White, Vernon, 1915-2008 (MSS 255)

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Vernon White was born on 2 October 1915 to William Grant White and Martha Ellen (Reed) White near White Mills, Hardin County, Kentucky. The family farm was located on the Nolin River and White Mills was approximately four miles away. The Whites had lived in this area since the early decades of the nineteenth century. Vernon, and his seven siblings, assisted his parents with operating the farm. The children were educated at the one-room Lee School in Hardin County and attended secondary school at Lynnvale High School. The family was literate, subscribing to the county newspaper and several popular magazines of the day; they also played word games and held academic competitions in the home. They attended the White Mills Baptist Church.

Vernon graduated from Lynnvale High School in 1935 and continued to help his family at the farm. In 1941 he participated in classes in woodworking offered by the National Defense Training program, and in 1943 he was inducted into the U.S. Army Air Corps attending through the Aircraft Armament School. While in the military, he enjoyed several parts of the country which he had never visited including Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. He was injured while in service and received his honorable discharge in 1944. His military service opened his eyes to the grandeur and size of the United States and allowed him to attend college on the GI Bill. He enrolled in the University of Louisville in 1947 and received his Bachelor of Science degree in sociology with a minor in psychology in 1951. He then enrolled at the University of Tennessee and received his Masters degree in Sociology in 1953. He immediately accepted a teaching position at Lincoln Memorial University and acted as head of the Sociology Department. The following year he taught social studies at Rogersville High School in Rogersville, Tennessee. Over the next decade he held several teaching and administrative positions at several colleges: University of Tennessee at Martin (1955-1958), Furman University (1958-1960), and Piedmont College (1961-1966). During these years he completed over seventy additional hours of graduate work at the University of Georgia. In 1966 he accepted a faculty position at Western Kentucky University, where he remained until his retirement in 1980. During his career, he was a long time member of both the American Sociological Association and the Southern Sociological Association. In the
later part of his career, he was an active member of the Kentucky Archaeological Association, serving as Treasurer from 1971 to 1977 and being elected to the Board of Directors for a three year term in 1978.

White’s research interests varied widely. From 1972 to 1977 researched “hominy holes” in Kentucky. A great deal of this research consisted of field work in which he located and then documented these sites in the south central Kentucky area. This research resulted in the publication of a report titled “An Archaeological Survey and Study of Hominy Holes in Kentucky,” which was published by the Kentucky Archaeological Association (Bulletin 14 & 15, April 1980). After his retirement, he continued in his research of Kentucky’s covered bridges. This resulted in perhaps his best known publication, Covered Bridges: Focus on Kentucky (Kentucky Imprints, 1985). White was interested both in the physical and aesthetic attributes of covered bridges. His last major publication was Grave Covers: Our Cultural Heritage (Kentucky Imprints, 2005) and it examines the various types of grave covers found in Kentucky and other nearby states.

White married Dorothy Bell Moore in 1953 and they had two children Carolyn Marie (White) Bell and Charles Vernon White.

**COLLECTION NOTES**

The Vernon White Collection consists chiefly of materials related to White’s research interests including: covered bridges, hominy holes, and grave covers. Most of this research is limited to Kentucky sites and includes published secondary material, field notes, illustrative material, and drafts of White’s books. In addition there is limited information about the White family and about the history of White Mills, Hardin County, Kentucky. The collection also includes a few sociological papers written by White in his early career as well as syllabi for some of the early sociology classes that he taught. A collection of approximately 1800 slides documenting older structures in Kentucky, as well as covered bridges, grave covers, and items related to folk life in the Commonwealth and the Upper South is included in the collection. Poetry, some philosophical notes, and two World War II diaries written by White can also be found in the collection. The Word War II diaries are complemented by a scrapbook of photographs documenting White’s military service.

In processing, staples, paper clips, metal spiral binders, and metal notebook posts were removed. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes. Pages were also removed from tablets and all notebook and tablet covers as well as news clippings were photocopied on acid-free paper. The slides were placed in acid-free boxes in numerical order according to a classification system that White developed. The slides have not been included in the cumulative item number total for the collection.
### SHELF LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal information and publications</td>
<td>1935-2008; n.d.</td>
<td>45 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Inventory and separation sheets</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Biographical information</td>
<td>1915-2008</td>
<td>8 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Notes by White including “A Philosophy of Life,” “Disciplines Toward Maturity,” “Duties of B.S.U. Officers” and poems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Photocopies of poems written by White</td>
<td>1935-1948</td>
<td>15 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paper entitled “A Study of Divorce in Louisville, KY”</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A Thesis by Vernon White; “Family Life Education on the Elementary Level”</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>“A Study of Divorce” published in Furman University Bulletin</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>“Teaching the Introductory course in”</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Teaching the Introductory Course in Sociology”; Paper given at the Southern Sociological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, 8-10 April 1965.</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Syllabus for Introductory Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Great Social Thought”: Syllabus for Social Sciences 461-462 at the University of Louisville</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paper written by White for an education course titled “The Philosophy of Auguste Comte”</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lynnvale High School (Hardin County) - Research notes</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 14</td>
<td>Code book for pictures, negatives and write-ups</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Code book 3 for some of the pictures and slides</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Write-up on pictures</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 17</td>
<td>General notes, book 1, notes on variety of things</td>
<td>1980-1992</td>
<td>2 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 18</td>
<td>White’s funeral eulogy, CD of the same, funeral program, etc.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 19</td>
<td>Reminiscence by White’s sister, Gertie White, titled “Growing up on a farm during the early 1900s”</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 20</td>
<td>Lynnvale High School (Hardin County) - Research notes</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BOX 2** Petroglyphs 1809-1991 97 items

