

James Free Papers

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Prepared by Bradley E. Gernand

Collection Summary

Title: James Free Papers

Span Dates: 1929-1996

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1951-1979)

ID No.: MSS83945

Creator: Free, James

Extent: 2,950 items ; 9 containers plus 1 oversize ; 4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Journalist. Story files and scrapbooks of clippings of Free's articles for various newspapers, especially as Washington, D.C., correspondent for the *Birmingham News* covering the civil rights movement and the Cold War.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Free, Ann Cottrell.

Free, James.

Hubbard, L. Ron (La Fayette Ron), 1911-1986.

Subjects

African Americans--Civil rights.

American newspapers--Alabama--Birmingham.

Civil rights movements--United States.

Civil rights--United States.

Cold War.

Journalism--Washington (D.C.)

Motion pictures--Caribbean Area.

Titles

Birmingham news.

Occupations

Journalists.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of James Free, journalist, were given to the Library of Congress in 1997 by his wife, Ann Cottrell Free.

Processing History

The papers of James Free were arranged and described in 1999. The register was revised in 2008.

Related Materials

Additional papers of James Free may be found in the Manuscript Division's records of the Gridiron Club of Washington, D.C., which Free served as historian from 1979 to 1991.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of James Free in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of James Free are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, James Free Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1908, Nov. 5	Born, Gordo, Ala.
1929	B.A., University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Ala. Attended Theodora Duncan School of Theater, New York, N.Y. Starred in vaudeville productions, "What Women Want" and "Cradle of the Deep"
1930	B.L., Columbia University, New York, N.Y. Reporter, <i>Tuscaloosa News</i> , Tuscaloosa, Ala.
1931	Circulation supervisor, <i>New York Times</i> , Brooklyn, N.Y.
1931-1932	Associate editor, Tennis magazine
circa 1931	Insurance salesman, Yazoo and Mississippi Railroad Co.
1932	Worked for L. Ron Hubbard aboard schooner in Carribean
1932-1933	Editor, <i>Tuscaloosa Weekly Warrior</i> , Tuscaloosa, Ala.
1933	Visited Central America Edited English-language newspaper in Tegucigalpa, Honduras Assisted in campaign for reelection, Richmond Pearson Hobson, Jr., circuit court clerk of Tuscaloosa, Ala.
1934	Conducted Works Progress Administration project, Suburban Subsistence Living Conducted Tennessee Valley Authority research project, Gorgas, Ala.
1935-1937	Reporter, <i>Birmingham News</i> , Birmingham, Ala.
1937-1939	Reporter, <i>Richmond Times-Dispatch</i> , Richmond, Va.
1939-1941	Reporter, <i>Evening Star</i> , Washington, D.C.
1941-1946	Reporter, <i>Chicago Sun</i> (later <i>Sun-Times</i>), Washington, D.C., with a two-year absence from 1943-1944
1942-1945	Private, United States Army Air Force; officer, United States Navy
1946-1947	Reporter, <i>Raleigh News and Observer</i> and <i>Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel</i> , Washington, D.C.

1947-1979	Reporter, <i>Birmingham News</i> , Washington, D.C.
1949-1968	Public information officer, United States Navy Reserve
1950	Married Ann Cottrell
1954	Special citation for exceptional Washington reporting, Raymond Clapper Award Committee
1960	Chairman, Standing Committee of Correspondents of the Congressional Press Galleries
1963	Nominated for Pulitzer Prize in journalism
1969	Elected to Gridiron Club (historian, 1979-1991)
1979	Relinquished full duties as Washington correspondent of the <i>Birmingham News</i> and entered semi-retirement
1985	<i>Published The First 100 Years!: A Casual Chronicle of the Gridiron Club.</i> Washington, D.C.: The Club
1989	Elected to Society of Professional Journalists Hall of Fame
1996, Apr. 3	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of James Stillman Free (1908-1996) span the years from 1929 to 1996, with the bulk of the material dated 1951-1979. Free served as national capital correspondent for several newspapers, notably the *Birmingham News* of Birmingham, Alabama, during the Cold War period and civil rights movement. Free's clippings document reporting on civil rights from 1961 through 1979. His story files also illustrate media coverage of the Soviet Bloc and the Cold War.

Free's papers consist of files and scrapbooks of his major stories; "National Whirligig," the newspaper column he coauthored with his wife, Ann Cottrell Free; and notebooks in which he recorded interviews and information. Free's story files are organized alphabetically by subject.

Free also participated in L. Ron Hubbard's Caribbean Motion Picture Expedition in 1932. Hubbard, a university student, organized and chartered the expedition with the intent of filming movies in the exotic locales of the Caribbean. Insufficient capital caused the expedition's insolvency midway through the voyage, during which only one movie was made. Free's files contain photographs of expedition members aboard the schooner *Doris Hamlin*, the schooner's deck log and daily reports, and correspondence and notes by Free.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein alphabetically.

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BOX 1	Notebooks, 1965-1980, undated (3 folders)
BOX 2	Scrapbooks
BOX 2	Civil rights articles, 1961 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 2	Letters from members of Congress re Free's career, 1979
BOX 2	Raymond Clapper Award entries, 1954 <i>See Oversize</i>
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BOX 2	Berlin, Germany, trips
BOX 2	East Berlin, German Democratic Republic, 1961
BOX 2	West Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany, 1961-1962 (2 folders)
BOX 2	Bevill, Tom, 1977-1979
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BOX 3	Carter, Jimmy, 1977-1979, undated
BOX 3	Central America, visit, 1933
BOX 3	Civil rights
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BOX 3	Praise and criticism by Free, 1960-1961
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BOX 5	Hubbard, L. Ron
BOX 5	Biographical information, circa 1986
BOX 5	Caribbean Motion Picture Expedition (1932)
BOX 5	Article by Robert Burgess re <i>Doris Hamlin</i> (schooner), 1986
BOX 5	Deck log and daily record of <i>Doris Hamlin</i> (schooner) and expedition, 1932
BOX 5	Photographs of <i>Doris Hamlin</i> (schooner) and crew, 1932
BOX 5	Notes by Free, undated
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BOX 6	"National Whirligig" (syndicated column with Ann Cottrell Free)
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