

## MSS. Collection #243

**Mattye and William Reed Family Papers, ca. 1920s-2015. 1½ boxes (32 folders), 46 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

Mattye and William Reed were influential African American members of the Greensboro community. Mattye is best known for her contributions to NC A&T State University's African Heritage Center and William for being Dean of the School of Agriculture at the university. This collection consists primarily of printed materials and artwork. Highlights include two screen prints by Greensboro artists Eva Hamlin Miller and Alma Adams, and a broadside and LP relating to vocalist Margaret Tynes. Also of note are three photographs of graduating classes at Immanuel Lutheran College and a program for "The Unveiling of the February One Monument" at A&T. William Reed's career is represented through his report entitled "Reconnaissance soil survey of Liberia" and materials relating to the 1955 U.S.-Soviet Agricultural Exchange. Researchers interested in Greensboro's African American cultural heritage, A&T faculty or the Mattye Reed African Heritage Center may find this collection useful.

**Arrangement:** This collection is organized into six series and arranged within series by document type and/or subject. The series are: **Audiovisual**, 1962-2011; **Art**, ca. 1950s-1990s; **Correspondence**, 1987-1994; **Miscellaneous**, ca. 1920s; **Photographs**, ca. 1930s-1960s; and **Printed Material**, 1951-2015.

**Provenance:** This collection was donated by Bernetae Reed in 2017 and assigned the accession number 2017.44.1.

**Processing:** This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by intern Ava Freyaldenhoven in July 2020.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William E. Reed (1914-2006) was born in Columbia, Louisiana, and studied agricultural science at Southern University in Baton Rouge. Mattye Marie Scott (1918-2003) was born in Plaquemine, Louisiana, and earned a nursing license from Emory University as well as a B.S. in health and physical education from the Tuskegee Institute in 1957. William earned his masters from Iowa State University in 1940 before returning to Southern University to teach. Around this time, Mattye also briefly taught at Southern University. In 1942, she became the first nurse of color with the Louisiana State Board of Health in East Baton Rouge Parish. This same year Mattye and William married, a union that would last 61 years.

In 1946, William had completed his PhD in soil chemistry from Cornell and was working at Southern University when the State Department asked him to join a mission to survey the

economic prospects of Liberia. This mission stemmed from a \$20 million loan given to Liberia by the United States under President Roosevelt to build a port. After it ended in 1949, the Reeds relocated to Greensboro, where William became the Dean of the School of Agriculture at A&T University while Mattye was employed as a nurse. Mattye worked at the Greensboro polio hospital and taught at Dudley High School, implementing a two year vocational nursing program. In 1955, William was part of the U.S.-Soviet Agricultural Exchange, a 12-man delegation sent to Russia for five weeks.

William spent 1957-59 with the International Development Service in Ghana, where his work in soil conservation helped build dams and improve grazing and crop production. Another program in which he was involved vaccinated livestock to deter the spread of diseases. In 1959, Mattye became one of the first nurses of color at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro. Two years later, the couple moved to Nigeria, where William worked as the assistant Agency for International Development (AID) mission director until 1968. During this time, Mattye worked as a part-time embassy nurse and a volunteer in public health. After this mission, William worked as the Deputy AID Director in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, until 1972. The next year, the Reeds returned to Greensboro and William became the AID Officer in Residence at A&T for the U.S. Agency for International Development. From 1978 until his retirement in 1986, William worked as A&T's Director of International Programs and Associate Dean for Research.

After a 30 year nursing career, Mattye became involved in A&T's African Heritage Center when it opened in 1968. She donated many African and Caribbean artifacts from her travels and was passionate in encouraging others to donate their African art to the university. She became the center's director in 1973 and retired in 1988. Her legacy is a museum that is named in her honor and holds over 6,000 artifacts from around 35 countries. In 1997, William was inducted into the A&T School of Agriculture Hall of Fame. Mattye and William Reed were active members at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Greensboro and are survived by their three daughters: Edwarda, Carol, and Bernetiae. Bernetiae Reed created the Sylvester Brown family newsletters, DVDs and books on Thomas Jefferson's slaves found in this collection.

**Biographical Sources:** The sources for this biographical note include Mattye and William's obituaries (*News & Record*, December 14, 2003 and April 15, 2006), a 1992 oral history interview with William Reed by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project ([Reed, William E.toc.pdf](#)), an article published after Mattye's death summarizing her contributions to the African Heritage Center (*News & Record*, December 13, 2003); and an announcement from the School of Agriculture at A&T about William's induction into the Hall of Fame. Other information comes from metadata in images loaned for scanning by Bernetiae Reed.

## **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of items that shed light on the Reed family's contributions to Greensboro and their time in African countries. The types of materials include audiovisual, artwork, correspondence, photographs and printed material. A VHS tape of Mattye and William's 50th wedding anniversary can be found in the audiovisual series, while an invitation and cocktail napkin from the event are in the correspondence series. Art pieces of note include portraits of both William and Mattye, the first a drawing from Ethiopia and the second a pastel

profile. Mattye Reed's ties to Greensboro's African American art community are represented through screen prints by artists Alma Adams and Eva Hamlin Miller, as well as a broadside and LP relating to vocalist Margaret Tynes. Also of note are three photographs of the Mattye and William Reed posing in traditional Nigerian dress with acquaintances in Nigeria. These images showcase their time abroad, while William's work in Africa is represented by his "Reconnaissance soil survey of Liberia."

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **1. Audiovisual. 5 folders (5 items). 1962-2011.**

The audiovisual materials include two historical documentaries produced by Bernetiae Reed, and a VHS recording of Mattye and William's 50th wedding anniversary celebration in 1992. Two LPs feature the A&T Fellowship Gospel Choir and an operatic recital by Margaret Tynes, an internationally successful singer, A&T graduate and friend of the Reed family.

