

The Filson Historical Society

**Verhoeff, Mary (1872-1962) and Carolyn Verhoeff (1875-1975)
Papers, 1895-1988**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers,
contact the Collections Department.

Size of Collection:
1 cu. ft.

Location Number:
Mss. A V514b

**Verhoeff, Mary (1872-1962) and Carolyn Verhoeff (1875-1975)
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Scope and Content Note

This collection documents the personal and professional lives of Mary Verhoeff (1872-1962) and Carolyn Verhoeff (1875-1975) through correspondence, newspaper clippings, journals, and publications. The Verhoeff sisters were lifetime companions who never married, instead devoting their lives to activism and community outreach.

Folders 1-6 contain personal and professional correspondence. The personal correspondence in folders 1-4 consists of letters from family members about travel, weather, birth announcements, and health. Folder 5 contains Carolyn's correspondence about animal welfare. Folder 6 contains correspondence related to Vassar College.

Folders 7-8 contain newspaper clippings related to Mary and Carolyn, respectively.

Folders 9-14 contain materials related to Carolyn's personal and professional life. Folder 9 contains materials related to kindergarten education. Folders 10-11 contain materials related to animal welfare. Folder 12 contains miscellaneous creative writings by Carolyn. Folders 13-14 relate to travel.

Folder 15 contains property appraisals for Carolyn Verhoeff and Margaret Lougee Verhoeff (1878-1962). Folders 16-17 contain death notices for Mary and Carolyn, respectively. Folder 18 contains the diary of Matilda Verhoeff (1840-1927), Mary and Carolyn's aunt. Folder 19 contains the schoolwork of Carolyn Verhoeff, Margaret Lougee Verhoeff, Mary Josephine Verhoeff (1907-1924), and Margaret Verhoeff Vested (1918-2016).

Folder 20 contains Minerva "Minnie" C. Verhoeff Hartwell's (1862-1926) graduation materials from the Louisville Female Seminary. Folder 21 contains the last will and testament of Annie S. Symonds (d. 1934), cousin of Margaret Lougee Verhoeff.

Folders 22-24 contain genealogical charts, maps, and notes for the Verhoeff and Parker families. Folder 25 contains correspondence written in German. Folder 26 contains miscellaneous materials related to the Daughters of the Revolution national society. Volumes 27-30 contain genealogical information for the Verhoeff family.

Related collections:

Verhoeff, Henry, 1863-1942. Papers, 1883-1920. (Mss. A V514a)

Verhoeff, Mary, 1871-1962. Papers, 1907-1960. (Mss. A V514)

Verhoeff Sisters Photograph Collection (022PC3)

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Biographical Note

Mary Verhoeff (1872-1962) and Carolyn Verhoeff (1875-1975) were born to Herman Verhoeff, Jr. (1827-1893) and Mary Jane Parker (1836-1924), members of one of Louisville's richest families. Both sisters went to Vassar College in New York, graduating in 1895 and 1897, respectively. The two never married; instead, they were lifetime companions, living together on Second Street in Louisville, attending First Unitarian Church, and spending their time on traveling and activism.

Parents: Herman and Mary Jane

Herman Verhoeff, Jr., immigrated from Germany to America with his parents in 1836, eventually settling in Louisville, Kentucky, where he and his younger brother, Otto Verhoeff, became leading pioneers in the grain and commission business under the firm name Verhoeff Brothers. In 1873, the brothers built the first grain elevator south of the Ohio River. This business venture succeeded spectacularly, and Louisville became an essential stop for trains transporting grain from the Western to the Southern states. After Otto's death in 1870, Herman left an interest in the firm to his nephew Henry Strater, and Herman remained President until his death in 1893.

Mary Jane Parker was born in Kentucky and married Herman Verhoeff in 1859. Mary and Carolyn had two older siblings: Minerva "Minnie" Verhoeff Hartwell (1862-1926) and Dr. Frederick Herman Verhoeff (1874-1968), who was a famous eye pathologist who served as Professor of Ophthalmic research at Harvard Medical School and Consulting Chief of Ophthalmology at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. Frederick married Margaret F. Lougee (1878-1962) in 1902, and they had two daughters, Mary Josephine Verhoeff (1907-1924) and Margaret Verhoeff Vested (1918-2016). (NOTE: Margaret Verhoeff Vested was married three times in her life and is referred to throughout the collection by the surnames "Vested," "McCarthy," and "Wyper." When she is mentioned in this finding aid, she will be referred to simply as "Margaret Verhoeff Vested.")

Mary Verhoeff

Mary Verhoeff received an M.A. degree in geography and sociology from Columbia University after graduating from Vassar College. She wrote two books: *The Kentucky Mountains*, published in 1911, and *The Kentucky River Navigation*, published in 1917. Though her major interests were scholarship and research, Mary Verhoeff also devoted a great deal of her time to civic activities. She was a leader of the Vassar alumnae club, which raised money to send promising Kentucky students to Vassar and promoted higher education for women. As a prominent member of the

Monday Afternoon Club, she helped sponsor lectures, concerts, and other cultural events. She joined women's civic organizations that provided playgrounds, supported the Louisville Free Public Library, and worked to improve sanitation.

