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- **Ola Belle Reed collection**

Overview

Title: Ola Belle Reed collection

Call Number: Coll122

Creator: Reed, Ola Belle, 1916-2002

Dates: 1888-1988; bulk 1933-1988

Size: 32 boxes (42 linear feet)

Language: English

Abstract: The collection consists of audio, visual, and printed materials documenting the Appalachian migration to Maryland (1930s-1960s) and the career and family of musician Ola Belle Reed. The collection includes Reed's autoharp, personal effects and clothing, as well as recorded sound and photographs.

Citation: Ola Belle Reed collection, Maryland Traditions Archives, Collection 122, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD).

Administrative/Biographical Note

Ola Belle Reed (nee Campbell) (1916-2002) was a singer, songwriter and musician from Lansing, North Carolina. During the Great Depression, she moved with her family to Northeastern Maryland, where she lived until her death in 2002.

Reed’s grandfather Alexander Campbell was a Primitive Baptist preacher and fiddle player and her father played fiddle, banjo, guitar, and organ and formed a string band with his brother and sister Ellen. An uncle, Herb Osborne, sang mining songs from the coalfields of West Virginia. Her grandmother and mother sang ballads and topical songs in the Appalachian tradition. As a member of the North Carolina Ridge Runners with her brother Alex, Reed played oldtime banjo and sang for the Appalachian migrant audience in the Maryland-Delaware-Pennsylvania area.

From 1949-1960, local radio station WASA delivered a broadcast of “Campbell’s Corner,” a live broadcast from Campbell’s Corner – a general store located in Oxford, Pennsylvania, which was operated by Alex Campbell and Ola Belle (Campbell) Reed. The back of the store had a stage on which live music was played (typically bluegrass, including Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers, and others) and a small number of seats for a live audience. Alex and Ola Belle and the New River Boys were the musical hosts and emcees of the program, which expanded from a 30 minute broadcast to a 3 hour broadcast between 1949-1960. Beginning in 1960, the “Campbell’s Corner” show was broadcast on WCOJ in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, before being picked up by WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia. In addition to performing and broadcasting, the family opened a country music park called the New River Ranch near Rising Sun, MD.

Through the years, Reed wrote a number of songs about her Appalachian past and her commitment to family traditions, religious values, and social justice. In 1978, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, awarded her an honorary doctorate of letters for her contributions to the arts and culture of Maryland and the United States.

Scope & Content

Arrangement

- Organized into two series: Series I. Manuscript materials, files, and personal correspondence, 1888-1988. Series II. Ephemera, circa 1950-1980.
- Series I. Manuscript materials, files, and personal correspondence**

 - A. Promotional Materials
 - B. Personal documents and correspondence
 - C. Media and Materials
- Series II: Ephemera**

 - A. Textiles
 - B. Musical instruments

Provenance Information

Provenance and Acquisition Information

Collection donated to the Maryland Folklife Program by Jason David Pate in the 1980s. The collection was donated by the Maryland State Arts Council in 2014 in three accessions: the first on January 14, 2014 from the NCTA, the second on March 5, 2014 from the Arts Council's Ostend St. office, and the third in 2014 from the Maryland State Archives. Accessions: MSS 2013-06, MSS 2014-02, MSS 2014-08.

Related Collections

Ola Belle Reed duplication project, AFC 1970/020, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).Jason T. Pate Recording of Alex Campbell and Ola Belle Reed, AFC 1971/049, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).Henry Glassie collection of Ola Belle Reed and family recordings, AFC 1976/043, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).1977 Neptune Plaza Concert Series collection, AFC 1977/003, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).Henry Glassie duplication project, AFC 1979/085, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).1977 Inaugural folk dance and concert collection, AFC 1980/039, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).Mike Seeger collection, AFC 1995/004, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC).

