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## Clarke, Mary Louise (Washington), 1913-1999 (MSS 634)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
 Department of Library Special Collections  
 Western Kentucky University  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 634 CLARKE, Mary Louise (Washington), 1913-1999**

6 boxes. 57 folders. 1,236 items. 1943-1979. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

1969.44.1

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Mary Washington was born in Fayette County, West Virginia on 4 February 1913. She was educated at Marshall University (A. B., 1933), West Virginia University (M.A., 1936), and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D., 1960). She taught at Oak Hill (West Virginia) High School, at Marshall University, at Indiana State College (Pennsylvania), and at Chico (California) State College, where she met Kenneth W. Clarke. After their marriage in August 1960, they taught at the University of Nevada and at Indiana University's southeastern campus at Jeffersonville. In September 1964, both joined the faculty of Western Kentucky State College (now WKU), where they taught English and folklore and became the owners of a farm near Bowling Green.

Mary Washington's doctoral dissertation, "The Folklore of the Cumberlands as Reflected in the Writings of Jesse Stuart," was begun in 1953 and completed in 1959. It reflected her interest in the folklore of Appalachia and in Stuart, who she first heard when he spoke at a convocation in the mid-1930s. She adapted her dissertation into the first scholarly study of Stuart, published by McGraw-Hill on 31 July 1968 as *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky*. The book earned its author the first "Distinguished Service to the University" award given at WKU and also won second place in the Chicago Folklore Prize competition.

Mary (Washington) Clarke's other publications on Stuart included journal articles and contributions to *Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work* (1977, co-edited with J. R. LeMaster) and *Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism* (1978). She and her husband also became recognized authorities on Kentucky folklore, publishing *A Concise Dictionary of Folklore* in 1965 as well as numerous articles; from 1965-1970, Mary and Ken were the editors of the *Kentucky Folklore Record*. In 1970, they received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support a production for educational television titled "Kentucky Heritage: Traditional Quilting in Kentucky." In 1976, as part of the Kentucky Bicentennial Bookshelf series, the University Press of Kentucky published Mary's *Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers*, an illustrated work based on extensive research and interviews with quiltmakers conducted from 1970-1975.

Mary retired in June 1975. After Ken's retirement in 1977, the couple moved to California. Mary (Washington) Clarke died in Fremont, California on 30 April 1999.

## COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists primarily of research, correspondence and photographs relating to Mary (Washington) Clarke's scholarly studies of the work of Kentucky author Jesse Stuart. Also included is research and correspondence relating to her book on quilters and quilting in Kentucky. An inventory is in Box 1, Folder 1.

Box 1 contains mostly Jesse Stuart's letters to Mary (Washington) Clarke (often addressed jointly to Mary and Ken after their marriage), and letters to Clarke from various correspondents regarding *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* and other scholarly work on Stuart. Letters of Jesse Stuart from 1953-1959 (Folder 2) begin when he agrees to assist Clarke in writing her Ph.D. dissertation. He is cooperative and encouraging, telling her about his current writing and articles written about him, pointing out aspects of his work that would be useful for themes in her dissertation, and answering questions about folk speech in some of his stories. He also relates the aftermath of his serious 1954 heart attack. Stuart's letters from 1960-1967 (Folder 3), some written while he is teaching at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, praise Clarke's dissertation and encourage her to pursue publication with McGraw-Hill (also his publisher); he also supports Mary and Ken's other scholarship and their editorship of the *Kentucky Folklore Record*. He is delighted when McGraw-Hill agrees to publish *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky*, makes some corrections and suggestions for the manuscript, advises on various aspects of the publication process, and offers to attend autographing events. Stuart's letters from 1968-1969 (Folder 4) keep Clarke abreast of his writing projects, travel and speaking engagements, and a hospital stay occasioned by his periodic heart problems; when *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* is published, he monitors reviews of the book and encourages its promotion. He also begins to report on his daughter Jane's studies and literary work. Stuart's letters from 1970-1973 (Folder 5) offer his cooperation and advice on the project that would culminate in the publication of *Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work*. He asks if Mary and Ken experience professional jealousy from other faculty or anti-academic prejudice from the community, expresses his unhappiness with the University Press of Kentucky for turning down manuscripts from Stuart and his daughter, and mentions his ongoing heart problems. Letters of Stuart from 1974-1978 (Folder 6) discuss the progress of *Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work*, other books about him, and a production for educational television called "Jesse Stuart at Home"; he takes pride in being included in the anthology *American Fiction, 1900-1950*. He commiserates with Clarke about anonymous manuscript readers, continues his complaints about the University Press of Kentucky, and keeps her up to date on his work. His letters end in 1978 after he suffers a stroke. Christmas cards from the Stuart family (Folder 7) include photographs and messages. Additional material relating to *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* includes Stuart's draft foreword and Clarke's drafts of the preface (Folder 8); reviews and notices (Folder 9); and a scrapbook kept by Clarke relating mostly to the publication, promotion and reviews of the book (Folder 10). Clarke's general correspondence relating to Jesse Stuart from 1960-July 1968 (Folder 11) includes requests for his books from collectors and vendors, and material relating to permissions, promotion and other aspects of the publishing process for *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky*. Correspondence from 1968-1969 (Folder 12) includes congratulatory letters and appearance requests sent to Clarke on the publication of *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky*, her notes for remarks to a club meeting about "the birth of a book," and her letter regarding lost family memorabilia relating to her ancestor George Washington. Correspondence from 1970-1978 (Folder 13) includes a

