Manuscripts & Folklife Archives

Department of Library Special Collections

Kentucky Library & Museum

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, KY 42101

# Descriptive Inventory

## MSS 255 WHITE, Vernon, 1915-2008

6 boxes. 85 folders. 567 items. 1809-2008

2008.239.4

***BIOGRAPHY***

Vernon White was born on 2 October 1915 to William Grant White and Martha Ellen (Reed) White near White Mills, Hardin County, Kentucky. The family farm was located on the Nolin River and White Mills was approximately four miles away. The Whites had lived in this area since the early decades of the nineteenth century. Vernon, and his seven siblings, assisted his parents with operating the farm. The children were educated at the one-room Lee School in Hardin County and attended secondary school at Lynnvale High School. The family was literate, subscribing to the county newspaper and several popular magazines of the day; they also played word games and held academic competitions in the home. They attended the White Mills Baptist Church.

Vernon graduated from Lynnvale High School in 1935 and continued to help his family at the farm. In 1941 he participated in classes in woodworking offered by the National Defense Training program, and in 1943 he was inducted into the U.S. Army Air Corps attending through the Aircraft Armament School. While in the military, he enjoyed several parts of the country which he had never visited including Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. He was injured while in service and received his honorable discharge in 1944. His military service opened his eyes to the grandeur and size of the United States and allowed him to attend college on the GI Bill. He enrolled in the University of Louisville in 1947 and received his Bachelor of Science degree in sociology with a minor in psychology in 1951. He then enrolled at the University of Tennessee and received his Masters degree in Sociology in 1953. He immediately accepted a teaching position at Lincoln Memorial University and acted as head of the Sociology Department. The following year he taught social studies at Rogersville High School in Rogersville, Tennessee. Over the next decade he held several teaching and administrative positions at several colleges: University of Tennessee at Martin (1955-1958), Furman University (1958-1960), and Piedmont College (1961-1966). During these years he completed over seventy additional hours of graduate work at the University of Georgia. In 1966 he accepted a faculty position at Western Kentucky University, where he remained until his retirement in 1980. During his career, he was a long time member of both the American Sociological Association and the Southern Sociological Association. In the later part of his career, he was an active member of the Kentucky Archaeological Association, serving as Treasurer from 1971 to 1977 and being elected to the Board of Directors for a three year term in 1978.

White’s research interests varied widely. From 1972 to 1977 researched “hominy holes” in Kentucky. A great deal of this research consisted of field work in which he located and then documented these sites in the south central Kentucky area. This research resulted in the publication of a report titled “An Archaeological Survey and Study of Hominy Holes in Kentucky,” which was published by the Kentucky Archaeological Association (*Bulletin* 14 & 15, April 1980). After his retirement, he continued in his research of Kentucky’s covered bridges. This resulted in perhaps his best known publication, *Covered Bridges: Focus on Kentucky* (Kentucky Imprints, 1985). White was interested both in the physical and aesthetic attributes of covered bridges. His last major publication was Grave Covers: *Our Cultural Heritage* (Kentucky Imprints, 2005) and it examines the various types of grave covers found in Kentucky and other nearby states.

White married Dorothy Bell Moore in 1953 and they had two children Carolyn Marie (White) Bell and Charles Vernon White.

***COLLECTION NOTES***

The Vernon White Collection consists chiefly of materials related to White’s research interests including: covered bridges, hominy holes, and grave covers. Most of this research is limited to Kentucky sites and includes published secondary material, field notes, illustrative material, and drafts of White’s books. In addition there is limited information about the White family and about the history of White Mills, Hardin County, Kentucky. The collection also includes a few sociological papers written by White in his early career as well as syllabi for some of the early sociology classes that he taught. A collection of approximately 1800 slides documenting older structures in Kentucky, as well as covered bridges, grave covers, and items related to folk life in the Commonwealth and the Upper South is included in the collection. Poetry, some philosophical notes, and two World War II diaries written by White can also be found in the collection. The Word War II diaries are complemented by a scrapbook of photographs documenting White’s military service.

In processing, staples, paper clips, metal spiral binders, and metal notebook posts were removed. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes. Pages were also removed from tablets and all notebook and tablet covers as well as news clippings were photocopied on acid-free paper. The slides were placed in acid-free boxes in numerical order according to a classification system that White developed. The slides have not been included in the cumulative item number total for the collection.

