

# **THE SALYNN McCOLLUM PAPERS**

**MSS 699  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE  
PROVENANCE STATEMENT  
CONTAINER LIST**

**2010**

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
JEAN AND ALEXANDER HEARD LIBRARY  
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**

419 21<sup>ST</sup> Avenue South  
Nashville, Tennessee 37240  
615-322-2807

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Salynn McCollum was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her parents were Walter C. and Hilda McCollum. Both of her parents were from Tennessee, with her father coming from the Waverly area and her mother coming from Memphis. She spent time in New York before attending college in Tennessee. In 1958, she began her first year of college at the George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee. Her course of study focused on instruction for intellectually and developmentally disabled children.

During her junior year in college, Ms. McCollum became involved in the Nashville Non-Violent Movement, the Nashville branch of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In February 1961, she attended a Nashville Student Movement meeting as a guest of Central Committee member Lester Carr. No committee members knew who she was, but they assumed she was a reporter because she took notes throughout the meeting. Ultimately, she became the first secretary of the Central Committee. She was also one of the ten college students who participated in the first Freedom Ride from Nashville to Birmingham, Alabama on May 17, 1961.

Salynn McCollum was an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement between 1961 and 1965. Despite pressure from her family and Peabody College to cease her involvement, she continued to work with SNCC following the Freedom Ride. She wrote the "I am a Freedom Rider" series depicting her experiences on the Freedom Ride and her subsequent jailing at the Birmingham Jail. She worked as a SNCC field secretary in different locations in the South. She was particularly active in Nashville, Tennessee; Cairo, Illinois; Charleston, Missouri; and Des Moines, Iowa.

As both a northerner in the South and a white woman in the Civil Rights Movement, family, friends, and acquaintances struggled to understand why she chose to participate in the Nashville Non-Violent Movement. For Ms. McCollum, her desire to live her life according to her convictions and religious beliefs pushed her to work tirelessly for equality.

Following her time with SNCC, Salynn McCollum returned to her interest in instructing children. She worked as a Head Start teacher and later a director. When possible, she still speaks to groups about her experiences as a Freedom Rider.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Salynn McCollum Papers consist of 2.085 linear feet of materials. The collection includes correspondence and writings by McCollum, as well as newspaper clippings, journal and magazine articles, and photographs. The majority of the material represents McCollum's participation with the Civil Rights Movement during the first half of the 1960s. Many items were generated while she was a field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

The collection is organized into two series: Personal Material, which includes Salynn's correspondence, poetry, and journal entries; and Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee Material, which includes many of that organization's publications, as well as field notes, committee meeting minutes, committee promotional materials, and many newspaper articles involving SNCC activities Salynn was involved in.

# CONTAINER LIST

## Series 1: Personal Material

### Box 1

<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Correspondence – Outgoing
2	Correspondence – Incoming, May 3, 1961 – June 26, 1961
3	Correspondence – Incoming, August 1, 1961 – September 27, 1961
4	Correspondence – Incoming, October 10, 1961 – December 17, 1962
5	Correspondence – Incoming, January 9, 1963 – November 14, 1963
6	Correspondence – Incoming, January 13, 1964 – June 26, 1966
7	Correspondence – Incoming, undated
8	Newspaper Articles
9	Publications – Newsletters, Articles, Resources
10	Writings – Articles
11	Writings – Coursework
12	Writings – Journal
13	Writings – Notes
14	Writings – Poetry
15	Writings – Poetry
16	Writings – Stories
17	Writings – Thoughts
18	Writings – Thoughts

## Series 2: Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee Material

### Box 2

<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Administrative Documents
2	Administrative Documents
3	Bibliographies, Catalogs – 1961 – 1964
4	Civil Rights Organizations Publications – Southern Regional Council
5	Civil Rights Organizations Publications – Southern Regional Council
6	Civil Rights Organizations Publications – U.S. National Student Association
7	Correspondence – Incoming, April 27, 1962 – May 14, 1964
8	Correspondence – Outgoing, July 25, 1962 – July 1, 1964
9	Flyers & Programs
10	Histories
11	Journal Articles
12	Laws