California teacher's proposal to a Walt Disney executive for dramatizing one of Stuart's books, letters commenting on *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky*, correspondence with other Stuart scholars, and letters reporting on Stuart's condition after his stroke. Undated correspondence (Folder 14) includes drafts of queries regarding publication of *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* (initially titled *Jesse Stuart's Appalachia*). In correspondence with Clarke (Folder 15), Murray State University and Southern Illinois University librarian, folklorist and Stuart bibliographer Hensley Woodbridge offers assistance during Clarke's research for her dissertation, shares personal news, and keeps her well informed over many years about his work, Stuart's, and that of other Stuart scholars.

Box 2 contains correspondence of Mary (Washington) Clarke relating to two works of Stuart scholarship: *Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work* and *Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism*, as well as photographs, many taken by Kenneth Clarke. Correspondence from 1972 relating to *Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work* (Folder 1) begins with a proposal from the University Press of Kentucky that Clarke co-edit a volume of scholarly essays on Stuart's work with J. R. LeMaster of Defiance College in Ohio. The two court potential contributors and discuss planning, themes and deadlines. Correspondence from 1973 (Folder 2) includes some data from Hensley Woodbridge on publication figures for a few of Stuart's books. Clarke and LeMaster exchange critiques of papers submitted for the volume, but continue to solicit contributors and juggle other projects. Correspondence from 1974 (Folder 3) finds Clarke and LeMaster extending the deadline for completion of the manuscript as they continue their editing. Correspondence from 1975 (Folder 4) relates to finalizing the manuscript for submission to the University Press of Kentucky. Included is the report, largely unfavorable, of the reader for the Press, and the co-editors' attempts to coax revisions from the contributors. Correspondence from 1976 (Folder 5) covers submission of the revised manuscript, which receives a favorable reading, and a decision on the book's title. Further edits and queries by the Press elicit a hostile reaction from one of the contributors. Correspondence from 1976 (Folder 6) covers the final steps in readying the book for publication, including an unsuccessful attempt to have Robert Penn Warren compose a foreword. Clarke's correspondence relating to a subsequent work, *Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism*, (Folder 7) begins in 1971 with editor J. R. LeMaster's outline of the book project, in which an abridged chapter from *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* eventually appears. The remainder of Box 2 contains photographs of Jesse Stuart and his family, as well as of Mary and Kenneth Clarke at the Stuarts' home, "W-Hollow," in Greenup, Kentucky.

Box 3 contains material on Jesse Stuart collected by Mary (Washington) Clarke: biographical summaries (Folder 1); articles by and about Jesse Stuart published in magazines and periodicals (Folders 2-10); and newspaper clippings of articles by and about Stuart (Folders 11-12), arranged chronologically. Included (Folder 5) is an issue of *W-Hollow Harvest* from March 1967 containing Clarke's appreciation of Stuart and an autobiographical note in which she mentions her father's fifth-generation descent from George Washington's brother Charles.

Box 4 contains miscellaneous material regarding Jesse Stuart: newsletters, printed material, and bibliographies of Stuart and his daughter Jane (Folders 1-3); manuscript articles and scripts of Mary (Washington) Clarke (Folders 4-6) and clippings about the literary work of Stuart's daughter Jane (Folder 10). Of interest (Folder 8) is a copy of Stuart's book *The Thread That Runs So True*, inscribed to a journalist friend, Cary Robertson. Found with the book after Robertson's death (Folder 9) were Stuart's handwritten notes, apparently provided in support of a planned article by Robertson, providing extensive information about the "real-life" persons on whom the book's characters were based.

Box 5 contains research, correspondence and other material relating to Mary (Washington) Clarke's book *Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers*. Research notes (Folders 1-3) are derived from fieldwork, library research, the holdings of the Folklife Archives of WKU's Department of Library Special Collections, and the Kentucky Museum. Other source material (Folders 4, 5, 7) includes clippings, letters from quilters, and script notes for the production "Kentucky Heritage: Traditional Quilting in Kentucky." Correspondence with the University Press of Kentucky (Folder 6) covers editing, illustrations, permissions, possible titles and promotion, and includes a letter from Naomi Deane (Mrs. Jesse) Stuart regarding family quilts. Photographs of quilts used in research and for the book (Folders 8, 9) are in color and black and white. Box 6 contains file cards used to record research and data on informants and quilt patterns. These cards have not been included in the item count for this collection.

