

MSS. Collection #249

Gordon Gray Papers, 1779-1980 [bulk 1974-1976]. 2 boxes (36 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 Gordon Gray Papers consist primarily of correspondence conducted between Gordon Gray and genealogist Jo White Linn while the latter was doing research for a book about the Gray family. Entitled *The Gray Family and Allied Lines: Bowman, Lindsay, Millis, Dick, Peebles, Wiley, Shannon, Lamar, McGee*, the book was coauthored by Gordon Gray and published in 1976. The correspondence contains details about Gordon Gray's ancestors and their relation to the city of Greensboro as well as prominent families from the area. Also included are copies of historical documents that provide limited context for the correspondence. Researchers interested in the Gray family's connection to early Greensboro may find this collection helpful. A researcher studying the Dick and Lindsay families could find this collection somewhat useful, but it contains little specific information about these families.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into two series and arranged within series by date or document type. The series are: **Correspondence**, 1971-1980, undated; and **Miscellaneous**, 1779-1975.

Provenance: This collection was donated by Gordon Gray's son, Bernard Gray, in March 2020 and assigned the accession number 2020.4.1.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was completed by volunteer Holly Barefoot in October 2021.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, **Gordon Gray** (1909-1982) was the second son of Bowman Gray Sr. (1874-1935), who later served as chairman of the board of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. After being educated in the Winston-Salem Schools and at Woodberry Forest School, Gordon Gray graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill as valedictorian in 1930, obtained a law degree from Yale University in 1933, and practiced law until 1937. He owned the *Winston-Salem Journal*, the *Twin City Sentinel* and WSJS radio station, and he represented Forsyth County as a state senator in 1939, 1941, and 1947.

Gray served in the U.S. Army during World War II. In 1947, he was appointed assistant secretary of the army, then undersecretary, and finally secretary in 1949. The next year, he resigned that position to become president of the University of North Carolina system. During his tenure, the Atlantic Coast Conference was created, the four-year medical, dental, and nursing

schools opened at UNC-Chapel Hill, and the university acquired licenses to operate an FM radio station and a statewide educational television network. In addition, the first black students were admitted. Gray resigned as president of the university system in 1955 to become assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs under President Dwight Eisenhower. In 1961, he was appointed to the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, on which he served until it was dissolved in 1977.

Gordon Gray had a longstanding interest in historic preservation and genealogy. He served as chairman of the board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation from 1962-1973 and as a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation from 1967-1973. In the latter position, he often testified before congressional committees to obtain government funding for the National Park Service and historic preservation. In the 1970s, Gray hired Jo White Linn to help him research and write a book about his Gray ancestors; *The Gray Family and Allied Lines: Bowman, Lindsay, Millis, Dick, Peebles, Wiley, Shannon, Lamar, McGee* was published in 1976. Gray was descended from Robert Lindsay and his second wife, Ann (Nancy) McGee, in whose house the first Guilford County court was held. In addition, he was indirectly related to the family of Governor John Motley Morehead.

Biographical Sources: The biographical information was obtained from the article about Gordon Gray in the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 2 D-G, edited by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), as well as from materials in the collection.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists primarily of correspondence between Gordon Gray and lineage specialist Jo White Linn about their research pertaining to the Gray family. Also included are letters between Linn and other individuals as she pursued various lines of inquiry. A few pieces of correspondence are between Gordon Gray and relatives or other individuals who were able to provide background information. Miscellaneous items such as family trees and an introduction to the diary of Elizabeth Dick Lindsay shed some light on the Gray family's connection with the Lindsay family and would be of particular interest to those researching that family.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence. 28 folders (ca. 250 items). 1971-1980, undated.

The correspondence focuses on the history and genealogy of the Gray family, with the majority being between Gordon Gray and lineage specialist Jo White Linn, whom Gray hired to assist in his research. The series is organized chronologically with the exception of content concerning Julius Alexander Gray, Robert T. Gray, and the Lindsay family. Some items pertain to the family history as it relates to Guilford County and the surrounding area.

