



The Wittliff Collections

Southwestern Writers Collection

Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection

A Guide to the Samuel Hynes Collection of John Graves

1954-2013 [Bulk Dates: 2000-2008]

Collection 121

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Hynes, Samuel
Title:	The Samuel Hynes Collection of John Graves
Dates:	1954-2013 (Bulk dates 2000-2008)
Abstract:	3 boxes of correspondence, photographs, negatives, screenplay drafts, manuscript drafts, and newspaper articles pertaining to the life and writings of John Graves (1920-2013).
Identification:	Collection 121
Extent:	3 boxes (2 linear feet)
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University

Biographical Sketch (John Graves)

Born August 6, 1920 in Fort Worth, Texas, John Alexander Graves III grew up in that city until moving away to attend college in 1938. He graduated from Rice Institute (now Rice University) with a B.A. in English in 1942, then entered the Marine Corps and served in the Pacific theater until being wounded by a Japanese grenade on the island of Saipan. After the service, Graves traveled to Mexico for a few months then attended Columbia University, earning an M.A. in English from there in 1948. He began his professional writing career while still a graduate student by publishing a short story, titled "Quarry," in *The New Yorker* in 1947.

Graves taught English from 1948 to 1950 at The University of Texas at Austin, but left academia and Texas behind to spend a year freelance writing in New York City. From January 1953 to July 1955 he spent abroad, living mostly in Spain, including the Canary Islands for some months on a resident colony of writers and artists. During these years he wrote articles for publications like *Holiday* and *Town and Country* but also worked on fiction, including a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Spotted Horse*. Graves concentrated on finishing the novel after returning to the United States, but his agent rejected the final manuscript and Graves soon came to realize the novel was not publishable as a whole.

In the spring of 1957 Graves returned home to help care for his gravely ill father. In November of that year, Graves completed a three-week canoe trip down part of the Brazos River that he feared was about to be changed forever by dams. His narrative chronicle of the trip was first published as a magazine article in *Holiday*, and later Graves added history, philosophy and folklore which resulted in his first major book, *Goodbye to a River* (1960). The book attracted national attention and critical praise for its original style. It won the Carr P. Collins Award of the Texas Institute of Letters in 1961 and was nominated for a National Book Award that year. In the meantime, Graves took a teaching job at Texas Christian University, married Jane Cole (his second marriage) and purchased the first of his limestone acres in Somervell County near the town of Glen Rose.

After three years assisting in and writing for a U.S. government study of pollution of the Potomac River, Graves returned to Texas and focused on converting his country acreage from a weekend getaway into a permanent home with a manageable farm and cattle ranch. In that time he also contributed to journals, magazines and books with introductions, articles, and essays—work that has continued to the present day. His observations and ruminations about his relationship with the land as a farmer and rancher led to the publication of his second major book, *Hard Scrabble: Observations on a Patch of Land* (1974). *Hard Scrabble* describes both the promise and adversity of country life, touching on subjects like animals, tools, construction, weather, water, ecology, agriculture, and migrant workers.

Starting in 1976, Graves again focused on life in the country in a series of essays that were published in *Texas Monthly* magazine. The essays examined topics such as fences, meat, tobacco, cows, chickens, dogs, and bees, and were collected and published for Graves' third major book, *From a Limestone Ledge: Some Essays and Other Ruminations about Country Life in Texas* (1980). Some essays follow up topics which he discussed in *Hard Scrabble*, but all focus on the “more or less country things which came to interest” Graves. *From a Limestone Ledge* was nominated for an American Book Award.

Although Graves did not publish an extensive number of books, his contributions to magazines, books, and anthologies spans over five decades. He wrote introductions and narratives for a number of books and reports, often on Texas history and Texas environment, such as *Cowboy Life on the Western Plains*, *Texas Heartland: A Hill Country Year* and *The Water Hustlers*. Two of Graves' most famous magazine pieces, “The Last Running” and “Blue & Some Other Dogs,” later became their own books, published first by Encino Press. Another well-received essay, “Recollections of a Texas Bird Glimpser,” written for the art book, *Of Birds and Texas* (1986), transformed into a limited edition book, *Self-Portrait, With Birds* (1991).

In 1996 the University of Texas Press published *A John Graves Reader*, which gathered together fiction and non-fiction pieces, both published and unpublished, including a long, reworked excerpt from his failed novel, *The Spotted Horse*. Graves wrote text for the photography books

Texas Rivers (2002) and *Texas Hill Country* (2003), and in 2004 Knopf published his memoir, *Myself and Strangers*, which focused on his years abroad as a freelance writer.

John Graves is one of the most important Southwestern writers. Three of his early short stories were collected in the O. Henry Award Series. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1963 and a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1972. Numerous awards and recognitions followed him throughout his writing career. Although considered a regional and nature writer due to his settings and subjects, his style, which incorporates fiction, folklore, autobiography, philosophy, and observation, defied provincial or topical boundaries. Perhaps the best example of this is *Goodbye to a River*, which has never gone out of print since first being published in 1960, and is still celebrated for its keen ruminations on the historical, attitudinal and natural worlds that intertwined around Graves as he canoed down the river.

