

## MSS. Collection #21

**Lindley Family Papers, 1928-1932 [bulk 1931]. 2 boxes (40 folders), ca. 260 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Lindley Family Papers primarily consist of letters written by Virginia Ives Hall, of Cedartown, Georgia, to her future husband, John “Jack” Van Lindley II of Greensboro, between December 1930 and November 1932. The love letters detail the couple’s courtship and wedding plans. Virginia and Jack were married on December 17, 1932.

Researchers interested in courtship during the early 1930s will find Virginia’s letters of particular interest. In addition, these letters provide insight into the education of women. Until her graduation in June 1932, Virginia attended Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Virginia. Her letters convey details about her life at this all women’s college including her studies, leisure activities, school rules, and events.

In addition to correspondence, other items of interest include numerous clippings from southern papers announcing the engagement of Virginia and Jack. These clippings illuminate the pomp and circumstance surrounding a southern wedding. They also indicate that both the Hall and Lindley families were surviving the Great Depression with relative ease.

**Arrangement:** The Lindley Family Papers are arranged into two series, and within each series folders are arranged alphabetically: **Correspondence**, 1928-32; **Printed**, 1930-32.

**Provenance:** This collection was donated by the Milwaukee County Historical Society in August 1999 and assigned the accession number 1999.56.1.

**Processing:** This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by Melissa Garrison, UNCG History Dept. Intern, in April 2000.

### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Virginia Hall Lindley, of Cedartown, Georgia, graduated from Sweet Briar College in Virginia in 1932. She married John “Jack” Van Lindley II in December of the same year. Jack and Virginia had two children, Virginia Van and John Van Lindley III. Virginia Hall Lindley, who was a member of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, the Colonial Dames, and the Junior League of Greensboro, died at age eighty-five on February 15, 1997. Jack preceded her in death on October 20, 1990.

The Lindley family is very prominent in Greensboro history. Jack’s grandfather, John Van Lindley (1838-1918), established Pomona Nursery in 1877, later to become the very successful Lindley Nursery. John Van Lindley also formed the Pomona Terra Cotta Company that made

the sewer pipe which lies under many southern towns today. In 1897, he served as director of the Pomona Cotton Mill and erected a schoolhouse for the children of his employees. John Van Lindley was President of the Guilford County Road Association as well. When asked, however, John Van Lindley was most proud of his involvement in the development of the Security Life and Annuity Company. This company later merged with others to form Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. John Van Lindley's numerous contributions to Greensboro were duly noted. Lindley Park and two area schools, John Van Lindley Elementary and Junior High are named in his honor.

John Van Lindley's business success and leadership skills were passed to his son (Jack's father), Paul Cameron Lindley (1877-1933). Paul Lindley headed the J. Van Lindley Nursery Company and served as director of Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. He served eight years as a member of the Greensboro City Council, spending the last two years as mayor (1931-1933). During his political service, Paul Lindley was active in developing city parks and playgrounds as well as the municipal airport, known as Lindley field. Paul Lindley retired as mayor in May 1933 and died a month later from drowning on a private lake on the Lindley nursery property.

John "Jack" Van Lindley II, a subject of this collection, was born to Paul Cameron Lindley and his first wife, Mabel Glenn, on November 12, 1908. He graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1930 with a BA degree in history. While studying at Chapel Hill, Jack was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. Like his father and grandfather before him, Jack Lindley served as president and general manager of Lindley Nurseries, Inc. as well as chairman of Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company's executive committee. He also was a member the Board of Directors of North Carolina National Bank. In 1935, he was named a member of the Greater Greensboro School District Board—a position he held for nearly ten years. Jack was politically active as well, serving two unexpired terms on the Greensboro City Council. In 1953, he was appointed commissioner of the Seventh District of the State Highway Commission that was responsible for the early building of I-85. Jack Lindley served on the board of trustees of the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Greensboro Country Club, the Country Club of North Carolina, and the Roaring Gap Club.

**Biographical Sources:** The sources used to compile the biographical note are the obituaries of Virginia Hall Lindley and John Van "Jack" Lindley. In addition, two books are particularly helpful in providing information on John Van Lindley. These books are: *Greensboro, North Carolina* and *For Whom Our Public Schools Were Named, Greensboro, North Carolina*, both authored by Ethel Stephens Arnett.