The correspondence between Gordon Gray and Jo White Linn began in October 1973 when Gray requested that Linn verify the accuracy of information contained in a booklet about the Gray family published in 1932. The largest part of the correspondence transpired between 1974

and 1976, when the book was published. After that year, their occasional letters relate to questions generated by the book.

One folder of correspondence relates to Julius Alexander Gray, who married Emma Victoria Morehead, a daughter of Governor John Motley Morehead and niece of Jesse Lindsay (1:26). These letters are between Mary Lewis Rucker Edmunds and Guilford County historian James MacLamroc. Included amongst them are a copy of a family tree showing Governor Morehead's children, their spouses, and their children, as well as a typescript of a letter written to Julius Alexander Gray by his sister Lizzie.

The correspondence pertaining to the Lindsay family includes a letter written by Governor John Motley Morehead (1:27) in which the governor seems to say that Andrew Lindsay was elected Col. Commandant of the 88th Regiment of N.C in October 1840. Correspondence between Gordon Gray and Fanny Patton relates to Robert T. Gray, who was Gordon Gray's great uncle (1:28). This thread contains some interesting stories about the life and experiences of Robert T. Gray, who was an officer in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

2. Miscellaneous. 8 folders (11 items). 1779-1975.

This series consists of miscellaneous materials that do not seem to be associated with a piece of correspondence. Included are maps, family genealogy, the introduction to the diary of Elizabeth Dick Lindsay, and a brief history of the first Guilford County court, which was held in the home of Robert Lindsay. The majority of items are copies of originals, with the one exception being a legal document dated 1779-1780.

Of particular interest is a speech delivered by Mrs. Albert Lee Thompson in 1962 at the placement of a marker commemorating the site of the first Guilford County court (2:3). The speech includes a brief history and description of the Robert Lindsay house. The marker was erected under the auspices of the Guilford Battle Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Also of interest is a copy of the introduction to Elizabeth Dick Lindsay's diary, which was published in 1975 and covers the years 1837-1861 (2:4). It gives a description of the Lindsay homestead and a short history of the family's ownership of the property. This series also includes a genealogy of the Lindsay family of Virginia, as well as copies of various reports and texts that trace the family lineage to Scotland (2:2).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Correspondence (1971)
	2	Correspondence (1972)
	3	Correspondence (1973, Jan.-Dec.)
	4	Correspondence (1974, Jan.)
	5	Correspondence (1974, Feb.)
	6	Correspondence (1974, March-April)
	7	Correspondence (1974, May)
	8	Correspondence (1974, June)
	9	Correspondence (1974, July)
	10	Correspondence (1974, Aug.)
	11	Correspondence (1974, Sept.)
	12	Correspondence (1974, Oct.)
	13	Correspondence (1974, Nov.-Dec.)
	14	Correspondence (1975, Jan.-April)
	15	Correspondence (1975, May-July)
	16	Correspondence (1975, Sept.-Oct.)
	17	Correspondence (1975, Nov.)
	18	Correspondence (1976, Jan.)
	19	Correspondence (1976, Feb.)
	20	Correspondence (1976, March)
	21	Correspondence (1976, May-Nov.)
	22	Correspondence (1977, May-1978, Sept.)
	23	Correspondence (1979, June-Oct.)
	24	Correspondence (1980, May)
	25	Correspondence (May 19)
	26	Correspondence re: Julius Alexander Gray (undated)
	27	Correspondence re: Lindsay Family (1972, Oct.-1975, May)
	28	Correspondence re: Robert T. Gray (1974, July-1978, March)
2	1	Broadside (copy, 1834)
	2	Genealogy (Lindsay family)
	3	History of the first Guilford County court
	4	Introduction to the Diary of Elizabeth Dick Lindsay (copy)
	5	Legal (1779-1780)
	6	Maps (copies)
	7	Minutes of the N.C. Genealogical Society (1975, Jan.15)
	8	Text of grave markers (copy, Amelia and Jesse Lindsay)