Graves was married to the former Jane Cole of New York, and they had two daughters, Helen and Sally. IN 2013, John died at his home near Glen Rose, at the age of 92.

Biographical Sketch (Samuel Hynes)

American author Samuel Hynes was born in Chicago on August 29, 1924. He grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota and graduated from high school at sixteen. After enrolling at the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1942, he immediately signed up for the Navy flight program. He was called up to service as a Marine Corps pilot in March 1943, and began pilot training in Denton, Texas. A year later he was commissioned as a Marine Second Lieutenant at Pensacola. Soon after, he met Liz Igleheart, the sister of a friend and fellow pilot; they were married in July 1944.

Hynes spent the fall of 1944 in California, training in TBMs, and in January of 1945 shipped out to the Pacific, where he joined Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 232 at Ulithi Atoll, in the Western Carolines. In April the squadron moved north to Okinawa, where he flew over a hundred missions, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. After the war Hynes finished college, got a PhD in English, and became a teacher and critic of British literature. His memoir of his wartime experiences, *Flights of Passage: Recollections of a World War II Aviator*, was first published in 1988. His most recent publication, *The Unsubstantial Air: American Fliers in the First World War* voices the plight of those young Americans who fought in the skies over Europe during World War I using letters, journals, and memoirs.

Scope and Content Note

Three boxes of correspondence, photographs, negatives, screenplay drafts, manuscript drafts, and newspaper articles pertaining to the life and writings of John Graves (1920-2013). The collection has been arranged into four series: Correspondence (Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, March 1998-June 2013), Photographs (including negatives, 1954, undated), Writings by John Graves (1991-2008), Writings about John Graves (2002, undated). The author's original order has been maintained where possible.

The collection gives an overview of Graves' literary career and includes numerous drafts of many of his books and short stories. It is particularly strong in illustrating his writing process through the correspondence with friend and colleague Samuel Hynes.

Administration Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research

Preferred Citation

The Samuel Hynes Collection of John Graves, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Acquisition Information

Gift of Samuel Hynes, 2013

Processing Information

Processed by Heather Haley, 2015

Notes to Researchers

The Wittliff Collection maintains the entire manuscript collection of John Graves. See the Bill Wittliff Collection 010. Books in the John Graves Collection have been cataloged separately. See also the Bill Wittliff Collection, Accession Numbers 88-052, 89-023, 91-001, 91-009, 91-046, 91-128, 92-044, and 92-053 for photographs of John Graves. See 93-104 for Dorys Grover's collection of research materials on Graves and Southwestern literature. See the Bud Shrake Collection for a letter from Graves to Shrake. See Wittliff 98-042 for Ned Blessing television series script by WDW and Graves.

The Wittliff also holds materials related to the production of *A John Graves Reader*, including copies of numerous works, correspondence, drafts, galleys and publicity materials, in the UT Press Collection of *A John Graves Reader* (Collection 090).

The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin holds 2.5 linear feet of Graves materials: <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/graves.john.html>.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Correspondence, March 1998-February 2002

Box Folder

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|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, March 1998-February 2002 |
| | 2 | Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, August 2002-April 2003 |
| | 3 | Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, June 2003-July 2004 |
| | 4 | Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, November 2004-September 2008 |
| | 5 | Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, October 2008-April 2011 |
| | 6 | Letters from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, August 2011-June 2013 |

Series II: Photographs, 1954, undated

Box Folder

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| 1 | 7 | Photographs and original negatives, 1954, undated
Correspondence from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, December 18, 2011
Correspondence from Samuel Hynes to Maggie Graves, October 8, 2013 |
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Series III: Writings by John Graves

Box Folder

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| 1 | 8 | "The Last Running" screenplay draft, 1991 |
| | 9 | <i>Self-Portrait, with Birds</i> revision, 1991
includes Correspondence from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, February 14, 1994 |
| | 10 | <i>Myself and Strangers</i> draft, 2000 |
| | 11 | <i>Myself and Strangers</i> fourth draft, 2002 |
| 2 | 1 | <i>Myself and Strangers</i> draft, September 14, 2002 |
| | 2 | <i>Myself and Strangers</i> draft, June 2003 |
| | 3 | <i>Myself and Strangers</i> uncorrected proof, May 2004 |
| | 4 | "Guns of a Lifetime" draft, May 18, 2006 |
| | 5 | War Notes excised from <i>Strangers</i> Chapter I
includes Correspondence from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, October 12, 2003 |
| | 6 | Personal war notes for Sam Hynes
includes Correspondence from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, October 28, 2003 |
| | 7 | Personal war notes for Sam Hynes
includes Correspondence from John Graves to Samuel Hynes, December 2, 2003 |
| | 8 | Personal war notes for Sam Hynes, September 29, 2008 |

Series IV: Writings about John Graves

Box Folder

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|---|----|---|
| 2 | 9 | Introduction for John Graves by Samuel Hynes, undated |
| | 10 | Samuel Hyne's handwritten suggestions, August 19, 2002
Samuel Hyne's transcribed and typewritten suggestions |
| 3 | 1 | <i>Southwest Scene: The Dallas Morning News Magazine</i> , February 20, 1972 |
| | 2 | <i>The Dallas Times Herald: Sunday</i> , August 1, 1976 |