The biographical files at the Greensboro Public Library contain a small number of newspaper articles on the Lindley family. The articles used for this note include: "Tar Heel of The Week – J. Van (Jack) Lindley," *Greensboro News and Observer*, August 30, 1962; "Know Your Commissioner," *Democrat*, June 18, 1953; "Paul C. Lindley Loses Life By Drowning When He Falls From A Small Boat Into A Lake," *Greensboro Daily News*, June 11, 1933.

## **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

Types of material in this collection include only **correspondence** and **printed material**.

The bulk are letters from Virginia Ives Hall to her future husband, John “Jack” Van Lindley, a Greensboro resident, from December 1930 to November 1932. (1:2-32). Researchers will find interesting information courtship as well as women’s education. Virginia attended Sweet Briar College and graduated in 1932. Her letters provide insight into her studies, student life, and college rules and regulations.

The remaining letters are to Jack Lindley from his future mother-in-law, Estelle Hall (1:1), postcards from his father (1:33), Paul Cameron Lindley, mayor of Greensboro, and miscellaneous letters (1:35-36) from family and friends extending their congratulations upon his engagement.

The printed material in this collection consists of numerous clippings of engagement announcements for Virginia and Jack published in many papers, graduation announcements from Sweet Briar College and UNC-Chapel Hill, and an invitation for dancing at Greensboro’s Sedgefield Manor.

**Weaknesses:** None of the materials in this collection directly relate to Greensboro due to the fact that none of the letters are from Jack Lindley himself. In addition, the time period covered by these documents is very short—less than four years. As a result, nothing in this collection pertains to Jack and Virginia’s life in Greensboro after their marriage.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **1. Correspondence. 36 folders (ca. 240 items). 1928-1932.**

The bulk of materials are letters from Virginia Ives Hall to her future husband, John “Jack” Van Lindley, a Greensboro resident, from December 1930 to November 1932 (1:2-32). Researchers will find interesting information about courtship as well as women’s education.

NOTE: Described below are the major topics included in Virginia’s letters along with citations of specific examples. These topics, however, occur numerous times throughout the correspondence. A complete reading is suggested if the topics are of interest.

Virginia attended Sweet Briar College and graduated in 1932. Her letters provide insight into her studies (Mar. 19: 1:5) and college rules and regulations (Feb. 24: 1:4; Apr. 9: 1:6). Virginia described the activities that filled the time of Sweet Briar students: dancing (Feb. 17: 1:4), games (Mar. 8: 1:5), tea parties (Mar. 11: 1:5), dating (Sept. 24: 1:12) and baseball (Mar. 19: 1:5; Apr. 13: 1:6; May 19: 1:8). She expressed to Jack her dismay when she was appointed as chairman of the chaperone committee at Sweet Briar (Sept. 24: 1:12), but she later admitted feeling important in her new position (Oct. 10: 1:13). Virginia also informed Jack of the horrible diphtheria epidemic at school (Jan. 31: 1:3; Feb. 3: 1:4) and a fire that destroyed school property (Apr. 27: 1:7). Virginia’s letters also express the importance of the May Queen and her court at Sweet Briar College (Feb. 26: 1:4; Mar. 8: 1:5; Apr. 20: 1:21; May 12: 1:22). Virginia won the May Queen title in her senior year (Feb. 24: 1:34).

Beginning in June 1932, Virginia Hall was no longer a student. She wrote Jack of her activities as a bride-elect preparing for their wedding in December (1:23-31). She traveled to Erie, Pennsylvania and Pensacola, Florida, shopped, gambled, played Ping-Pong and bridge and attended many dances. Virginia soon became absorbed in wedding planning (Nov. 2: 1:30) and kept Jack informed of their numerous gifts (Nov. 29: 1:31).

The remaining letters are to Jack Lindley from his future mother-in-law, Estelle Hall (1:1), postcards from his father (1:33), Paul Cameron Lindley, mayor of Greensboro, and miscellaneous letters (1:35-36) from family and friends extending their congratulations upon his engagement.

## **2. Printed. 4 folders (ca. 20 items). 1930-1932.**

The printed material is divided into four folders: Clippings; Sedgefield Manor; Sweet Briar College; and UNC-Chapel Hill.

The clippings (2:1) announced Virginia Hall and Jack Lindley's engagement in newspapers in Cedartown and Atlanta, Georgia, and well as Greensboro. In addition, there are clippings that announced the engagements and weddings of a few of Virginia's friends.

