

Guide to the Rita Karan Thompson Collection

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: Rita Karan Thompson,

Title: Rita Karan Thompson Collection

Dates: 2007

Quantity: 0.5 feet

Abstract: This collection contains research notes, data sheets, and photocopied excerpts from documents pertaining to the life and background of Satchel Paige and to the history of tradespeople in Mobile. This research was conducted by Rita Karan Thompson during her time as a graduate student at the University of South Alabama. Thompson took on this research under guidance from Dr. Michael Thomason.

Accession: 737-2021

Biographical Note:

Rita Thompson is a former University of South Alabama student who earned her MA in History. Thompson did her assistantships in the Archives under Dr. Michael Thomason. In 2007, Thompson completed one semester of research as a graduate student for the Mobile Historic Development Commission on early builders in Mobile. This research was used to write a short book on Builders of Mobile. The book and databases are accessible on the web at http://www.mobilehd.org/publications_builtcity.html. These were financed by a grant from the Sybil H. Smith Charitable Trust.

Scope and Content:

The Rita Karan Thompson Collection consists of handwritten notes, printouts of spreadsheets, and photocopied documents. These documents are broken up into two series—Thompson's research on Satchel Paige on behalf of Larry Tye and Thompson's research on the history of tradespeople in Mobile on behalf of the MHDC.

The Paige material largely revolves around his family history, including details about his

parents and siblings and includes census data, directory information, and information on deaths. Additionally, correspondence between Thompson and Tye is also included, mostly relating to the specific research questions Thompson gathered materials to address, though her specific conclusions are not always included.

The MHDC series consists of a wide selection of information, including census data, directory information, death and burial information, research into the families and origins of various tradespeople, details about specific buildings in Mobile and the parties responsible for their design and construction, and a number of documents contextualizing parts of the city's history relevant to Thompson's research both academic and primary. Additionally, several pamphlets likely based on Thompson's research are included with the materials. While some material is present indicating the basic research direction Thompson undertook, researchers are advised that much of the collection consists of raw materials without commentary.

Provenance:

Donated in honor of Professor Michael Thomason by Rita Karan Thompson, 2021.

Arrangement:

This collection consists of two series based on the subject matter to which each group of documents pertains. Researchers are advised that owing to the nature of these documents as a scholar's working notes, little to no processing has occurred below the folder level. The first series relates to Thompson's research into Satchel Paige and his family. Documents have been divided between Thompson's correspondence on the subject and her gathered materials. The second series consists of a number of research notes collected regarding the history of professional tradespeople in the city of Mobile in the 19th and 20th centuries and has been subdivided into a number of folders based on subject matter and—when relevant—how the contained information has been organized.

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Guide prepared by: Christopher Stanford, 2022

Guide updated by: Deborah Gurt, Skyler Oliveira-Khan

Guide last updated: 6/5/2023

Related Content:

City Directories, Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Census Microfilms, Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Content List:

Box 1

Series I. Satchel Paige, 2 folders

1. Correspondence
2. Research

Series II. Mobile Tradespeople, 17 folders

3. Demographics – By Name
4. Demographics – By Location
5. Demographics – By Origin
6. Demographics – Miscellaneous

Box 2

1. Naturalization
2. Addresses
3. Family Members
4. Photos
5. Death/Burial
6. Biographical Narratives

7. Legal
8. Buildings
9. Advertisements
10. Publications – Specific Buildings
11. Publications – Mobile History
12. Publications – Academic/Southern History
13. Miscellaneous