Processing Note

Processed primarily by Nichole Procopenko in 2015, with assistance from Yuri Zietz. Collection processing included reuniting a previously dispersed collection of materials that originated with the Reed family. Materials from the Maryland State Arts Council office consist of digitized copies and related printed material from selected audio tapes at the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA). Materials from the NCTA consist of additional audio tapes. Materials at the Maryland State Archives include personal ephemera (musical instruments, stage outfits, crafts, letters, photo albums, etc.) donated by Ola Belle Reed to MSAC for use in museum exhibitions related to Maryland folklife. In 2022, Acadia Roher addressed conservation issues in the collection and rehoused textiles and instruments.

Descriptive Rules Used

Describing Archives: a Content Standard (DACS)

[Archives Processing Manual: Description \(2015\)](#): The processing manual used in Special Collections for all descriptive platforms, including PastPerfect.

Access & Use

Finding Aids

Finding aid available.

Finding Aid: <http://library.umbc.edu/speccoll/findingaids/coll122.php>

Access Conditions

No restrictions.

Conditions Governing Reproductions and Use

Reproductions allowed for research purposes. Copyright maintained by the creator.

Subject Headings

Creators

Reed, Ola Belle, 1916-2002

Pate, Jason Thomas

Subjects

Bluegrass music

Bluegrass musicians

Folk music -- Appalachian Region, Southern

Folk musicians

Folk songs, English -- Appalachian Region, Southern

Reed, Ola Belle, 1916-2002 -- Archives

Series Description & Container List

Series I. Manuscript materials, files, and personal correspondence

Date: 1888-1988

Extent: 20 boxes (23 linear ft.)

Description: This series collects files, handwritten notes, promotional materials, correspondence, and miscellaneous paper holdings from Ola Belle Reed. Series arranged by type of material.

Subseries I.A: Promotional materials

Date: 1906-1988

Extent: 11 boxes (14 linear ft.)

Description: This subseries collects posters and fliers, music programs, and other materials related to Ola Belle Reed's professional career.

Folder Title/Description	Date	Box #	Folder #	Additional Info.
Recognitions	1982-1984	1	1	

Correspondence from binder	1935-1976	1	2
Fliers and program materials	undated	1	3
1970 - PA Civic Center programs	1970	1	4
1971 - PA Civic Center program materials	1971	1	5
1973 - National Folk Festival Assn. program	1973	1	6
1974 - Various program materials	1974	1	7
1975 - Ticket stub	1975	1	8
1977 - Program materials	1977	1	9
1978 - Fliers and program materials	1978	1	10
1979 - Delaware Bluegrass program	1979	1	11
1981 - Fliers	1981	1	12
1982 - Program materials	1982	1	13
1983 - Fliers and program materials	1983	1	14
1988 - Fliers	1988	1	15
Southern Appalachian Video Ethnography Series (SAVES)	undated	1	16
Newsletters/mailers/Ola Belle/J. Pate	ca. 1969-1971	1	17
Newsletters/mailers/Ola Belle/J. Pate	ca. 1968-1975	1	18
Ola Belle photographs and ephemera	1969-1972	1	19
MFPR C. Camp posters and ephemera	ca. 1970-1974	1	20
MFPR C. Camp posters and ephemera	undated	1	21
Concert fliers: Ola Belle or Jason Pate	ca. 1976-1978	1	22
Fliers and program materials	ca. 1970-1974	1	23
Fliers and correspondence	undated	1	24
Oversized fliers	1968-1972	2	
Fliers and ephemera - Charley Camp	ca. 1971-1974	3	
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1967-1975	4	1
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1975-1977	4	2
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1978-1980	4	3
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1982-1983	4	4
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1906-1962	5	1
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1963-1967	5	2
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1976-1978	5	3
Music publications, songbooks, and programs	1979-1982	5	4
Press clippings and music publications	ca. 1965-1980	6	
Personal ephemera and framed photographs	ca. 1976-1977	7	
Personal correspondence: Candlewood Elementary	1977	8	
News clippings: Ola Belle	ca. 1970-1983	9	
Havre de Grace scrapbook	1951-1953	10	
Concert fliers, Winter Folk Festival and Carousel Concerts	ca. 1971	11	