| Folder 1 | Photographs of petroglyphs (site reports) | 1970-1985 | 24 items |
| Folder 2 | Negatives of photographs of petroglyphs | 1970-1985 | 21 items |
| Folder 3 | Photographs and negatives of pictographs and grooved circles | 1970-1973 | 12 items |
| Folder 4 | Photos by Vernon White | n.d. | 7 items |
| Folder 5 | Photos by Fred Coy of hominy holes and petroglyphs | n.d. | 16 items |
| Folder 6 | Petroglyph and Pictograph Sites (March 30, 1971) | 1970-1974 | 5 items |
| Folder 7 | Articles about archaeology & anthropology in Kentucky


Folder 8 “Vernon White in Search of Hominy Holes” 1980 1 item from *In Kentucky* (July/August 1980)

**BOX 3 Bridges 1980-2002; n.d. 107 items**

Folder 1 Covered bridges – Correspondence 1984-2002 28 items

Folder 2 Information about covered bridge expert Stockton Bower, chiefly obituaries 1993-1995 6 items

Folder 3 Covered Bridges – White’s “write-ups” on covered bridges outside Kentucky 1984-1995 1 item

Folder 4 Covered Bridges – White’s “write-ups” on covered bridges 1 item

Folder 5 Hand written copy of *Covered Bridges Focus on Kentucky* n.d. 1 item
Folder 6  *Covered Bridges*, Rough draft of Chapters 1 & 2  n.d.  1 item

Folder 7  *Covered Bridges*, Work copies (Ch. 1, 2, & 3)  n.d.  1 item

Folder 8  *Covered Bridges*, outlined through Ch. 3  n.d.  1 item

Folder 9  *Covered Bridges*, outlined Ch. 4 (Bridge descriptions)  n.d.  1 item

Folder 10  *Covered Bridges*, Ch. 5 (Appendix, Glossary, Bibliography)  n.d.  1 item

Folder 11  *Covered Bridges*, (rewrites on rough field notes)  n.d.  1 item


Folder 13  Covered bridges – Kentucky  1980-2001  34 items

Folder 14  Bridges (not covered) – Kentucky  1992-2002  8 items

Folder 15  Covered bridges – Outside Kentucky  1982-2002  10 items

**BOX 4**  **Hominy Holes**  1970-1979; n.d.  264 items

Folder 1  Archaeological survey and study of hominy holes in Kentucky - Edmonson County  1970-1974  51 items

Folder 2  Archaeological survey and study of hominy holes in Kentucky – Hardin County  1971-1975  47 items

Folder 3  Archaeological survey and study of hominy holes in Kentucky – Warren County  1970-1972  25 items

Folder 4  Archaeological survey and study of hominy holes in Kentucky – Breckinridge County  1971-1974  25 items

Folder 5  Archaeological survey and study of hominy holes in Kentucky – Butler, Hart, Logan, Todd Counties  1970-1979  28 items
| Folder 6 | Archaeological survey and study of hominy holes in Kentucky – Grayson County | 1971-1977 | 60 items |
| Folder 7 | Notes on hominy holes (Listed by county) | n.d. | 3 items |
| Folder 8 | Pictures for hominy hole study (by Ron Morrison) | n.d. | 7 items |

**BOX 5**  
**Grave Covers and Cemeteries**  
1943-2003; n.d.  
50 items

| Folder 1 | Grave Covers: Typescript | 2000 | 2 items |
| Folder 2 | Grave Covers – Miscellaneous items related to: photocopies of news clippings about cemeteries, cemetery brochures | 1989-2002 | 16 items |
| Folder 3 | “A Study of Child Gravestones with Lambs, Doves, Angels, etc. on Top of the Stones”: Handwritten draft and typescript | 1997 | 3 items |
| Folder 4 | White cemetery, Hardin County, Kentucky | 1973 | 2 items |
| Folder 5 | Photocopies of published articles related to tombstones  
| Folder 6 | Photocopies of published articles about cemeteries  
*The Southern Folk Cemetery in Texas*, (1982): 26, 34-38, 
124, 135-141.