### **SHELF LIST**

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Mary (Washington) Clarke – Jesse Stuart</b>	<b>1953-1978</b>	<b>381 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory and related data		5 items
Folder 2	Jesse Stuart letters to Mary (Washington) Clarke	1953-1959	21 items
Folder 3	Jesse Stuart letters to Mary (Washington) Clarke	1960-1967	59 items
Folder 4	Jesse Stuart letters to Mary (Washington) Clarke	1968-1969	46 items
Folder 5	Jesse Stuart letters to Mary (Washington) Clarke	1970-1973	23 items
Folder 6	Jesse Stuart letters to Mary (Washington) Clarke	1974-1978	45 items
Folder 7	Jesse Stuart Christmas cards	1958-1975	15 items
Folder 8	<i>Jesse Stuart's Kentucky</i> – Drafts of foreword and preface	[1968]	4 items
Folder 9	<i>Jesse Stuart's Kentucky</i> – Reviews, notices	1968-1969	15 items
Folder 10	Scrapbook regarding publication of <i>Jesse Stuart's Kentucky</i> (correspondence, reviews, clippings, photographs) – filed in oversized C1,D7, #8	1967-1969	1 item
Folder 11	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding Jesse Stuart	1960- July 1968	27 items
Folder 12	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding Jesse Stuart	Aug. 1968- 1969	56 items

Folder 13	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding Jesse Stuart	1970-1978	21 items
Folder 14	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding Jesse Stuart	n.d.	9 items
Folder 15	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence with Hensley C. Woodbridge	1958-1978	34 items
<b>BOX 2</b>	<b>Mary (Washington) Clarke – Jesse Stuart</b>	<b>1943-1978</b>	<b>266 items</b>
Folder 1	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work</i>	1972	32 items
Folder 2	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work</i>	1973	53 items
Folder 3	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work</i>	1974	47 items
Folder 4	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work</i>	1975	49 items
Folder 5	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work</i>	1976	41 items
Folder 6	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work</i>	1977-1978	9 items
Folder 7	Mary (Washington) Clarke correspondence with J. R. LeMaster regarding <i>Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism</i>	1971-1975	8 items
Folder 8	Jesse Stuart – Photographs	1943-1974	3 items
Folder 9	Jesse Stuart – Photographs by Kenneth Clarke	1968	6 items
Folder 10	Jesse Stuart – Photographs by Kenneth Clarke	1969	16 items
Folder 11	Jesse Stuart – Negatives of Kenneth Clarke photos	1969	2 items
<b>BOX 3</b>	<b>Mary (Washington) Clarke – Jesse Stuart</b>	<b>1953-1978</b>	<b>178 items</b>
Folder 1	Jesse Stuart – Biographical summaries	n.d.	2 items

Folder 2	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1953-1957	9 items
Folder 3	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1958-1963	7 items
Folder 4	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1965-1966	7 items
Folder 5	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1967	10 items
Folder 6	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1968-1970	16 items
Folder 7	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1972	8 items
Folder 8	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1973-1974	6 items
Folder 9	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	1975-1977	7 items
Folder 10	Articles, writing by and about Jesse Stuart	n.d.	9 items
Folder 11	Clippings of articles by and about Jesse Stuart	1953-1967	46 items
Folder 12	Clippings of articles by and about Jesse Stuart	1968-1978, n.d.	51 items
<b>BOX 4</b>	<b>Mary (Washington) Clarke – Jesse Stuart</b>	<b>1955-1979</b>	<b>67 items</b>
Folder 1	Murray State University – Jesse Stuart Newsletter; Creative writing workshop	1960-1961; 1977	4 items
Folder 2	Miscellaneous printed material regarding Jesse Stuart	1955-1975	9 items
Folder 3	Bibliographies of Jesse Stuart and Jane Stuart compiled by Hensley C. Woodbridge	1965-1975	14 items
Folder 4	“Proverbs, Proverbial Phrases, and Proverbial Comparisons in the Writings of Jesse Stuart,” by Mary (Washington) Clarke	n.d.	1 item
Folder 5	Kentucky Heritage scripts, “Kentucky in Literature”; Kentucky Heritage in Jesse Stuart’s Writing”	1969	2 items
Folder 6	“Jesse Stuart’s Use of Local Legends,” by Mary (Washington) Clarke	[1977]	1 item

