985
40. *Mobile: Talk About Town!* Manuscript, 1985
41. *Mobile: Talk About Town!* Edited Chapters
42. *Mobile: Talk About Town!* Reviews and Press Clippings
43. *Confessions of a Peanut Butter Counter*, Correspondence, 1987-1988
- 44-47. *Confession of a Peanut Butter Counter*, Manuscript, 1987
48. *Confessions of a Peanut Butter Counter*, Notes

Box 4

1. "A Friend, A Daughter, and Annie"
2. "A Jazz Man Dies"
3. "A Little Dirt"
4. "A Rose by Any Other Flavor"
5. "A Shipboard Romance"
6. "A Trying Time for Clarence"
7. "Across the Gap..." Collected Short Stories
8. "Analysis of Escape"
9. "Cancer Facing"
10. "Chilton Powell"
11. "Constructive College Students"
12. "Control Yourself – And Your Ulcer"
13. "Declaration"
14. "Don't Drink Out of the Gutter"
15. "Don't Wait Too Long"
16. "The Face of Goodbye"
17. "Faith and God and Joy"
18. "Fledgling"
19. "Flying Story"
20. "Handel and the Young Buddhists"
21. "How I Got Mad as Hell"
22. "I Remember Death"
23. "I Saw a Jesus People"
24. "I Was a Woman Juror"
25. "Improvisation: On the Evolution of Jazz"
26. "In Search of a Funeral"
27. "Incident on a Porch"
28. "Instant Language in Origami"
29. "Iron 'Em Out"
30. "Jerry and the Easter Egg Tree"
31. "The Lady of Primrose Lane" (Prostitution in Mobile)
32. "Landlordism and Wartime Flying Roomers"
33. "Leinkauf Memories"
34. "Madame Rose"
35. "Madam Badham's Biggest Adjustment"
36. "Memories Ripped Up"
37. "The Message"
38. "Mobile History Under Glass: The Overbey Collection"
39. "Mr. Fixit"
40. "Mule Trolley 'Dinner Boy'"
41. "The Murderous Tale of an Oak"
42. "My Son Rides a Motorcycle"
43. "No Appointment Necessary"
44. "No Simple Act"
45. "Of Aches and Pains"
46. "On Going Out of Print"
47. "Opportunities Knock Frequently"
48. "PAC – Breakthrough in Mental Illness Rehabilitation"
49. Poems and Quotes
50. "The Quiet People"
51. "Quotes from the Underground"

52. "Random Notes from Rose's Café"
53. "Reflections on a Tarnished Eye" (Hurricane Frederic)
54. "Rejection of Louis"
55. "RLS: Glad Beatnik of Edinburgh"
56. "Shack-Up Time"
57. "The Silver Thread of Truth"
58. "Steve Sloan: Quarterback for Christ"
59. "The Story of Mobile Mental Health Center"
60. "Spirit in the Woods"
61. "Teen-Age Christmas Prayer"
62. "They Said it to My Face"
63. "To Aunt Helen"
64. "Toward My Frontier"
65. "Tryst with Faith"
66. "Turkey for Eight"
67. "Two Mr. Novaks Talk School"
68. "Washington Square and Mrs. Beck"
69. "What Burglary Did to Me"
70. "What Space can do for the World"
71. "Why Go on Writing?"
72. "Wilhelmina's Wondrous Words"
73. "The Wilted Wits"
74. "Would Your Patients Recommend You?"
75. "Your Children's Message"
76. "Your Credit is You"
- 77-96. Newspaper Articles, 1951-1954, January 1962-October-1965, February 1966-June 1966, 1967-1970, 1975
97. Newspaper Articles, *Birmingham News*, June 26, 1977
- 98-99. Newspaper Articles, 1985-1986, 1990, 1997
- 100-102. Magazine Articles, 1953-1972, 1974-1978

