3-3-2015

Hendricks, John Thornton, b. 1939 (MSS 528)

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This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in MSS Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
John T. Hendricks was born in 1939 in Knoxville, Tennessee. He graduated from the Tennessee Military Institute in 1957, attended Centre College, and received an A.B. (1961) and M.A. (1963) from Western Kentucky University and an Ed.D. from the University of Tennessee. He served as a high school teacher, administrator and college instructor at several schools before retiring from the Spalding County, Georgia school system.

This collection consists of notes, newspaper articles, interviews (taped and/or transcribed) and photographs relating to John T. Hendricks’ research for his book *Once Upon a Lynching: The Jerome Boyett Story*. A first draft and a published copy of the book are also included.

*Once Upon a Lynching* chronicles the lynching of Jerome Boyett (sometimes spelled Boyatt) in Scott County, Tennessee. On 21 April 1933, Pickett County, Tennessee sheriff George Winningham and his son and deputy, Floyd Winningham, attempted to arrest Boyett at Rock Creek, a logging camp in the county. Both lawmen were shot and killed, prompting an intensive manhunt for Boyett. Boyett’s family was detained in Byrdstown, Tennessee to force his surrender but his father, Ransom Boyett, was released on an undertaking to make contact with his son. On 14 May 1933, Ransom was found dead at his home in the No Business community of Scott County, a suspected victim of the posse searching for Jerome.

Jerome Boyett surrendered on 22 May 1933 and was taken to the jail at Huntsville in Scott County. On 8 June 1933, a group of vigilantes took him from the jail and tortured and fatally shot him along with another inmate, Harvey Winchester. Law enforcement officers were suspected to be in the lynching party, but no one was ever charged. Several officers, however, including Clinton County, Kentucky sheriff Willie Winningham (the son and brother of the slain sheriff and deputy) and Maynard King, deputy sheriff of Scott County, Tennessee, subsequently suffered violent deaths. Another tragic figure in the story was Willie’s widow Anne Winningham, who lost her husband, father-in-law, brother-in-law, and a sick daughter during that year.
Box 1 contains the collection inventory and correspondence relating to donation of the
collection (Folder 1), Hendricks’ correspondence with publishers, interview subjects and other
sources who responded to requests for information (Folder 2), contemporary newspaper
clippings about the case and later articles about Hendricks’ research (Folder 3), and a list of the
main characters involved in the case (Folder 4). Also included are transcripts (full or partial) of
interviews conducted by Hendricks and others about the case (Folders 5, 6); some of these
interviews are also on audiotape (see Box 3). Notes on various aspects of the case (Folders 7-
13) consist of excerpts clipped from the typescripts in Folders 5 and 6.

Box 2 contains further excerpts on various aspects of the case (Folders 1-19) clipped
from the typescripts in Box 1, Folders 5 and 6. Also included are sketches of the jail in
Huntsville, Tennessee where Jerome Boyett and Harvey Winchester were held (Folder 20); a
published article on the Boyett case by anthropologist Benita Howell (Folder 21); a first draft,
galley proofs, and a final copy of Once Upon a Lynching (Folders 22-24); photographs, including
some of the individuals involved in the case, cemetery markers, and the jail at Huntsville,
Tennessee (Folder 25); and photographs relating to the Hendricks family (Folder 26).

Box 3 contains cassette tapes of interviews, conducted by Hendricks and others, with
persons familiar with the case.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1 Research and Interviews 1932-1985 238 items

Folder 1 Inventory; donor correspondence; Herman “Jack” Hendricks obituary 14 items

Folder 2 Correspondence with publishers, interview subjects and other sources 1984-1985 54 items

Folder 3 Newspaper clippings 1932-1934; 1984-1985 44 items

Folder 4 List of main characters in Once Upon a Lynching n.d. 1 item

Folder 5 Transcripts of interviews – Clyde “Cotton” Bilbrey 1974-1984 9 items
   Gar Blevins
   Noah Blevins
   Oscar Blevins
   Bonnie (Boyett) Chambers
   W. O. Frogge
   Dave Hassler and Shirley Hassler
   Joe and Effie Hicks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Transcripts and notes of interviews –</td>
<td>1979-1985</td>
<td>10 items</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lattie “Buck” Lominac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will J. Miller</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Rich</td>
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<td></td>
<td>William M. Rich</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General Slaven</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hobert Taylor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nell C. Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ivory (Winchester) Watson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anne Winningham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Albert and Jerome Boyett</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>2 items</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Jerome Boyett, Boyett family, and No Business community</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>18 items</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Manhunt for Jerome Boyett</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>25 items</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Rock Creek and shooting of George and Floyd Winningham</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>31 items</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Byrdstown; George and Floyd Winningham</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>21 items</td>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>J. W. Tallishaw</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Byrdstown after Rock Creek</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>8 items</td>
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**BOX 2**  
**Research; Book manuscript; Photographs**  
1983-1985  
165 items