13	Memoranda & Letters
14	Miscellaneous Handouts, Prints, Posters
15	Nashville Non-Violent Movement Documents
16	Nashville Non-Violent Movement – Coordinating Committee Minutes, March 1961
17	Nashville Non-Violent Movement – Coordinating Committee Minutes, April 1, 1961 – April 12, 1961
18	Nashville Non-Violent Movement – Coordinating Committee Minutes, April 13, 1961 – April 29, 1961
19	Nashville Non-Violent Movement – Coordinating Committee Minutes, May 1961
20	News Releases – 1961 – November 6, 1962
21	News Releases – January 1963 – July 1963
22	News Releases – September 4, 1963 – 1964
23	Newsletters – March 1961 – June 5, 1963
24	Newsletters – The Student Voice, Summer 1962 – February 18, 1964
25	Newsletters – The Student Voice, February 25, 1964 – August 5, 1964

Box 3

<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Other Organizations Publications – August 1957 – September 1961
2	Other Organizations Publications – April 1962 – August 1962
3	Other Organizations Publications – September 1962 – June 29, 1964
4	Other Organizations Publications – September 1964 – June 7, 1966
5	Other Organizations Publications – Undated
6	Pamphlets & Booklets
7	Photographs
8	Promotional Materials
9	Promotional Materials
10	Reports – May 19, 1962 – August 8, 1962
11	Reports – August 16, 1962 – October 1, 1962
12	Reports – October 1, 1962 – February 18, 1964
13	Reports
14	Songs & Music Information
15	Writings – Notes, Drafts
16	Writings – Notes, Drafts
17	Writings – Notes, Drafts
18	Writings – Notes, Drafts
19	Writings – Notes, Drafts
20	Writings – Notes, Drafts
21	Writings – Notes, Drafts

Box 4

<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Writings – Reflections and Accounts
2	Writings – Reflections and Accounts
3	Writings – Speeches
4	Writings – Speeches
5	Writings – Speeches
6	Newspaper Articles – September 23, 1961 – July 3, 1962
7	Newspaper Articles – July 5, 1962 – July 16, 1962
8	Newspaper Articles – July 16, 1962 – July 24, 1962
9	Newspaper Articles – July 24, 1962 – August 15, 1962
10	Newspaper Articles – August 16, 1962 – October 4, 1962
11	Newspaper Articles – 1962 – April 7, 1963
12	Newspaper Articles – April 17, 1963 – November 19, 1963
13	Newspaper Articles – November 25, 1963 – April 29, 1964
14	Newspaper Articles – May 17, 1964 – March 10, 1965
15	Newspaper Articles – March 12, 1965 – March 20, 1965
16	Newspaper Articles – March 21, 1965 – March 31, 1965
17	Newspaper Articles – March 31, 1965 – October 8, 1966
18	Newspaper Articles – February 6, 2006 – February 26, 2006
19	Newspaper Articles – Undated
20	Newspaper Articles – Undated
21	Newspapers – The Southern Patriot, April 1960 – May 1964
22	Newspapers – The Empire Star Weekly, January 21, 1961 – May 27, 1961
23	Newspapers – The Empire Star Weekly, August 19, 1961 – September 11, 1961
24	Newspapers – The Empire Star Weekly, September 18, 1961 – January 6, 1962
25	Newspapers – The Empire Star Weekly, January 12, 1962 – February 10, 1962

Box 5

<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Magazine Articles – April 25, 1961 – December 17, 1961
2	Magazine Articles – April 10, 1962 – September 25, 1966
3	Magazine Articles – Undated
4	Magazines – The New Yorker, August 29, 1959
5	Magazines – Motive, May 1960
6	Magazines – Motive, October 1960
7	Magazines – Motive, November 1960
8	Magazines – Motive, December 1960
9	Magazines – Motive, April 1961
10	Magazines – Presbyterian Life, August 1, 1961
11	Magazines – Harper's Magazine, October 1961
12	Magazines – U.S. News & World Report, March 26, 1962

- 13 Magazines – Playboy, July 1962
- 14 Magazines – The Progressive, June 1963
- 15 Magazines – Liberation, June 1963
- 16 Magazines – Liberation, Summer 1963
- 17 Magazines – Liberation, September 1963
- 18 Magazines – U.S. News & World Report, September 9, 1963
- 19 Magazines – Newsweek, October 21, 1963
- 20 Magazines – The Progressive, February 1964
- 21 Magazines – Parents’ Magazine, July 1964
- 22 Magazines – Newsweek, July 13, 1964
- 23 Magazines – Newsweek, August 3, 1964
- 24 Magazines – Newsweek, November 20, 1967