

**LAURA BODDIE JONES BOWERS PAPERS**

(Mss. 3546)

Inventory

Compiled by

Chris Brown

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections

Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library

Louisiana State University Libraries

Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2008

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**SUMMARY**

<b>Size</b>	3.25 linear feet
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Louisiana, Mississippi
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1906-1918, 1931-1955, 1980, 1990, undated
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	1931-1955
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Summary</b>	The Laura Boddie Jones Bowers Papers are comprised of correspondence and personal papers documenting the family life, student life, and early career of librarian Laura Boddie Jones Bowers in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Natchitoches, La.
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<b>Related Collections</b>	George W. Jones Papers (Mss. 3145)
<b>Citation</b>	Bowers (Laura Boddie Jones), Mss. 3546, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
<b>Stack Location(s)</b>	E:119-121

**BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

Laura Boddie Jones Bowers (June 24, 1915 – June 22, 2003) was the daughter of druggist Ben H. Jones and Laura West of Canton, Mississippi. She was the oldest of three children; her younger siblings are George (d. 1991) and Ellen.

In September 1932, Bowers entered H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College in New Orleans, Louisiana. During her first year of school, she lived at the home of her aunt, Estelle, and uncle, Juno, along with her cousins, Margie and Blake. In May 1936 Bowers earned a bachelor's degree. In September 1936, she entered Louisiana State University where in May 1937 she earned a bachelor's degree in library science. During this time, she lived in the French House at LSU. From October 1937 to May 1939 Bowers worked as a librarian at Tulane University. In June 1939, she became one of the first students to pursue advanced studies in library science at LSU. She earned a master's degree in library science in May 1940. Following graduation, Bowers resumed library work at Tulane. In February 1941, she moved to Natchitoches, Louisiana, to work as a librarian at the Louisiana State Normal College.

In 1943, Bowers worked as a Special Services librarian, attached to the 346<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 87<sup>th</sup> (Golden Acorn) Division, stationed at Camp McCain near Grenada, Mississippi. In May 1943, she married Lieutenant Earle Cooper "Bud" Bowers, Jr. (d. 1944) of Providence, Rhode Island.

In 1980, Bowers was the director of library services and an assistant professor at the University of Southern Mississippi in Natchez.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection comprises correspondence and personal papers documenting the student life and early career of librarian Laura Boddie Jones Bowers in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Natchitoches, Louisiana. Correspondence (1931-1955, undated) consists mostly of letters written by Bowers to her parents and grandparents in regards to personal and family matters, as well as her student life at Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, plus her employment as a librarian at Tulane University in New Orleans and Louisiana State Normal College in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Some of the significant topics represented in these files are LSU's School of Library Science offering a master's degree for the first time, LSU acquiring its first tiger mascot, and World War II military training taking place near Natchitoches, La. The personal papers consist of Bowers' newspaper clippings, notes, postcard collection, printed items, recollections, and a scrapbook on the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.

**LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES**

**I. Correspondence**, 1931-1955, undated

**II. Personal Papers**, 1906-1918, 1932-1951, 1980, 1990, undated

**SERIES DESCRIPTIONS****Series I: Correspondence, 1931-1955, undated (2.5 linear feet)**

Primarily contains letters from Bowers to her parents, as well as grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William A. West, living in Norwood, Louisiana. Also included are letters written to Bowers from her parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, and husband. Some letters include reply messages from family members written on the back of letters they received from Bowers. For example, a letter from Bowers to her mother includes writing added by the mother addressed to Bower's grandmother. The grandmother then writes a response on the same letter and sends it back to Bower's mother.

Correspondence from September 1932 to May 1936 relates to Bowers' time as a student at Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans. General topics throughout these letters include: student life, classes, professors, and classmates. Specific topics include: Mardi Gras parades and balls (1932 undated; 1933 undated; Feb. 13-15, 1934; March 5-7, 1935; February 27, 1936), touring naval ships docked in New Orleans (March 6, 1934; April 1, 1935), Phi Mu fraternity (September 1934 – May 1936), attending an anti-war/peace rally at Tulane University (April 21-22, 1936), and applying to Louisiana State University's School of Library Science (Jan 9, 1936; March 3, 1936; April 1936). Subjects concerning specific persons include: Huey Long's controversial appointment of a professor at LSU's new medical center in New Orleans (1932 undated), Huey Long's Audubon Street house fire (September 26, 1933), Rose Long attending classes at Newcomb College (October 2, 1933), the death of Tulane University's president, Dr. Albert Bledsoe Dinwiddie (Nov. 22, 1935), the death of George V, King of Great Britain (Jan 20-21, 1936), and an interview with Lyle Saxon (April 28, 1936). Also included in the correspondence from this time period are letters from Bowers' father, Ben H. Jones, who writes of life in Canton, Mississippi (March 1934 – April 1935).

Correspondence from September 1936 to May 1937 relates to Bowers' time as a student at Louisiana State University pursuing a bachelor's degree in library science. General topics throughout these letters include: student life, library science classes, professors, classmates, and living at the French House. Specific topics include LSU acquiring its first tiger mascot, Mike the Tiger (October 19-21, 1936) and Eleanor Roosevelt giving a talk at LSU (March 7, 1937).