### SHELF LIST

#### BOX 1 Personal information and publications 1935-2008; n.d. 45 items

Folder 1a Inventory and separation sheets n.d. 3 items

Folder 1 Biographical information 1915-2008 8 items

Folder 2 Journal 1988-1989 1 item

Folder 3 Notes by White including “A Philosophy of Life,”

“Disciplines Toward Maturity,” “Duties of

B.S.U. Officers” and poems

Folder 4 Photocopies of poems written by White 1935-1948 15 items

Folder 5 Paper entitled “A Study of Divorce in 1950 1 item

Louisville, KY”

Folder 6 A Thesis by Vernon White; “Family Life 1953 1 item Education on the Elementary Level”

Folder 7 “A Study of Divorce” published in Furman 1951 1 item

University Bulletin

Folder 8 “Teaching the Introductory course in 1964 1 item

Folder 9 “Teaching the Introductory Course in 1965 1 item

Sociology”; Paper given at the Southern

Sociological Society, Atlanta, Georgia,

8-10 April 1965.

Folder 10 Syllabus for Introductory Sociology 1 item

Folder 11 “Great Social Thought”: Syllabus 1950 1 item

for Social Sciences 461-462 at the

University of Louisville

Folder 12 Paper written by White for an education 1964 1 item

course titled “The Philosophy of Auguste

Comte”

Folder 13 Lynnvale High School (Hardin County) - 1959 1 item

Research notes

Folder 14 Code book for pictures, negatives and n.d. 1 item

write-ups

Folder 15 Code book 3 for some of the pictures and n.d. 1 item

slides

Folder 16 Write-up on pictures n.d. 1 item

Folder 17 General notes, book 1, notes on variety 1980-1992 2 items

of things

Folder 18 White’s funeral eulogy, CD of the same, 2008 2 items

funeral program, etc.

Folder 19 Reminiscence by White’s sister, Gertie White, 1996 1 item

titled “Growing up on a farm during the early

1900s”

Folder 20 Lynnvale High School (Hardin County) - 1959 1 item

Research notes

**BOX 2 Petroglyphs 1809-1991 97 items**

Folder 1 Photographs of petroglyphs (site reports) 1970-1985 24 items

Folder 2 Negatives of photographs of petroglyphs 1970-1985 21 items

Folder 3 Photographs and negatives of pictographs 1970-1973 12 items

and grooved circles

Folder 4 Photos by Vernon White n.d. 7 items

Folder 5 Photos by Fred Coy of hominy holes and n.d. 16 items petroglyphs

Folder 6 Petroglyph and Pictograph Sites 1970-1974 5 items

(March 30, 1971)

Folder 7 Articles about archaeology & anthropology in 1809-1991 11 items

Kentucky

1) Brown, Samuel, “A Description of a Cave on Crooked Creek, With

Observations on Nitre and Gun-Powder,” *Transactions of [the]*

*American Philosophical Society*, vol. 6 (1809): 235-247.

2) Battle, Herbert B., “The Domestic Use of Oil Among Southern

Aborigines,” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 24 (1922): 171-182.

3) Webb, W.S. & W.D. Funkhouser, “The So-Called ‘Hominy-Holes’

of Kentucky,” *American Anthropologist* (1929): 701-709.

4) Blake, S.F., “A New Variety of Iva Ciliata From Indian Rock Shelters

in the South-Central United States,” *Rhodora, Journal of the New*

*England Botanical Club*, vol. 41, no. 483 (March 1939): 81-87.

5) Coy, Fred E., Jr. & Thomas C. Fuller, “The Asphalt Pictograph,

Edmonson County, Kentucky,” *Tennessee Archaeologist*, vol. 25,

no. 2, p. 37-46.

6) Fuller, Tom C., “Ancient Picture-Writing in Kentucky,” *Kentucky*

*Happy Hunting Ground*, vol. 25, no. 5 (September 1969): 15-18.

7) White, Vernon, “Unanswered Questions From Historic or Prehistoric

Kentucky,” *Kentucky Archaeological Association Bulletin*, 14&15

(1979): 55-62.

8) Swauger, James L., “Petroglyphs, Tar Burner Rocks, and Lye

Leaching Stones,” *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, vol. 51, no. 1-2

(April 1981): 1-7.