Series 3: Subject Files

Box 5

1. Alabama Writer's Conclave
2. American Home Laundry Association
3. Andrews, Raymond
4. Books & Company
5. Carter, Hodding
6. Church Recreation
7. Communication Conference, 1969
8. Communism
9. "Contact Mobile"
10. Degussa America
11. Dynamics of Grief
12. First Baptist Church of Mobile
13. Frazer Family (See also Tucker Frazer papers in Eichold Collection)
14. Gayfer's Department Store
15. Groom, Winston
16. Interview, 1985
17. Haunted Bookshop

18. Medical Association of the State of Alabama
19. Miscellaneous Authors
20. Miscellaneous Pamphlets
21. Mobile Mental Health Center
22. Mobile Press Register
23. Morris, Willie
- 24-25. Newspaper Institute of America
26. Personal Adjustment Center – News and Views
27. Reader's Digest, 1962-1976
28. Rayford, Julian
29. Religion
30. Russia
31. Seattle Earthquake, 1965
32. Sholes Typewriters
33. Sledge, E.B.
34. Speeches
35. Toastmistresses Club
36. University of South Alabama
37. Writers

Series 4: Photographs

Box 6

- 1-4. Photographs, *Press Register*, 1962-1967
5. Photographs, Virginia Greer
6. Photographs, *Mobile Talk About Town!*
7. Photographs, Color
8. Photographs, Miscellaneous, undated

Series 5: Miscellaneous Printed Materials

Box 7

1. *The Pulse* (Mobile General Hospital) August 1968 – May 1970
2. Department of State Press Briefings, November 2, 1962 – February 6, 1964

Box 8

1. Newspaper Institute of America Handbook for Writers, 1949
2. Burks, Nell. "Once Upon a Time There Was a House"
3. Sage, Joan. "The 'Grilling' Story of St. Joan the Bar-Be-Cued"

Box 9

1. Galley proofs of *Give Them Their Dignity*
2. Galley Proofs of *Mobile: Talk About Town!*
3. Unidentified portrait

Series 6: Autographed Books

Box 10

Andrews, Raymond. *Jesie and Jesus and Cousin Claire*. Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 1991.
Betty, Stafford. *Sunlit Waters: The Whale and the Girl Who Cared*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990.

_____. *The Rich Man: A Galilean Chronicle*. New York: Saint Martins Press, 1984.

_____. *Sing Like the Whippoorwill*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987.

Bragg, Rick. *All Over But the Shoutin'*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1997.

Burns, Elizabeth. *The Late Liz*. New York: Popular Library, 1957.

Carmer, Carl. *Stars Fell on Alabama*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1985.

Childress, Mark. *Crazy in Alabama*. New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1993.

_____. *Gone for Good*. New York: Alfred Knopf

_____. *V for Victor*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988

Cline, C. Terry. *The Attorney Conspiracy*. New York: Faucet Crest Books, 1983.

_____. *Damon*. New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1987

_____. *Death Knell*. New York: G.P Putnam and Sons, 1977

Cotten, Nell. *Piney Woods*. New York: The Vanguard Press, 1962.

Deal, Borden. *Walk Through the Valley*. New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1956

Dickson, Frank A. *The Freelancer's Treasury of Article Ideas*. New York: Channel Press, 1961.

Dotson, Bob. *In Pursuit of the American Dream*. New York: Athenaeum Books, 1985.

Edwards, Annie, *The Road to Tara: The Life of Margaret Mitchell*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1987.

Ezzell, Ben, *The Editor's Ass & other Newspaper Tales from Fifty Years Behind the Desk of Editor Ben Ezzell*. The Canadian Record, 1986.

Flagg, Fannie. *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*. New York: Random House, 1987.

Gibran, Kahil. *The Prophet*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963.

Goellner, Aladar. *Von Ranke and the American: Seven Colloquies*. New York: Exposition Press, 1967.

Greenhaw, Wayne. *Flying High: Inside Big-time Drug Smuggling*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1984.

Groom, Winston. *As Summers Die*. New York: Summit Books, 1980.