Correspondence from October 1937 to May 1939 relates to Bowers' time as a librarian at Tulane University. General topics throughout these letters include work and football games played by Tulane and LSU. Specific topics include: Mardi Gras parades and balls (February 26, 1938; March 2, 1938; February 17-22, 1939), a St. Patrick's Day parade in the French Quarter (March 19, 1939), and Bowers' trip to visit family in San Francisco, California (August 1938). Subjects concerning specific persons include: radio speeches by Adolph Hitler (March 15, 1938; September 12-14, 1938; January 31, 1939; March 23, 1939; April 27, 1939), Russell and Rose Long campaigning at LSU (May 10, 1938), a play performed by Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne (March 4, 1939) and a church service

led by Peter Marshall (March 6, 1939). Letters during this time period also include information about Bowers being the first applicant to LSU's masters in library science program (February 22, 1939; March 13, 1939; March 29, 1939; May 2, 1939).

Correspondence from June 1939 to May 1940 relates to Bowers' time as a graduate student at Louisiana State University pursuing a master's degree in library science. General topics throughout these letters include: student life, library science classes, professors, classmates, work at LSU's library, and LSU football games. Subjects concerning specific persons include: Earl Long (June 25, 1939; January 23, 1940), the controversial resignation of LSU President James Monroe Smith (June 25-29, 1939), and Russell Long teased at LSU's law school (February 21, 1940). Also included in the correspondence from this time period are letters from Bowers' brother, George Jones, who writes of life as an undergraduate at LSU (June 1940 – 1941). His letters mention student life, hazing, and ROTC.

Correspondence from September 1940 to February 1941 relates to Bowers' time as a librarian at Tulane University. Many of these letters discuss library work at Tulane. Also included are letters discussing Bowers' application for library jobs at army camps (November 11-29, 1940).

Correspondence from February 1941 to December 1942 relates to Bowers' time as a librarian at Louisiana State Normal College in Natchitoches, Louisiana. General topics throughout these letters include: library work, library conventions, and soldiers stationed in nearby camps visiting Natchitoches. Specific topics include: socializing with soldiers especially at dances (November 11, 1941; December 6, 1941; February 15, 1942; April 26, 1942; May 9-12, 1942; September 26-28, 1942; November 12, 1942), taking a trip to Mexico with Louisiana State Normal College students (April 15, 1941; August 16, 1941), visiting a friend who works as librarian at Camp Claiborne, a U.S. army military camp (May 4, 1941), the removal of a master's degree program from LSU School of Library Science curriculum (May 19, 1941), the effects of World War II on LSU (July 24, 1941), the escalation of soldiers around Natchitoches on training maneuvers (October 1941), the bombing of Pearl Harbor (December 8-11, 1941), Bowers' volunteering for the Red Cross (February 1942), training of the Louisiana State Normal College Civil Defense Committee in the event of attacks (March 7-18, 1942), Bowers' applying to Women's Army Auxiliary Corps officer training school (June 11, 1942; June 23, 1942; July 21, 1942), and Bowers' applying to Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (September - October 5, 1942). Subjects concerning specific persons include: Bowers' brother, George, joining the military and being stationed at Marion Institute in Marion, Alabama (October 9, 1941)

Correspondence from 1943-1946 primarily includes information on family members related to World War II. Specific topics include Laura describing Lieutenant Bowers, who she later marries (February 10, 1943), her pregnancy with son, Jake (August – November 1944), and the death of Lieutenant Bowers in Germany (November 25, 1944). Also included are letters from Bower's uncle, George West, regarding the death of George West Jr, in Germany (December 1944 – January 1946).

Attached to some correspondence are newspaper clippings and programs.

Also included are four empty cardboard notebooks in which Bowers originally stored her letters.

Correspondence is arranged chronologically.

**Series II. Personal Papers, 1906-1918, 1932-1951, 1980, 1990, undated (0.5 linear feet)**

Consists of clippings, notes, postcards, printed items, recollections, and a scrapbook. Clippings (1930s – 1940s) include topics related to Bowers' friends, Tulane University, Newcomb College, LSU, Huey Long, and the history of Canton, Mississippi. LSU School of Library Science (1937) includes Bowers' notes and assignments from her library science classes. Natchez History Notes (undated) consist of photocopied deed records (1820s – 1910s) from Natchez, Mississippi. Postcards (1906-1918, undated) depict scenes in New Orleans and Camp Beauregard (Alexandria, Louisiana). Printed Items (1935-1942) include programs for such events as an opera recital at Newcomb College (1933), an address by Eleanor Roosevelt at LSU (1937), a play at Louisiana State Normal College (1942), and a pamphlet on the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (1941). Recollections (1990) consist of a story written by Bowers about her 1943 Christmas visit to see her husband, a lieutenant on "big maneuvers" in Tennessee. USM Library Reference Class Outline (1980) includes an outline and sample tests for a library science class taught by Bowers. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (1942-1943) consists of an application and correspondence concerning Bowers' joining the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Also included are clippings, a scrapbook, and publications on WAAC.

Personal papers arranged alphabetically by subject.

**INDEX TERMS**

Academic librarians--Louisiana.	All Series
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Fontanne, Lynn.	I
George V, King of Great Britain, 1865-1936.	I
Hitler, Adolf, 1889-1945.	I
Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, La.). School of Library and Information Science.	All Series
Long, Earl Kemp, 1895-1960.	I
Long, Huey Pierce, 1893-1935.	I
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Louisiana--Social life and customs--20th century.	All Series
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Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, La.)--Football.	I
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Mexico--Description and travel.	I
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Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962.	All Series
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**CONTAINER LIST**

<u>Stack</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder(s)</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
				<b>Series I: Correspondence</b>
	E:119	1	1-34	Correspondence (1931-March 1936)
	E:120	2	1-42	Correspondence (April 1936-1940)
	E:121	3	1-25	Correspondence (1941-July 1946, 1950, 1955, undated)
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			4	Recollections (1990)
			5	USM Library Science (1980)
			6	Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (1942-1943)
			7	Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps – Clippings (undated)
			8	Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps – Scrapbook (1942)