From 1911 on, Mary was a member of the Filson Club (now the Filson Historical Society). While serving on the Club's Library Committee, she assisted in reading, arranging, and cataloguing old letters, manuscripts, and documents. She did this "with no thought of reward," stated a tribute from the Filson Club, "except the satisfaction derived from worthwhile work well done."

Carolyn Verhoeff

Carolyn Verhoeff did her post-graduate work at Radcliffe College after also graduating from Vassar. Carolyn worked as a kindergarten teacher until 1903 and published three books for kindergarten-aged children: *All About Johnnie Jones*, *Four Little Fosters*, and *Love Me, Love My Dog*. These books centered around the humane treatment of animals, one of Carolyn's greatest passions.

Carolyn later became president of the Kentucky Animal Rescue League, publicized the horrifying conditions at the city dog pound, and campaigned for humane treatment of animals used for medical research at the University of Louisville. The medical school consented to inspections, which Carolyn did herself for many years. In 1959, she was honored by the National Society for Medical Research, and in 1963 the University of Louisville School of Medicine dedicated the Carolyn Verhoeff Animal Care Center to her. Both Mary and Carolyn were also dedicated suffragists.

Sources:

H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online, *Carolyn Verhoeff (1876-1975): Louisville Animal Welfare Advocate and Suffragist*

H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online, *Mary Verhoeff, 1872 (?)-1962 Louisville Geographer and Suffragist*

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Mary and Carolyn Verhoeff correspondence, 1926-1953
- Folder 2: Mary Verhoeff personal correspondence, 1905-1960
- Folder 3: Carolyn Verhoeff personal correspondence, 1903-1968 and n.d.
- Folder 4: Correspondence to/from family, 1923-1955
- Folder 5: Carolyn Verhoeff correspondence concerning animal welfare, 1921-1969
- Folder 6: Vassar College correspondence and class bulletin, 1907-1949
- Folder 7: Mary Verhoeff clippings and publications, 1911-1973
- Folder 8: Carolyn Verhoeff clippings and publications, 1924-1968
- Folder 9: Kindergarten and education material, 1911-1964
- Folder 10: Animal welfare / Animal Rescue League material, 1927-1963
- Folder 11: Medical Research Dog heroism medal, 1961
- Folder 12: Carolyn Verhoeff miscellaneous literary manuscripts, 1947-1967
- Folder 13: Carolyn Verhoeff "European Tour" diary, 1901
- Folder 14: Carolyn Verhoeff passport, LFPL certificate, and National Centenarian's Reunion brochure, 1901-1975
- Folder 15: Property appraisals of Carolyn Verhoeff and Margaret Lougee Verhoeff, 1971-1983
- Folder 16: Mary Verhoeff "in memoriam" material, 1962
- Folder 17: Carolyn Verhoeff death and memorial material, 1975-1976
- Folder 18: Matilda Verhoeff diary, 1918-1922
- Folder 19: Schoolwork of Carolyn Verhoeff, Margaret Lougee Verhoeff, Mary Josephine Verhoeff, and Margaret Verhoeff Vested, 1895-1937
- Folder 20: Minerva "Minnie" C. Verhoeff Hartwell Louisville Female Seminary material, 1880
- Folder 21: Annie S. Symonds' will, 1936
- Folder 22: Genealogical manuscript "Parkers in America," 1617-1859, with annotations by Mary Verhoeff, n.d.
- Folder 23: Genealogical charts, n.d.
- Folder 24: Miscellaneous genealogical notes and clippings, 1896-1990
- Folder 25: German correspondence, ca. 1923
- Folder 26: Daughters of the American Revolution, 1939-1941
- Volume 27: Binder of genealogical information, n.d.
- Volume 28: Binder of genealogical information, n.d.

Volume 29: Binder of genealogical information, n.d.

Volume 30: Binder of genealogical information, n.d.

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Subject Headings

Actions and defenses.
Anderson, Marion, 1897-1993.
Animal experimentation.
Animal models in research.
Animal rescue – Kentucky.
Animal welfare.
Authorship.
Birth announcements.
Books and reading.
Christmas.
Creative writing.
Death notices.
Diaries.
Dog attacks.
Draft – Law and legislation – Vietnam (Democratic Republic).
Europe – History.
Female seminaries.
Filson Club.
Genealogy.
General Society of the Daughters of the Revolution.
Geography.
German language.
Hartwell, Minerva Verhoeff, 1862-1926.
Health – Kentucky.
Home repair and improvement.
Influenza Epidemic, 1918-1919.
Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973.
Kentucky – History – 20th century.
Kindergarten.
Louisville Free Public Library.
Medical colleges.
Mourning customs – Kentucky.
Mythology, Greek.

Mythology, Roman.
Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.
Symonds, Annie S., d. 1934.
Travel – 20th century.
Travel – Europe.
University of Louisville.
Valuation – United States.
Vassar College.
Verhoeff, Margaret Lougee, 1878-1962.
Verhoeff, Mary Josephine, 1907-1924.
Verhoeff, Matilda, 1840-1927.
Vested, Margaret Verhoeff McCarthy Wyper. 1918-2016.
Vietnam War, 1961-1975.
Weather – Kentucky – Louisville.
Women – Education – Kentucky.
Women – Social life and customs.