_____. *Gone the Sun*. New York: Doubleday Books, 1988.

Groom, Winston and Duncan Spencer. *Conversations with the Enemy: The Story of PFC Robert Garwood*. New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1983.

Box 11

Hearin, Emily Staples. *Downtown Goes Uptown*. First Southern Federal Savings and Loan Association, 1983.

Hearon, Olive. *Abraham's Children*. Bay Minette: Lavender Press, 1998.

Higginbotham, Jay. *Brother Holifield*. New York: Thomas-Knull & Company, 1972.

_____. *Fast Train Russia*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1983.

Jenkins, Peter. *A Walk Across America*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1979.

Kennington, S. Albert. *From the Days of Small Things: The Story of Trinity Church, Mobile, AL*. Mobile: Factor Press, 1996.

Larson, Robert E. ed., *Preparing to Listen: A Sourcebook of Teleministry Training*. CONTACT Teleministries USA, PA: 1981.

McGuane, Thomas. *The Bushwhacked Piano*. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1984.

_____. *Something to be Desired*. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1984.

McLaurin, Melton and Michael Thomason. *Mobile: The Life and Times of a Great Southern City*. Woodland Hills: Windsor Publications, 1981.

Morris, Willie. *The Courting of Marcus Dupree*. New York: Doubleday Books, 1983.

_____. *Terrains of the Heart and Other Essays on Home*. Oxford, MS: Yoknapatwpha Press, 1981.

Richards, Judith. *After the Storm*. Atlanta: Peachtree Press, 1987.

_____. *Summer Lightning*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978.

Riddick, Tut. *People to Know*. Mobile: Easter Publishing Company, 1977.

Schwartz, Marylyn. *A Southern Belle Primer, Or Why Princess Margaret will Never be a Kappa Kappa Gamma*. New York: Doubleday Books, 1991.

Box 12

Sibley, Celestine. *The Celestine Sibley Sampler: Writings and Photographs*. Atlanta: Peachtree Press, 1996.

Sledge, Eugene B. *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*. New York: Presido Press, 1981.

Thomason, Michael. *Trying Times: Alabama Photographs, 1917-1945*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985.

Toulmin, Harry T. *The Great Bingville Fair: People and Place in Early Toulminville*. Daphne: The Village Press, 1983.

Wells, Dean Faulkner, ed. *The Great American Writers' Cookbook*. Oxford, MS: Yoknapatawpha Press, 1981.

Wilkes, Paul, ed. *Merton: By Those Who Knew Him Best*. New York: Harper and Row, 1984.

Series 7: Audio Cassette

Box 13

Audio recording of Greer's appearances on *Gulf Coast Today*, WALA-TV, April 13, 1976, and *Woman's World*, WKRG-TV, April 22, 1976.

Pulse articles written by Virginia Greer

(listed alphabetically by title)

"Auxiliary Pays Cost of MGH Laboratory Equipment," vol. 2, no. 1, August 1969

"Auxiliary President Brings Experience to New Challenge," vol. 1, no. 11, June 1969

"Auxiliary Rings up \$\$\$ for Hospital," vol. 1, no. 6, January 1969

"Candy-Strippers Meet Vital Summer Needs," vol. 1, no. 12, July 1969

"Christmas Trees in General," vol. 2, no. 5, December 1969

"Fingerprints on Altar Rail Mute Testimony in Chapel," vol. 2, no. 4, November 1969

"Flowers, Flowers! See the Gift Shop," vol. 2, no. 3, October 1969

"Night Pediatric Service Needs Volunteers," vol. 2, no. 7, February 1970

"Rainbow - Gold - Volunteers," vol. 1, no. 4, November 1968

"Six Ministers Enter Clinical Study Program," vol. 1, no. 3, October 1968

"Volunteers Can Fill a Need in Mental Care," vol. 2, no. 6, January 1970

"Volunteer Chaplaincy Program Great Asset," vol. 1, no. 2, September 1968

"Volunteers Undertake Far-Reaching Service," vol. 1, no. 1, August 1968

"Why is a Volunteer," vol. 2, no. 8, March 1970