Folder 7	“Archaic English Words Used in North Eastern Kentucky,” by Mona R. Combs	1958	1 item
Folder 8	Copy of <i>The Thread That Runs So True</i> , inscribed by Jesse Stuart to Cary Robertson	1963	1 item
Folder 9	Jesse Stuart’s notes on <i>The Thread That Runs So True</i> accompanying copy inscribed to Cary Robertson; related correspondence	1978-1979	29 items
Folder 10	Clippings regarding Jane (Stuart) Juergensmeyer	1971-1976	5 items
<b>BOX 5</b>	<b>Mary (Washington) Clarke – Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers</b>	<b>1968-1977</b>	<b>344 items</b>
Folder 1	Research notes	1971-1976	50 items
Folder 2	Research notes	n.d.	27 items
Folder 3	Student research papers	1973, n.d.	9 items
Folder 4	Clippings	1967-1977	22 items
Folder 5	Correspondence	1968-1976	48 items
Folder 6	Correspondence	1976-1977	36 items
Folder 7	Notes, scripts for ETV “Kentucky Heritage: Traditional Quilting in Kentucky”	1969-1976	15 items
Folder 8	Photographs of quilts used in book (color); poster with 16 color pictures of quilts used in book (filed in oversized C1,D7, #8)	n.d.	43 items
Folder 9	Miscellaneous photographs of quilts (color, black and white)	1975-1976	94 items
<b>BOX 6</b>	<b>Mary (Washington) Clarke – Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers</b>	<b>n.d.</b>	
	Research – Index cards	n.d.	



**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS CLARKE, Mary Louise (Washington), 1943-1979  
634 1913-1999

Research, correspondence and photographs relating to the scholarly study of Kentucky author Jesse Stuart by WKU English and folklore professor Mary (Washington) Clarke. Includes correspondence with Stuart, editors and other scholars in connection with her book *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* and other publications. Also includes research and correspondence relating to Clarke's book *Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers*.

6 boxes. 57 folders. 1,236 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

1969.44.1

**SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

## Authors

Blair, Everetta Love, 1907-1978 B1,F2  
Blair, Everetta Love, 1907-1978 – Relating to B1,F3,6,15  
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Egypt – Comments about, 1961 B1,F3  
Flanagan, John Theodore, 1906-1996 – Correspondence B2,F2-5  
Foster, Ruel E., 1916-1999 – Correspondence B2,F1-4  
Guthrie, Vera (Grinstead), 1930-2023 – Letters to B2,F2,4  
Hall, Wade Henry, 1934-2015 – Correspondence B1,F12; B2,F1,2,4  
Hinds, Charles F., 1923-2019 B1,F12  
Hochstrasser, Maude Adelaide "Addie," 1900-1994 B1,F13  
Hughes, Jessie Ford (Hopwood), 1895-1978 B1,F14  
*Jesse Stuart: Essays on His Work* (book) – Relating to B2,F1-6  
*Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism* (book) – Relating to B2,F7  
*Jesse Stuart's Kentucky* (book) – Relating to B1,F2-14  
Juergensmeyer, Jessica Jane (Stuart), b. 1942 – Photographs B1,F7; B2,F8  
Juergensmeyer, Jessica Jane (Stuart), b. 1942 – Relating to B1,F2-6; B4,F3  
Keeney, Lester E., 1915-2006 B1,F12  
*Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers* (book) – Relating to B5  
King, Virgil D., 1910-2003 B1,F13

Leavell, Frank Hartwell, 1928-2005 – Correspondence B1,F13; B2,F4  
 LeMaster, Jimmie R. “J. R.,” 1934-2014 – Correspondence B1,F13; B2,F1-7  
 LeMaster, Jimmie R. “J. R.,” 1934-2014 – Relating to B1,F5,6  
 Masters, Edgar Lee, 1868-1950 – Relating to B1,F5  
 Meacham, Harry Monroe, 1901-1975 B2,F2  
 Miller, Jim Wayne, 1936-1996 – Correspondence B1,F3,4  
 Nunn, Beula (Cornelius) Aspley, 1914-1995 B1,F12  
 Owen, Guy, 1925-1981 – Letters to B2,F1  
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 Richards, Frances, 1893-1991 B1,F12  
 Richardson, Harold Edward, 1929-2008 – Correspondence B2,F1-4  
 Rubin, Louis Decimus, Jr., 1923-2013 – Correspondence B2,F2  
 Spurlock, John Howard, 1939-2023 – Correspondence B2,F1,2  
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 Still, James, 1906-2001 – Comments about, 1968 B1,F4  
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 Stuart, Jesse Hilton, 1906-1984 – Correspondence B1,F2-7; B2,F2-4  
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 Warren, Robert Penn, 1905-1989 – Letters to B2,F5,6  
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