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Greene, Zula Bennington (1895-1988), Collection, 1920-1991

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21 Greene, Zula Bennington (1895-1988), Collection, 1920-1991
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INTRODUCTION

Personal papers and materials collected by Zula Bennington Greene, an author and columnist from Topeka, Kansas. Includes personal and professional correspondence with friends and publishers; manuscripts; newspaper articles and clippings; book reviews; poetry and psalms; programs; printed materials; and photographs and images.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Zula Bennington Greene Collection was donated to Leonard H. Axe Library of Pittsburg State University on 10 October 1978 and 20 March 1979 by Zula Bennington Greene.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Zula Bennington Greene was born March 2, 1895, on a farm in Hickory County, Missouri, to Jacob and Margaret (Holley) Bennington. She grew up in Missouri and moved with her family to Center, Colorado in her teens. She attended Colorado University for two years and taught school for three years. In 1928 she began writing for two Kansas newspapers, Chase County Leader-News and the El Dorado Times. During the Great Depression she moved to Topeka and began writing for the Topeka Daily Capital, later known as the Topeka Capital-Journal. During her later years she wrote twice a year for the Minneapolis Review of Baseball. Greene is best known for her column, "Peggy of the Flint Hills." Her column appeared six days a week in the Topeka Capital-Journal from 1933 to 1988. In the 1930's, she wrote "The Coleman Family," a weekly serial for WIBW Radio. In 1983, she wrote Skimming the Cream, a collection of her favorite columns, and the introduction for Kansas In Color. Portions of her autobiography have appeared in the Little Balkans Review.

Greene was an active member of the Topeka, Kansas, community for over fifty years. She was a board member and past president of the Topeka Civic Theatre. She appeared in several theatre and television productions. In 1940, her first role was a doctor's wife in "Our Town." She also appeared in a made-for-television movie, "Mary White," playing the role of "Mrs. Apple" in 1977. The Arts Council of Topeka presented an award for her writing and support of Topeka, Kansas, theatres that same year. She is credited with the of founding a Performing Arts Center for children and putting weekly acting classes at the Veterans Administration hospital in Topeka, Kansas. In 1987 she received the American Association of Community Theatres Robert Gard Superior Volunteer Award for her work with the Topeka Civic Theatre. She also received an award for her contributions to community theatre from the Federation of American Community Theatres Midwestern conference. She was named Outstanding Newswoman of the Year by the University of Kansas and Kansas State University. She was nominated for the Mary Margaret McBride Award in 1952.

The Junior League of Topeka, Kansas Authors Club and the Kiwanis Club honored Greene for her contributions. She was the first recipient of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce "Topper" Award in 1977. Kansans honored her for the Equal Rights Amendment in 1978. She celebrated her 50th anniversary of her column in 1984. That same year, the Native Sons and Daughters named her Distinguished Kansan and the Kansas Authors Club honored her for distinguished service. Greene received an honorary doctorate of human letters degree from Washburn University on May 15, 1988.

Greene was a member of Theta Sigma Phi, now the Topeka Professional Chapter of Women in Communications, Inc., the Topeka Civic Theatre, Phi Kappa Phi honorary scholastic society, the Topeka Downtown Rotary Club, Women in Communications, YMCA, Minerva Club, Nautilus Club, and the Central Congregational Church. Zula Bennington Greene married Milton Willard Greene on June 26, 1918, in Center, Colorado. They had four children: Margaret Greene, Edward Greene, Dorothy (Greene) Hanger, and Willard B. Greene. She died of a stroke on June 13, 1988, in Topeka, Kansas.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Zula Bennington Greene Collection contains correspondence, manuscripts, newspaper articles and clippings, and miscellaneous materials that document her personal and professional life, family, and activities as author and columnist in Topeka, Kansas. Materials within the collection include letters, printed material, clippings, revised copies of autobiographical manuscripts, a radio program, and book reviews of the book, Kansas In Color.

The collection is arranged into nine series: **Correspondence Series, Manuscript Series, Book Reviews Series, Poetry Series, Program Series, Radio Program Series, Images Series, and Miscellaneous Series.**

The **Correspondence Series** is comprised of correspondence both to and from Greene from 1920, 1922, 1929, 1931, 1933, 1938, 1942, 1946, 1948-1950, 1959, 1960-1962, 1964, 1965, 1969, 1872, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1981-1984, 1988, 1989, and 1991. The correspondence also consists of postcards to and from Lynn Martin and to Gene DeGruson written 1942, 1944, 1969, 1971, 1972, and 1985. Included are original and copied letters to and from George White, editor for a New York publishing house, relating to the publication and revision of her autobiographical manuscript. Letters from University Press of Kansas informing Greene that the book, Kansas In Color, made their national bestseller list for hardcover regional titles. The series also consists of numerous personal letters and enclosures to Lynn Martin, publisher of The Echo and Gene DeGruson, curator of special collections and archivist at Pittsburg State University from 1968 to 1997. Martin and DeGruson were close personal friends of Greene. The personal correspondence contains reference to her family, childhood, poetry, and the autobiographical manuscript she was writing.

