

MSS. Collection #201

Gene Lashley Papers, ca. 1930s-1974 [bulk 1930s, 1955-1956].
½ box (13 folders), 55 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 Gene Lashley Papers contain a variety of materials relating to amateur photographer and local business owner Gene Lashley. Of note are photographs of downtown Greensboro in the 1930s, including photos of damage from the 1936 tornado, as well as advertisements and other documents relating to the menswear store Gene Lashley Clothiers. The collection also includes city directories, miscellaneous periodicals, and a program from the 1974 NCAA Basketball Tournament.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into three series by document type and arranged within series by subject. The series are: **Photographs**, ca. 1930s, undated; **Printed Materials**, 1935-1974; and **Scrapbook Pages**, ca. 1930s-1956, undated.

Provenance: This collection was donated by Phyllis Lashley in October 2008 and assigned accession number 2008.20.1.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by volunteer Kimberly Oliver in June 2016.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Eugene “Gene” Montgomery Lashley (1913-2008) was born in Spray, North Carolina, to Walter and Maggie Lashley. An amateur photographer, during the 1930s he captured many Greensboro buildings and sites, including damage from the tornado that tore through the south side of the city on April 2, 1936, and became the deadliest and most destructive natural disaster in local history.

Lashley was employed by Vanstory Clothing Co. in the late 1930s and then served in the U.S. Army during World War II. After the war, he worked in the men’s clothing store Younts-DeBoe before opening Gene Lashley Clothiers at 107 West Gaston Street (later West Friendly Avenue) in 1956. The business sold fine readymade and tailored menswear, specializing in fashion for young men. Following the store’s closing in 1975, he worked at T.R. Goforth Clothier.

Lashley married Anna Cowles (1915-1980) in 1938, and the couple had two daughters, Ann and Susan. After Anna’s death in 1980, he married Phyllis Wilson (1927-2013) in 1981. He was

a member of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, the Greensboro Merchants Association and the Greensboro Historical Museum.

Biographical Sources: The sources for this biographical note include the Guilford County Register of Deeds database, Greensboro city directories, Gene Lashley's obituary (*News & Record*, April 2, 2008), and Phyllis Lashley's obituary (*News & Record*, March 8, 2013). Additional information about Gene Lashley Clothiers was obtained from "[Fashion evolved from Straitlaced to Comfortable](#)" (*Greensboro News & Record*, September 22, 1990), and information about the 1936 tornado was found in "Day of Destruction" (*News & Record*, April 2, 1996).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains photographs, periodicals, directories, and loose scrapbook pages with newspaper clippings and advertisements. The photographs cover a variety of subjects, with many street scenes of downtown Greensboro and images of city buildings and sites (1:1-4; 3:1). Also included are several views of the city from the top of the Jefferson Standard building (1:2). A weakness of this collection is that many of these photos are not labeled with their location and very few are dated. Scrapbook pages include photos of damage from the 1936 tornado (3:3). Printed materials include telephone and city directories for the Greensboro area (2:1) and periodicals reflecting Lashley's business and personal interests (2:5). The bulk of the materials in this collection are photographs of the Greensboro area or are related to Gene Lashley Clothiers, with a focus on the opening of the store and advertisements showing merchandise (2:2; 3:2).

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Photographs. 4 folders (24 items). ca. 1930s, undated.

This series consists of various amateur photos taken by Gene Lashley. Included are street scenes from downtown Greensboro (South Elm Street, Market Street, and Jefferson Square; 1:4), as well as overhead views from the top of the Jefferson Standard building (1:2). Additional photos show an unidentified golf match (1:1), the interior of Vanstory Clothing Co., the exterior of First Presbyterian Church, Lawson Little, Harry Cooper, and photographer O. L. Grubbs (1:3).

2. Printed Materials. 5 folders (18 items). 1935-1974.

This series contains assorted printed materials, including directories, periodicals, and programs. Items that relate to Gene Lashley Clothiers include stationery, a business card, mailing label, clothing tag, and 1956 Christmas mail ad (2:2). Also of note are a 1938 program from the Greensboro Camera Club's First Annual Photographic Exposition and a ribbon for First Award from that exhibition (2:3). Additional items include a program for the 1974 NCAA Basketball Championship (2:4), Greensboro telephone directories for 1957-1959, a Greensboro city directory from 1972 (2:1), and issues of *Apparel Arts*, *Gentry*, *Life*, *The Miniature Camera Monthly*, *Playboy*, *Popular Photography*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *U.S. Camera* (2:5).

3. Scrapbook Pages. 4 folders (13 items). ca. 1930s-1956, undated.

The majority of the loose scrapbook pages in this series hold newspaper clippings about Gene Lashley Clothiers, with advertisements containing photos and illustrations of the store's merchandise and its motto "clothes for men with young ideas." Also included are articles and advertisements for the opening of the store in 1956, including an invitation to the store's opening day (3:2). An additional page covers the April 2, 1936 tornado, with photographs of damage on South Elm Street and Gorrell Street (3:3). Photographs of various city sites, including the Carnegie Library, Country Park, First Presbyterian Church, War Memorial Stadium, and the lobby of the Jefferson Standard building (3:1), and a signed picture of Will Rogers complete the series (3:4).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Photographs	-- Golf (undated)
	2	"	-- from Jefferson Standard building (undated)
	3	"	-- Miscellaneous (ca. 1936-ca. 1938)
	4	"	-- Street Scenes (ca. 1936-ca. 1937)
2	1	Printed Materials	-- Directories (1957-1972)
	2	"	-- Gene Lashley Clothiers (ca. 1956)
	3	"	-- Greensboro Camera Club (1938)
	4	"	-- NCAA Basketball Championship (1974)
	5	"	-- Periodicals (1935-1956)
3	1	Scrapbook Pages	-- City Buildings (undated)
	2	"	-- Gene Lashley Clothiers (1955-1956)
	3	"	-- Tornado (1936)
	4	"	-- Will Rogers (undated)