<p>| Folder 1 | Boyett family and home after Rock Creek                                      | n.d.       | 6 items |
| Folder 2 | Martha (Mrs. George) Winningham                                              | n.d.       | 2 items |
| Folder 3 | Boyett family in Byrdstown                                                   | n.d.       | 3 items |
| Folder 4 | George and Floyd Winningham funeral                                          | n.d.       | 2 items |
| Folder 5 | Ransom Boyett’s search for Jerome                                            | n.d.       | 3 items |
| Folder 6 | Death of Ransom Boyett                                                       | n.d.       | 17 items |
| Folder 7 | Ransom Boyett inquest                                                        | n.d.       | 7 items |
| Folder 8 | Boyett family’s return to No Business                                        | n.d.       | 5 items |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Surrender and arrest of Jerome Boyett</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Pre-trial of Jerome Boyett</td>
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<td>4 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Jerry Harvey Winchester</td>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Jerome Boyett lynching</td>
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<td>18 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Boyett family after lynching</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>5 items</td>
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<td>Folder 14</td>
<td>Posse in No Business after lynching</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Lynching suspects</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>5 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Investigation into lynching</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>7 items</td>
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<td>Folder 17</td>
<td>Reactions to lynching</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 18</td>
<td>Death of Maynard King</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>2 items</td>
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<td>Folder 19</td>
<td>Death of Willie Winningham</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 20</td>
<td>Pickett County map; sketches of old Huntsville jail</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>4 items</td>
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<td>Folder 22</td>
<td>Manuscript draft of Once Upon a Lynching</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 23</td>
<td>Galley proofs of Once Upon a Lynching</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 24</td>
<td>Copy of Once Upon a Lynching</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 25</td>
<td>Photographs relating to Once Upon a Lynching</td>
<td>1919-1985</td>
<td>40 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 26</td>
<td>Negatives; Photographs of Hendricks family and South Fork River</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>18 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 3</td>
<td>Taped Interviews</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>11 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Interview with Clyde “Cotton” Bilbrey</td>
<td>1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Interview with Gar Blevins</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Folder 3  Interview with Noah Blevins  1984  2 items
Folder 4  Interview with Bonnie Chambers  1984  1 item
Folder 5  Interview with Shirley and David Hassler  1984  1 item
Folder 6  Interview with George Rich  1984  1 item
Folder 7  Interviews with Hobert Taylor and William M. Rich  1984  1 item
Folder 8  Interview with Nell C. Taylor  1984  1 item
Folder 9  Interview with Anne Winningham  1984  2 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS  HENDRICKS, John Thornton,  1932-1985
528     b. 1939

Notes, newspaper articles, interviews and photographs relating to John Hendricks’ research for his book *Once Upon a Lynching: The Jerome Boyett Story*, concerning the 1933 lynching in Scott County, Tennessee, of the accused murderer of a Pickett County, Tennessee sheriff and his deputy.
3 boxes. 48 folders. 414 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs, cassette tapes.
1985.193.1

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Bilbrey, James Clyde “Cotton,” 1913-2003 (Informant)   B1,F5; B3,F1
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Blevins, Garfield “Gar,” 1908-2007 (Informant)   B1,F5; B3,F1
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Blevins, Oscar, 1915-1988 (Informant)   B1,F5
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Boyett, Ransom, 1872?-1933 – Relating to   B1,F3; B2,F5-7
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Hicks, Effie Lee (Sweet), 1895-1983 (Informant) B1,F5
Hicks, Joseph, 1899-1984 (Informant)           B1,F5
Howell, Benita J.                              B1,F2; B2,F21
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Hicks, Effie Lee (Sweet), 1895-1983 (Informant) B1,F5
Hicks, Joseph, 1899-1984 (Informant)           B1,F5
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SEE or SEE ALSO

Boyatt family
   See:
      Boyett family

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   See:
      Boyett, Jerome

Boyatt, Ransom, 1872?-1933
   See:
      Boyett, Ransom

Winchester, Harvey, 1915-1933
   See:
      Winchester, Jerry Harvey

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