9) Lady, C. Lynn & Robert F. Maslowski, “Historic Rock Carvings in

the Ohio Valley,” *West Virginia History*, vol. 42, no. 1-2 (1981):

88-93.

10) Hockensmith, Charles D., “Euro-American Petrolglyphs Associated

With Pine Tar Kilns and Lye Leaching Devices in Kentucky,”

*Tennessee Archaeologist*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 100- 131.

Folder 8 “Vernon White in Search of Hominy Holes” 1980 1 item

from *In Kentucky* (July/August 1980)

**BOX 3 Bridges 1980-2002; n.d. 107 items**

Folder 1 Covered bridges – Correspondence 1984-2002 28 items

Folder 2 Information about covered bridge expert 1993-1995 6 items

Stockton Bower, chiefly obituaries

Folder 3 Covered Bridges – White’s “write-ups” on 1984-1995 1 item

covered bridges outside Kentucky

Folder 4 Covered Bridges – White’s “write-ups” on 1 item

covered bridges

Folder 5 Hand written copy of *Covered Bridges Focus* n.d. 1 item

*on Kentucky*

Folder 6 *Covered Bridges*, Rough draft of Chapters n.d. 1 item

1 & 2

Folder 7 *Covered Bridges*, Work copies (Ch. 1, 2, & 3) n.d. 1 item

Folder 8 *Covered Bridges*, outlined through Ch. 3 n.d. 1 item

Folder 9 *Covered Bridges*, outlined Ch. 4 n.d. 1 item

(Bridge descriptions)

Folder 10 *Covered Bridges*, Ch. 5 (Appendix, Glossary, n.d. 1 item

Bibliography)

Folder 11 *Covered Bridges*, (rewrites on rough n.d. 1 item

field notes)

Folder 12 “Observations on the Burr Family of Trusses”: 1994-1995 2 items

Typescript, published article & letter

Folder 13 Covered bridges – Kentucky 1980-2001 34 items

Folder 14 Bridges (not covered) – Kentucky 1992-2002 8 items

Folder 15 Covered bridges – Outside Kentucky 1982-2002 10 items

**BOX 4 Hominy Holes 1970-1979; n.d. 264 items**

Folder 1 Archaeological survey and study of hominy 1970-1974 51 items

holes in Kentucky - Edmonson County

Folder 2 Archaeological survey and study of hominy 1971-1975 47 items

holes in Kentucky – Hardin County

Folder 3 Archaeological survey and study of hominy 1970-1972 25 items

holes in Kentucky – Warren County

Folder 4 Archaeological survey and study of hominy 1971-1974 25 items

holes in Kentucky – Breckinridge County

Folder 5 Archaeological survey and study of hominy 1970-1979 28 items

holes in Kentucky – Butler, Hart, Logan,

Todd Counties

Folder 6 Archaeological survey and study of hominy 1971-1977 60 items

holes in Kentucky – Grayson County

Folder 7 Notes on hominy holes (Listed by county) n.d. 3 items

Folder 8 Pictures for hominy hole study n.d. 7 items

(by Ron Morrison)

**BOX 5 Grave Covers and Cemeteries 1943-2003; n.d. 50 items**

Folder 1 *Grave Covers*: Typescript 2000 2 items

Folder 2 *Grave Covers* – Miscellaneous items related 1989-2002 16 items

to: photocopies of news clippings about

cemeteries, cemetery brochures

Folder 3 “A Study of Child Gravestones with Lambs, 1997 3 items

Doves, Angels, etc. on Top of the Stones”:   
 Handwritten draft and typescript

Folder 4 White cemetery, Hardin County, Kentucky 1973 2 items

Folder 5 Photocopies of published articles related to 1970-1982 2 items

tombstones

1) West, Klaus, “Folk Art in Stone: Southwest Virginia,”

*Shenandoah History*, (1970): 1-28.

2) Cooper, Patricia Irvin, “Some Strange North Georgia

Tombstones,” *Pioneer American Society Transaction,*

vol. 5 (1982): 27-36.

Folder 6 Photocopies of published articles about 1943-1982 5 items

cemeteries

1) Denis, J.W., “The Nashville City Cemetery,” *Tennessee Historical*

*Quarterly*, vol. 2 (March 1943): 30-42.