### **2. Art. 7 folders (7 items). ca. 1950s-1990s.**

This series includes a 1972 portrait of William Reed produced in Ethiopia and a pastel portrait of Mattye Reed in profile. Influential local artists Eva Hamlin Miller and Alma Adams are represented with a 1960 screen print and a 1990s screen print illustrating a Senegalese marketplace, respectively. Miller studied art in New York, Italy and Nigeria before coming to North Carolina to teach art at Bennett College and A&T. Adams was one of Miller's students at A&T. Together, they founded the African American Atelier in downtown Greensboro. Miller served as curator of the Atelier until her death in 1991, and Adams later became a U.S. Representative. Also included in this series is a print of Russian bears from a Shishkin painting titled "Morning in a Pine Forest"; it was given to William Reed while on the 1955 U.S.-Soviet Agricultural Exchange.

### **3. Correspondence. 3 folders (4 items). 1987-1994.**

This correspondence consists of three invitations. One addressed to Mattye Reed from the Greater Greensboro Republican Women's Club describes a luncheon at Starmount Country Club, while another that is not addressed invites recipients to a special showing of the A&T "Black Heritage Expo" and a reception. A copy of Mattye and William's 50th wedding anniversary invitation is accompanied by a cocktail napkin from the event.

### **4. Miscellaneous. 2 folders (3 items). ca. 1920s.**

This series contains a handwritten recipe for making syrup and handwritten instructions for bottling Ly-nola with a Ly-nola envelope. The Ly-nola instructions are written on Hotel Guilford letterhead, connecting this item to Greensboro.

**5. Photographs. 2 folders (6 items). ca. 1930s-1960s.**

Three oversized photographs show the Reeds dressed in traditional Nigerian clothing and posing with acquaintances in Nigeria in the 1960s. Another three oversized photographs show graduating classes from Immanuel Lutheran College in Greensboro around the 1930s-1940s.

**6. Printed Material. 13 folders (21 items). 1951-2015.**

As the largest series, the printed materials include books, periodicals, pamphlets and programs. A pamphlet highlights a 1969 Berhane Mehary exhibit in Ethiopia. The programs for events at A&T consist of “The Heritage of African Dress” and “The Unveiling of the February One Monument,” the latter accompanied by a postcard showing images from “The Making of the February One Monument.” William Reed’s “Reconnaissance soil survey of Liberia” provides a firsthand look at the work he did for the State Department, while an issue of *The Annals of Iowa* includes a chapter entitled “Diplomatic Farmers: Iowans and the 1955 Agricultural Delegation to the Soviet Union,” of which William was a part. Bernetae Reed published two volumes of *The Slave Families of Thomas Jefferson*, which contain the history of Monticello, pictures, and family trees. She also produced seven newsletters relating to former slave Sylvester Brown and his descendants. The newsletters provide updates within the extended family and historical information, and a program details a family reunion in 1998.

**FOLDER LISTING**

<b>Series</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
1	1	Audiovisual	-- DVD -- <i>Thomas Jefferson's Slaves</i> v. 2 (2009)
	2	“	-- DVD -- <i>We Teach Them to Think!</i> (2011)
	3	“	-- LP -- A&T Fellowship Gospel Choir- “Leaning on Jesus” (1985)
	4	“	-- LP -- Margaret Tynes Operatic Recital (1962)
	5	“	-- VHS -- 50th Wedding Anniversary -- Mattye & William Reed (1992)
2	1	Art	-- Painting -- African scene
	2	“	-- Portrait -- Reed, Mattye
	3	“	-- Portrait -- Reed, William (1972)
	4	“	-- Print -- “Morning in a Pine Forest” (1955)
	5	“	-- Print -- Sculpture
	6	“	-- Screen Print -- African woman, by Eva Hamlin Miller (1960)
	7	“	-- Screen Print -- “Senegalese Marketplace,” by Alma Adams (ca. 1990s)
3	1	Correspondence	-- Invitation -- A&T’s “Black Heritage Expo” (1987)
	2	“	-- Invitation -- Greater Greensboro Republican Women’s Club to Mattye Reed (1994)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
3	3	Correspondence	-- Invitation -- Mattye and William Reed 50th wedding anniversary (1992)
4	1	Miscellaneous	-- Formula for syrup
	2	“	-- Instructions for bottling Ly-nola (ca. 1920s)
5	1	Photographs	-- Immanuel Lutheran College -- Graduating classes (ca. 1930s-1940s)
	2	“	-- Mattye and William Reed in Nigeria (1960s)
6	1	Printed Material	-- Books -- <i>The Slave Families of Thomas Jefferson</i> v. I and II (2007)
	2	“	-- Broadside -- Margaret Tynes as Lady Macbeth (1959)
	3	“	-- Card with poem by Charles J. Conrad Jr.
	4	“	-- Cookbook (Ethiopian, 1970)
	5	“	-- Newsletters -- Sylvester Brown family, by Bernetiae Reed (2004-2015)
	6	“	-- Pamphlet -- Berhane Mehary Exhibition (Ethiopia, 1969)
	7	“	-- Pamphlets -- Mattye Reed African Heritage Center
	8	“	-- Periodical -- <i>The Annals of Iowa</i> (Winter 2013)
	9	“	-- Periodical article -- “Reconnaissance soil survey of Liberia,” by William Reed (June 1951)
	10	“	-- Programs -- A&T -- “The Unveiling of the February One Monument” with postcard (2002)
	11	“	-- Programs -- A&T -- “The Heritage of African Dress” (1989)
	12	“	-- Programs -- Episcopal Church of the Redeemer (Easter 1959)
	13	“	-- Programs – Reunion -- Sylvester Brown Family (1998)