Folder 7 Photocopies of published articles about grave covers, particularly grave houses

Folder 8 “A Stroll Through Americana”: Manuscript 1999? 4 items
Folder 9 “Notes on This and That” – Related to White’s “A Stroll Through Americana” concept n.d. 1 item
Folder 10 Photographs of grave covers given to White, includes correspondence 1997-2003 5 items
Folder 11 Correspondence and photos regarding cast iron grave covers in Denton County, Texas 2002-2003 2 items
Folder 12 “Good Fences Make Good Neighbors” - Manuscript 1981 1 item
### BOX 6  
**White in World War II**  
1942-1944  
4 items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>World War II Diary Nov. 3, 1942 – Sept. 10, 1943</td>
<td>1942-1943</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>World War II Diary Sept. 11, 1943 - July 12, 1944</td>
<td>1943-1944</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Honorable discharge certificate</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>World War II photograph album</td>
<td>1942-1944</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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</table>

### BOX 7  
**Slides**  
1981-2003

Note: Many numbers within the slides are actually for a series of slides, i.e. Br 1 (Bridges 1) has four views of the Bennetts Mill Bridge in Greenup County, Kentucky. A number of the slides were missing when the collection was donated, so the numbers below are inclusive numbers but do not always reflect the exact number of slides within a subject area. The slides have not been included in the cumulative number of items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1</td>
<td>Bridges 1-124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2</td>
<td>Bridges 125-285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3</td>
<td>Buildings 1-240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4</td>
<td>Buildings 242-261; Banks 11-19; Barns 3-42; Chimneys 3-18; Fences 1-63; Furnaces 3-9; Flowers 1-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 5</td>
<td>Churches 3-185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 6</td>
<td>Household 1-15; Indians 8-9; North Carolina 11-14; Mills 1-25; 325-391; Tools 4-48; Power driven tools 4-22; Wood items 1-7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### BOX 7  
**Slides**  
1981-2003

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1</td>
<td>Grave covers 2-163</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 2</td>
<td>Grave covers 164-289</td>
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<td>Box 3</td>
<td>Grave covers 290-366</td>
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CATALOG CARD

MSS       WHITE, Vernon,                     1809-2008
255    1915-2008

Correspondence, research notes, slides, and photographs related to White's interests: covered bridges, hominy holes, archaeology, and grave covers, chiefly in Kentucky. Also includes drafts of his books and information about the White family of White Mills, Hardin County, Kentucky as well as information about White's participation in World War II.

8 boxes. 85 folders. 567 items.

2008.239.4                     K/84

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

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Archaeology – Breckinridge County       B4,F4
Archaeology – Butler County       B4, F5
Archaeology – Edmonson County       B4,F1
Archaeology – Grayson County       B4, F6
Archaeology – Hardin County       B4,F2
Archaeology – Hart County       B4, F5
Archaeology – Logan County       B4, F5
Archaeology – Photos       B4, F8
Archaeology – Todd County       B4, F5
Archaeology – Warren County       B4,F3
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Bridges, Covered – Kentucky       B3
Butler County – Archaeology       B4, F5
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Cemeteries – Hardin County       B5,F4
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Hardin County – Archaeology B4,F2
Hardin County – Cemeteries B5,F4
Hardin County – Farms and farming B1,F19
Hardin County – Education B1,F19-20
Hardin County – Social life and customs, 1900-1925 B1,F19
Hardin County – Travel and description B1,F19
Hardin County – Soldiers from - World War II, 1939-1945
Hart County – Archaeology B4,F5
Logan County – Archaeology B4,F5
Louisville – Divorce – Relating to, 1950 B1,F5&7
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Morrison, Ron – Photos by B4,F8
Petroglyphs – Photos B2
Photographers – Coy, Frederick B2,F5
Photographers – Morrison, Ron B4,F8
Photos – Archaeology B4,F8
Photos – Petroglyphs B2
Photos – Pictographs B2
Photos – World War II B6,F4
Pictographs – Photos B2
Poetry B1,F3-4
Sepulchral monuments – Relating to B5,F1-3,5-6,10-11
Sepulchral monuments – Photos B5,F10-11
Social life and customs – Hardin County, 1900-1925 B1,F19
Sociology – Teachers and teaching B1,F8-11
Teachers and teaching – Sociology B1,F8-11
Todd County – Archaeology B4,F5
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World War II, 1939-1945 – Military life       B6,F1-4
World War II, 1939-1945 – Photos       B6,F4

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1809
1915-1925
1926-1950
1951-1975
1976-2000
2001-2008

me -1; sl - 1; sa - 76; chrono - 6

Jeffrey  04/22/2009