2) Hannon, Thomas J. Jr., “Nineteenth Century Cemeteries

in Central West Pennsylvania,” *Pioneer America Society*,

vol. 2 (1973): 22-38.

3) French, Stanley, “The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The

Establishment of Mount Auburn and the ‘Rural Cemetery’

Movement,” *Death in America*, (1975): 69-91.

4) Jordan, Terry G., “‘The Roses So Red and The Lilies So Fair’:

Southern Folk Cemeteries in Texas,” *Southwestern Historical*

*Quarterly,* vol. 83 (1979-1980): 227-258.

5) Jordan, Terry G., “Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy,”

*The Southern Folk Cemetery in Texas,* (1982): 26, 34-38,

124, 135-141.

Folder 7 Photocopies of published articles about grave 1954-1998 7 items

covers, particularly grave houses

1) Walton, James, “Hogback Tombstones and the Anglo-Danish

House,” *Antiquity* vol. 27, 110 (1954): 68-77.

2) Ball, Donald B., “Observations on the Form and Function of

Middle Tennessee Gravehouses,” *Tennessee Anthropologist,*

vol. 2, 1 (Spring 1977): 29-62.

3) Cantrell, Brent, “Traditional Grave Structures on the Eastern

Highland Rim,” *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin,* vol. 67,

3 (October 1981): 93-104.

4) Sexton, Rocky, “Don’t Let the Rain Fall on My Face: French

Louisiana Gravehouses in an Anthropo-Geographical Context,”

*Material Culture*, vol. 23, 3 (Fall 1991): 31-46.

5) Ball, Donald B., “Types of Early Grave Decoration in Middle

Tennessee,” *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin,* vol. 58

(1977): 117-127.

6) Smoot, Frederick, “The Middle Tennessee Grave House,” *Middle*

*Tennessee Journal of Genealogy & History,* vol. 11, 3 (Winter

1997-98): 99-100.

7) Ball, Donald B., “An Old Idea in Modern Clothes: Notes on a Poured

Concrete Gravehouse in Middle Tennessee,” *U.S. Army Corps*

*of Engineers*  Louisville, Ky. : 1-6.

Folder 8 “A Stroll Through Americana”: Manuscript 1999? 4 items

Folder 9 “Notes on This and That” – Related to White’s n.d. 1 item

“A Stroll Through Americana” concept

Folder 10 Photographs of grave covers given to White, 1997-2003 5 items

includes correspondence

Folder 11 Correspondence and photos regarding 2002-2003 2 items

cast iron grave covers in Denton County,

Texas

Folder 12 “Good Fences Make Good Neighbors” - 1981 1 item

Manuscript

**BOX 6 White in World War II 1942-1944 4 items**

Folder 1 World War II Diary Nov. 3, 1942 – 1942-1943 1 item

Sept. 10, 1943

Folder 2 World War II Diary Sept. 11, 1943 - 1943-1944 1 item

July 12, 1944

Folder 3 Honorable discharge certificate 1944 1 item

Folder 4 World War II photograph album 1942-1944 1 item

**BOX 7 Slides 1981-2003**

Note: Many numbers within the slides are actually for a series of slides,

i.e. Br 1 (Bridges 1) has four views of the Bennetts Mill Bridge in Greenup

County, Kentucky. A number of the slides were missing when the collection

was donated, so the numbers below are inclusive numbers but do not always

reflect the exact number of slides within a subject area. The slides have

not been included in the cumulative number of items.

Box 1 Bridges 1-124

Box 2 Bridges 125-285

Box 3 Buildings 1-240

Box 4 Buildings 242-261; Banks 11-19; Barns 3-42;

Chimneys 3-18; Fences 1-63; Furnaces 3-9;

Flowers 1-18

Box 5 Churches 3-185

Box 6 Household 1-15; Indians 8-9; North Carolina 11-14;

Mills 1- 25; 325-391; Tools 4-48; Power driven

tools 4-22; Wood items 1-7

**BOX 7 Slides 1981-2003**

Box 1 Grave covers 2-163

Box 2 Grave covers 164-289

Box 3 Grave covers 290-366

***CATALOG CARD***

MSS WHITE, Vernon, 1809-2008

255 1915-2008

Correspondence, research notes, slides,

and photographs related to White’s interests:

covered bridges, hominy holes, archaeology,

and grave covers, chiefly in Kentucky. Also

includes drafts of his books and information

about the White family of White Mills, Hardin

County, Kentucky as well as information about

White’s participation in World War II.