An invitation for dancing at Greensboro's Sedgefield Manor (2:2) as well as graduation announcements for Sweet Briar College (2:3) and UNC-Chapel Hill (2:4) comprise the rest of the printed material.

FOLDER LISTINGSeries Folder Contents

1	1	Corresp. -- Hall, Estelle -- Letters to Jack Lindley (Dec. 1931-Oct. 1932)
	2	“ -- Hall, Virginia -- “ (Dec. 1930)
	3	“ -- “ -- “ (Jan. 1931)
	4	“ -- “ -- “ (Feb. 1931)
	5	“ -- “ -- “ (Mar. 1931)
	6	“ -- “ -- “ (Apr. 1-15, 1931)
	7	“ -- “ -- “ (Apr. 17-28, 1931)
	8	“ -- “ -- “ (May 1931)
	9	“ -- “ -- “ (June 1931)
	10	“ -- “ -- “ (July 1931)
	11	“ -- “ -- “ (Aug. 1931)
	12	“ -- “ -- “ (Sept. 1931)
	13	“ -- “ -- “ (Oct. 1931)
	14	“ -- “ -- “ (Nov. 1931)
	15	“ -- “ -- “ (Dec. 2-9, 1931)
	16	“ -- “ -- “ (Dec. 11-25, 1931)
	17	“ -- “ -- “ (Jan. 1932)
	18	“ -- “ -- “ (Feb. 1932)
	19	“ -- “ -- “ (Mar. 1-11, 1932)
	20	“ -- “ -- “ (Mar. 14-31, 1932)
	21	“ -- “ -- “ (Apr. 1932)
	22	“ -- “ -- “ (May 1932)
	23	“ -- “ -- “ (June 1932)
	24	“ -- “ -- “ (July 1-16, 1932)
	25	“ -- “ -- “ (July 19-30, 1932)
	26	“ -- “ -- “ (Aug. 1932)
	27	“ -- “ -- “ (Sept. 1932)
	28	“ -- “ -- “ (Oct. 6-17, 1932)
	29	“ -- “ -- “ (Oct. 20-27, 1932)
	30	“ -- “ -- “ (Nov. 2-11, 1932)
	31	“ -- “ -- “ (Nov. 12-29, 1932)
	32	“ -- “ -- “ (n.d.)
	33	“ -- Lindley, Paul -- “ (1928)
	34	“ -- Misc. -- “ (1928-1932)
	35	“ -- “ -- “ (re. Engagement) (Oct.-Nov. 1932)
	36	“ -- “ -- “ (Nov. 3-29, 1932)
2	1	Printed -- Clippings (1932)
	2	“ -- Sedgefield Manor (1931)
	3	“ -- Sweet Briar College (1932)
	4	“ -- UNC-Chapel Hill (1930)

**Index to the Lindley Family Papers (1928-1932)**

Note: The numbers following the name/subject entry –e.g. 1:1 – indicate in which Series#:Folder# (or, if no “:”, Series only) that name/topic can be found. Dates of the items are given in parenthesis for an individual Series/Folder or, if at the end, for the entire subject/name entry. The abbreviation GSO indicates a Greensboro association.

**Diphtheria:** 1:3 (Jan. 31), 1:4 (Feb. 3)

**Hall, Estelle:** 1:1 (Dec. 1931-Oct. 1932)

**Lindley, Paul Cameron:** 1:33 (1928)

Lindley, John Van, II (Jack): Wedding: Gifts: 1:31 (Nov. 29)

Planning: 1:30 (Nov. 2)

**Sedgefield Manor (GSO):** 2:2 (1931)

Sweet Briar College: Chaperone Committee: 1:12 (Sept. 24), 1:13 (Oct. 10)

Diphtheria Epidemic: 1:3 (Jan. 31), 1:4 (Feb. 3)

Fire: 1:7 (Apr. 27)

Graduation Announcement: 2:3 (1932)

May Queen: 1:4 (Feb. 26), 1:5 (Mar. 8), 1:21 (Apr. 20),  
1:22 (May 12), 1:34 (Feb. 24)

Rules and Regulations: 1:4 (Feb. 24), 1:6 (Apr. 9)

Student Life: 1:4 (Feb. 17), 1:5 (Mar. 8, 11, 19), 1:12 (Sept. 24)

**UNC-Chapel Hill:** 2:4 (1930)

**Wedding** announcements: 2:1 (1932)