Subseries I.B: Personal documents and correspondence
Date: 1966-1984

Folder Title/Description	Date	Box #	Folder #	Additional Info.
Correspondence, Agnes Thomas poetry	undated	12	1	
Travel ephemera, brochures	undated	12	2	
Personal correspondence - Glassie, Henry, 1 of 2	1966-1969	12	3	
Personal correspondence - Glassie, Henry	1966-1969	12	4	
Correspondence, accounts	1977-1984	12	5	
Business correspondence	1971-1982	12	6	
Personal correspondence	1975-1983	12	7	
Personal correspondence - N. Carolina Folklife Programs	1980	12	8	
Personal correspondence - Wake Forest Elementary	1980	12	9	
Personal correspondence - Phelps Luck Elementary School	1980	12	10	
Miscellaneous	undated	12	11	
Correspondence	1971-1984	12	12	
Ralph Reed - High School Reunion	undated	12	13	
Reed Family Songbook	1974	12	14	
Jerry Campbell	1975	12	15	
Misc. - financial/business	1975-1979	12	16	
Stamp Saver Booklet	undated	12	17	
Correspondence, photocopies, To Lie down in Peace	1980-1982	12	18	
Concert fliers, receipts, personal ephemera	ca. 1974-1983	13		
Certificate, First Continental Congress	1974	14		
Personal calendars (with notes)	1966-1984	15	1	
Vintage catalogs	1904-1908	15	2	

Subseries I.C: Media and materials
Date: ca. 1888-1980

Extent: 5 boxes (4.5 linear ft.)

Description: Collected in this subseries are audiovisual materials from Ola Belle Reed's personal collection, including family photographs and memorabilia from her career in music.

Folder Title/Description	Date	Box #	Folder #	Additional Info.
Photographs - Reed family	1939-1975	16	1	
Photographs and postcards, Ola Belle and family	ca. 1938-1975	16	2	
Photographs, postcards, slides	1933-1975	16	3	
Photographs ABC	undated	16	4	
Photographs D-Q	undated	16	5	
Photographs RST	undated	16	6	
Photographs XYZ	undated	16	7	
From packet of loose images - photographs, pencil drawings, and postcards	ca. 1920-1980	16	8	
Green Binder photos	ca. 1936-1970	16	9	
The Campbell family	undated	16	10	

James Dennis Wallace, Carter family	undated	16	11
Ola Belle Reed and unidentified	undated	16	12
Ola Belle Reed photographs, album	undated	16	13
Ola Belle Reed photographs, album (scanned)	undated	16	14
Osborne family photo	undated	17	
Umatic videocassette	undated	13	1
Vinyl LP and 78 RPM disc, Alex Campbell/New River Boys + Ola Belle	undated	13	2
Collection of hymnals and songbooks	1888-1929	18	1
Digitized tapes from NCTA	undated	32	1

Series II: Ephemera

Date: ca. 1950-1980

Extent: 13 boxes (19 linear ft.)

Description: This series collects musical instruments from Ola Belle Reed's personal collection as well as textiles made and worn by Reed. Dates are rough estimates as nearly all of the items in this series are undated.

Subseries II.A: Textiles

Date: ca. 1950-1980

Extent: 10 boxes (14.5 linear ft.)

Description: Textiles made by Ola Belle Reed. These items are undated, and inclusive dates are a best estimate.

Folder Title/Description	Date	Box #	Folder #	Additional Info.
Needlepoint	undated	19		
Various textiles	undated	20		
Cushion/textile	undated	21		
Skirt	undated	22		
Tapestry	undated	23		
Hat	undated	24		
Belt	undated	25		
Shawl	undated	26		
Dress	undated	27		
Sweater	undated	28		

Subseries II.B: Musical instruments

Date: undated

Extent: 3 boxes (4.5 linear ft.)

Description: Musical instruments from Ola Belle's personal collection. Exact dates are unavailable for either instruments' manufacture or when Ms. Reed came to possess them.

Folder Title/Description	Date	Box #	Folder #	Additional Info.
Toy banjo	undated	29		
Six harmonicas	undated	30		
Autoharp with note	undated	31		



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