8 boxes. 85 folders. 567 items.

2008.239.4 K/84

***SUBJECT ANALYTICS***

Account books, 1884-1888 – General stores – Barren County B1,F13

Archaeology – Breckinridge County B4,F4

Archaeology – Butler County B4, F5

Archaeology – Edmonson County B4,F1

Archaeology – Grayson County B4, F6

Archaeology – Hardin County B4,F2

Archaeology – Hart County B4, F5

Archaeology – Logan County B4, F5

Archaeology – Photos B4, F8

Archaeology – Todd County B4, F5

Archaeology – Warren County B4,F3

Barren County – General stores, 1884-1888 B1,F13

Bower, Stockton, 1905-1995 B3,F2

Breckinridge County – Archaeology B4,F4

Bridges – Kentucky B3

Bridges, Covered – Kentucky B3

Butler County – Archaeology B4, F5

Cemeteries – Relating to B5,F2,6

Cemeteries – Hardin County B5,F4

Certificates – Discharge papers – World War II, 1944 B6,F3

Comte, Auguste, 1798-1857 – Relating to B1,F12

Conwill, Joseph D. – Correspondence B3,F1

*Covered Bridges: Focus on Kentucky* B3

Coy, Fred E., Jr.– Photos by B2,F5

Death, 2008 B1,F18

Diaries, 1942-1944 – White, Vernon, 1915-2008 B6,F1-2

Diaries, 1988-1989 – White, Vernon, 1915-2008 B1,F2

Divorce – Louisville – Relating to, 1950 B1,F5&7

Edmonson County – Archaeology B4,F1

Eulogies – White, Vernon, 1915-2008 B1,F18

Family – Relating to B1,F6

Farms and farming – Hardin County B1,F19

Fences B4,F12

Folklore B5,F8-9

General stores – Barren County, 1884-1888 B1,F13

*Grave Covers: Our Cultural Heritage*, 2000 B5,F1-2

Grayson County – Archaeology B4, F6

Hardin County – Archaeology B4,F2

Hardin County – Cemeteries B5,F4

Hardin County – Farms and farming B1,F19

Hardin County – Education B1,F19-20

Hardin County – Social life and customs, 1900-1925 B1,F19

Hardin County – Travel and description B1,F19

Hardin County – Soldiers from - World War II, 1939-1945

Hart County – Archaeology B4, F5

Logan County – Archaeology B4, F5

Louisville – Divorce – Relating to, 1950 B1,F5&7

Lynnvale High School – Hardin County B1,F19-20

Morrison, Ron – Photos by B4,F8

Petroglyphs – Photos B2

Photographers – Coy, Frederick B2,F5

Photographers – Morrison, Ron B4,F8

Photos – Archaeology B4,F8

Photos – Petroglyphs B2

Photos – Pictographs B2

Photos – World War II B6,F4

Pictographs – Photos B2

Poetry B1,F3-4

Sepulchral monuments – Relating to B5,F1-3,5-6,10-11

Sepulchral monuments – Photos B5,F10-11

Social life and customs – Hardin County, 1900-1925 B1,F19

Sociology – Teachers and teaching B1,F8-11

Teachers and teaching – Sociology B1,F8-11

Todd County – Archaeology B4,F5

U.S. – Army – Air Corps – Relating to, 1942-1944 B6,F1-4

Warren County – Archaeology B4,F3

White Cemetery – Hardin County B5,F4

White family B1,F19

White, Gertie , 1912-2006 B1,F19

White Mills – Hardin County – Travel and description B1,F19

White, Vernon, 1915-2008 – Diaries, 1942-1944 B6,F1-2

White, Vernon, 1915-2008 – Diaries, 1988-1989 B1,F2

Wood, Miriam – Correspondence B3,F1

World War II, 1939-1945 – Soldiers from – Hardin County

World War II, 1939-1945 – Military life B6,F1-4

World War II, 1939-1945 – Photos B6,F4

***CHRONLOGICAL CARDS***

1809

1915-1925

1926-1950

1951-1975

1976-2000

2001-2008

me -1; sl - 1; sa - 76; chrono - 6

Jeffrey 04/22/2009