The **Manuscript Series** is comprised of manuscripts written by Zula Bennington Greene. Included in the collection are several revised copies of chapters from her paper entitled, "From the Middle of an Hourglass: Reminiscences of Zula Bennington Greene." The chapters are entitled, Part I: "Hickory County, Missouri, 1895-1910," Part II: "Center and Boulder, Colorado, 1910-1918," Part III: "Chase County, Kansas, 1918-1933," and Part IV: "Topeka, Kansas, 1933-1943." The series also contains a paper she wrote about a January 8, 1926, fire in Bazaar, Kansas and an article she wrote about Kansas authors and books.

The **Clippings Series** is comprised of newspaper articles and clippings written about the life and death of Zula Bennington Greene, articles she wrote, and miscellaneous clippings she collected. Included in the series are articles published in the Topeka-Capital Journal, Chase County Leader-News, Wichita Eagle-Beacon and USA Today regarding the death of Greene in 1988. Articles written by Greene include reference to Lynn Martin, publisher of The Echo, and personal friend Gene DeGruson. The series also contains several copies of her column, "Peggy of the Flint Hills."

The **Book Review Series** consists of book reviews from 1982 to 1983 for Zula Bennington Greene's book, Kansas In Color (1982). The University Press of Kansas published the book for the Kansas Department of Economic Development to highlight the state's evolution and heritage. Included are original and copied newspaper reviews by the Manhattan Mercury, Kansas City Star, Wichita Eagle-Beacon, Topeka Capital Journal, and a magazine article in Kansas Farmer. The series also contains a complete list of books in print by the University Press of Kansas publication for fall and winter 1982.

The **Poetry Series** consists of a collection of original and clippings of published poetry. Included are poems by May Ward, George Martin and a letter from the Lawrence Free Public Library with the winning entry by Lora D. Reiter for the 1960 Kansas Centennial Celebration Poetry Contest. There is also unsigned work in the series.

The **Program Series** consists of printed programs collected by Greene for productions by the Topeka Civic Theatre, Topeka High School, and the Montreal Repertory Theatre. The series dates from 1954 to 1990. It includes performances by Yma Sumac and her company of Incan dancers and musicians, a program for "The Teahouse of the August Moon," with a performance by Gene DeGruson, and a program by the Shawnee County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.

The **Radio Program Series** consists of a radio program written for "Peggy." Included is manuscript of humorous quotes to be read on air and a rewritten manuscript of the radio program with corrections and handwritten notes. There is also a 1941 radio program entitled, "Village Notes" for a Brookville, Kansas, radio broadcast in the series.

The **Images Series** contains photographs and images collected by Zula Bennington Greene. Included are photographs of Liz Driss, the family of late 1800's humorist Edgar "Bill" Nye, and an official United States Navy photograph of a kitten born aboard a cruiser during the battle of the Coral Sea. Also included is a lithograph by Peter Hurd entitled, "The Return of the Weed."

The **Miscellaneous Series** contains clippings, handwritten notes, and flyers. Included is a funeral program for Zula Bennington Green, a book cover for Kansas In Color, and a caricature of Greene that appeared in a 1946 Topeka magazine. There are two blank 1938 post cards Sears, Roebuck, and Company and Montgomery Ward in Kansas City, Missouri. A 1954 Christmas booklet given to Greene is also in the series.

FOLDER LIST

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- f. 1 undated, 1920-1938
- f. 2 1942-1943
- f. 3 1946-1959
- f. 4 1960-1969
- f. 5 1971-1972
- f. 6 September-November 1973
- f. 7 1975-1976
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- f. 18 Undated, June 24, 1988
- f. 19 June 24, 1988
- f. 20 June 24, 1988
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- f. 22 June 28, 1988
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- f. 24 June 29, 1988
- f. 25 June 29, 1988
- f. 26 June 29, 1988
- f. 27 June 29, 1988
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- f. 29 Life and death of Greene, 1981-1988
- f. 30 Written by Greene, undated, 1931-1988
- f. 31 Miscellaneous, 1914-1973

Book Review Series

- f. 32 1982
- f. 33 1982
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- f. 35 undated, 1941
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- f. 37 1954, 1957
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- f. 39 1941, 1947

Images Series

- f. 40 U.S. Navy photograph, Bill Nye family portraits, lithograph, clippings, and photographs

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- f. 41 Flyer, handwritten notes, book signing invitation, and booklet
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