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Kimbrough, Mary Alice (Sexton), 1907-1991 (MSS 495)

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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 495 KIMBROUGH, Mary Alice (Sexton), 1907-1991

1/2 box. 7 folders. 229 items. 1961-1981. Originals.

SC2014.62.1

See also: MSS 159 & SC1749

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mary Alice Kimbrough was born Mary Sexton on 9 August 1907 near Bethel, Tennessee, the daughter of Edward Harvey and Magdalene Jackson Sexton. Although the sixth of eight children, only five, William, David, Clara, Alma, and Mary, survived to adulthood. Soon after her birth, Mary's family moved to an estate near Minor Hill, Tennessee, where they lived and farmed. Throughout Mary's childhood, the family would alternately live in Minor Hill or on the farm.

Mary and her siblings attended school in Minor Hill, and Mary went on to attend the University of Tennessee. Although she was very involved in school life and excelled in academics, she returned home after one year of college and began working as a substitute teacher.

In the summer of 1928, Mary married William Joseph "Joe" Kimbrough, a clerical employee for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company. A son, William Joseph, Jr., was born in 1930. A second son, James "Jimmy" Edward, was born the following year. In the late 1930s, Mary began to lose the use of her limbs, and would occasionally fall down while walking. When doctors in Nashville were unable to diagnose her mysterious malady, she traveled to the Mayo Clinic in October 1941 where doctors soon discovered that Mary was suffering from "Spinal Muscular Atrophy," also known as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or "Lou Gehrig's Disease." At the time of her diagnosis, very little was known about the disease; within 9 years, she was in a wheelchair, and for the next 50 years the paralysis grew progressively worse.

In 1942, the family settled permanently in Bowling Green, Kentucky. They bought their home on Chestnut Street in 1961, and though practically homebound, for the next 30 years Mary spent her time by maintaining a voluminous correspondence, collecting rocks, making postcards, and contributing to the work of the First Baptist Church. She died on 31 January 1991, in a Bowling Green nursing home.

The Kimbroughs owned rental property in Bowling Green and managed several other properties for out-of-town owners. The house, at 720 State Street, that is the focus of these letters, was owned by Clara Gregory, who lived in Nashville, Tennessee. The letters are

addressed to Clara through 1970. During her time in Bowling Green, Clara Velma (Jones) Gregory lived at 720 State Street; she was the daughter of Thomas H. Jones and the wife of William Harris Gregory. She worked for many years as a telephone operator and attended First Baptist Church. After Clara's death in August 1971, the letters are addressed to Clara's daughter, Mildred (Gregory) Pugh of Nashville. Mildred had also worked for the telephone company and was married to Floyd A. Pugh. In 1972, the letters go from 4-page missives to terse, one-page memos.

COLLECTION NOTE

These newsy letters, 1961-1981, were written by Mary Kimbrough, Bowling Green, Kentucky, to the owners of a rental property managed by Kimbrough and her husband, Joe. The owner, Clara Gregory, was an absentee landlord residing in Nashville. Mrs. Kimbrough was an excellent correspondent, filling her letters with information about local news, murders, deaths, and community developments. She makes a number of comments about the Model Cities program and how it might affect local property owners. She also mentions President Kennedy's assassination and the moon landings. The letters to Clara stop upon her death on 5 August 1971; they pick up in July 1972 and are directed to Clara's daughter Mildred Pugh of Nashville. Mary and Mildred were not of the same generation, and undoubtedly Kimbrough perceived that all the Bowling Green news would bore Mildred. Folder 7 contains receipts for maintenance projects performed at 720 State Street. A large number of receipts were also transferred to the Kentucky Library Research Collections Ephemera Collection.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Mary Kimbrough	1961-1981	229 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Correspondence	1961-1965	39 items
Folder 3	Correspondence	1966-1969	46 items
Folder 4	Correspondence	1970-1975	45 items
Folder 5	Correspondence	1976-1981	57 items
Folder 6	Correspondence	n.d.	26 items
Folder 7	Receipts	1962-1970	15 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS KIMBROUGH, Mary Alice 1961-1981
495 (Sexton), 1907-1991

Letters written by Mary Kimbrough, Bowling Green, Kentucky, to Clara Gregory and Mildred (Gregory) Pugh, Nashville, Tennessee, related to a rental property owned by Clara Gregory at 720 State Street in Bowling Green. The newsy letters contain information about maintenance to the property and remarks about current events in Bowling Green as well as comments about national affairs.

½ box. 7 folders. 229 items. Originals.
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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Aviation – Accidents – Warren County – Comments about B1,F6
Bowling Green High School – Comments about B1,F3
Citizens National Bank – Bowling Green – Comments about, 1969 B1,F3
Courthouses – Warren County – Mentioned, 1965 B1,F2
Crime and criminals – Dynamiting – Mentioned, 1965 B1,F2
Crime and criminals – Mentioned, 1966-1969 B1,F3
Durbin's – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1977 B1,F5
Explosions – Bowling Green – Mentioned B1,F4
Fairview Shopping Center – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1967 B1,F3
Fountain Square Park – Bowling Green – Comments about, 1976 B1,F5
Gregory, Clara Velma (Jones), 1892-1971 – Letters to B1,F2-4,6
Helm Hotel – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1970 B1,F4
Kennedy, John Fitzgerald, 1917-1963 – Assassination – Mentioned, 1963 B1,F2
Mitchell, Jennie, d. 1966 – Comments about B1,F3
Mitchell, Mary – Comments about B1,F3
Model Cities Program – Bowling Green – Comments about, 1968-1970 B1,F3-4,6
Moon – Exploration – Comments about, 1965 B1,F2-3
Murders – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1970 B1,F4
Pugh, Mildred (Gregory), 1920-2013 – Letters to B1,F4-6
Race relations – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1966-1970 B1,F3-4
Receipts, 1962-1970 B1,F7
Rental housing – Maintenance and repairs
Roads – Warren County (Highway 68-80) – Mentioned, 1968 B1,F3
Robberies – Mentioned, 1964 B1,F2
Shopping centers – Bowling Green – Comments about, 1967 B1,F3

Troy Laundry – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1975 B1,F4
Urban renewal – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1966 B1,F3
Western Towers – Bowling Green – Mentioned, 1965 B1,F2

Jeffrey 06/17/2014