



State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
403 Seventh Avenue North  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**PORTER, FELICIA GRUNDY  
PAPERS  
1890-1958**

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Accession Number: 1990-208  
Date Completed: August 29, 2007  
Location: IX-D-2  
Microfilm Accession Number: 1845

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Felicia Grundy Porter Papers, 1890-1958, is centered around items that focus on Felicia Grundy Porter, her career as a librarian, Felix Grundy and First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tennessee. The Felicia Grundy Porter Papers are a gift of an unidentified donor.

The materials in this collection measure 1 linear foot of shelf space. There are approximately 257 items and 3 volumes included in this collection. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Felicia Grundy Porter Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

### Felicia Grundy Porter

Felicia Grundy Porter was born, in Tennessee, about 1873. She was the daughter of R. M. and Jessie Marshall Porter. She was the great-granddaughter of Felix and Ann Grundy and the granddaughter of Dr. Robert Massengill and Felicia Grundy Porter. (Felix Grundy was a congressman from Tennessee and served as the United States Attorney General during Martin Van Buren's presidency. Ann Grundy was the founder of Nashville's first Sunday School. Dr. Robert Massengill Porter was the first professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Medical Department at the University of Nashville.) Miss Porter graduated from Ward Seminary prior to attending George Peabody College and Columbia University. She studied Library Science at Columbia and served as librarian at the Watkins Institute and Nashville Public Library for 40 years. Miss Porter was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tennessee. She was a teacher in one of First Presbyterian's first mission Sunday Schools. Miss Porter was a member of the Red Cross, U. S. Citizens Service Corps, the American Library Association and the Nashville Library Club. She was also a dedicated volunteer worker with the USO. Miss Porter died on November 17, 1958, in Nashville, Tennessee. She is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Source: Information in the biographical note was gleaned from the 1880 Census of Tennessee and the following newspaper articles:

Unknown. (November 18, 1958). "Miss Porter dies; librarian here 40 years." *The Nashville Banner*, p. 10.

Unknown. (November 19, 1958). Porter obituary. *The Nashville Banner*. p. 30.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Felicia Grundy Porter Papers, containing approximately 257 items and 3 volumes, spans the period 1890-1958. The collection is composed of an address book, various correspondence, a diary, genealogical data regarding the Grundy family, lease contracts, newspaper clippings, photographs, poems, printed materials, receipts, recipes, a scrapbook, voter registrations and a watercolor. The arrangement of items is alphabetical.

The address book, located in folder 1 of box 1, is not dated. It contains handwritten addresses and/or phone numbers for various individuals. It also contains an Easter poem on the last page of the book.

The correspondence, located in folders 2 through 10 of box 1, is centered around various letters written by, addressed to or regarding Felicia Grundy Porter. There are several items of note contained in the correspondence. The first items of note are two letters (located in folder 4 of box 1), dated January 15, 1947, written by Mary Hannah Johnson Claxton. One letter is addressed to William Hume and the other is addressed to Albert G. Ewing. The letters are written on behalf of Felicia Grundy Porter who has been "let out" of the Nashville Public Library without a pension. The letter to Mr. Ewing states that "the salaries were niggardly." She is concerned for Miss Porter's welfare as Miss Porter only has a "nine months pension from the Watkins Night School" to support herself. Another item of note is an invitation (located in folder 4 of box 1), dated April 29, 1952. The invitation is addressed to Miss Felicia Porter from then Governor, Gordon Browning. The invitation is to the cornerstone and dedication services for the new Tennessee State Library and Archives building.

The diary, located in folder 11 of box 1, is dated, 1890-1891, and belonged to Felicia Grundy Porter. The first entry, dated August 6, 1890, describes being awakened at 3 o'clock in the morning to screams as if someone were in distress. The cause of the distress was unknown to Miss Porter.

The genealogical materials, located in folder 12 of box 1, relate to the Grundy and Porter families. There are a couple of biographical sketches of Felix Grundy included in the genealogical materials as well as a dedication of a writing desk that belonged to Mrs. Felicia Grundy Porter, Miss Porter's grandmother.

The lease contract materials, located in folder 13 of box 1, contain lease contracts and receipts for lease payments. The first two lease contracts, dated 1896 and 1897 are signed by Mrs. J. M. Porter. The third lease contract, dated 1899, is signed by Mrs. Rebecca M. Porter. The last lease contract and the receipts are signed by Felicia Grundy Porter.

The newspaper clippings, located in folder 14 of box 1, contain various newspaper articles related to Miss Felicia Porter and Dr. Celia Rich. Dr. Celia Rich was a prominent Nashville, Tennessee, dentist. She graduated from the Vanderbilt University Dental School in 1898. Dr. Rich was the first president of the National Association of Women Dentists.

The photographs, located in folder 1 of box 2, contain photographs of several unidentified children and a sketch of Robert M. Porter, the first professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Medical Department at the University of Nashville. Also contained in

the photographic materials is a *carte de visite* of Robert E. Lee, Confederate general during the United States Civil War.

The poems, located in folder 2 of box 2, contain poems collected by Felicia Grundy Porter. Most of the poems regard the death of a loved one, usually a mother. Notable authors include: C. R. Hager, Robert Browning, Adelaide Winter Lyon, Yan Phou Lee, John Finley and Elizabeth Porter Gould.

The printed materials, located in folders 3 through 14 of box 2, contain various printed materials regarding the Carnegie Library, Downtown Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church, various art galleries, tourist information and medical/nutritional information. Interesting titles include: *A Good Breakfast A Good Beginning*, *Exhibition of Portraits*, *Overweight and Underweight*, *Some Medical References in Shakespeare* and *Tours Et La Touraine*.

The receipts, located in folder 15 of box 2, contain grocery receipts. The receipts are from J. W. Sherrill and Son Grocery Company. They are dated, 1906, and are for accounts paid by Felicia Grundy Porter.

The recipes, located in folder 16 of box 2, contain handwritten recipes. Some recipes appear to be complete, such as the egg and cake recipes, while others appear to be incomplete.

The scrapbook, located in folder 17 of box 2, is dated, 1906. It contains various poems with a couple being handwritten and the rest being cut from newspapers. Notable poets include: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Eugene J. Hall, William Allen Dromgoole, Ethel Clifford, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, John Boyle O'Reily and Edgar A. Guest. The poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is titled, *The Cross of Snow*. It is a well known work regarding the death of Longfellow's wife.

The voter registrations, located in folder 18 of box 2, belonged to Felicia Grundy Porter. They are dated, 1939-1944. The first three registrations pertain to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward of Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, with the remaining registration pertaining to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward.

The remaining items in the collection consist of a watercolor, located in folder 19 of box 2, and various writings, located in folder 20 of box 2. The watercolor depicts a water scene with a sail in the foreground and stilted huts in the background. It has Chinese or Japanese symbols in the lower right corner that could be the artist's signature.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Box 1

1. Address Book, n.d.
2. Correspondence, 1898-1927
3. Correspondence, 1939-1946
4. Correspondence, 1947-1952
5. Correspondence, 1953-1954
6. Correspondence, 1955
7. Correspondence, 1956
8. Correspondence, 1957
9. Correspondence, 1958
10. Correspondence, n.d.
11. Diary, 1890-1891
12. Genealogy, 1924-1949, n.d.
13. Lease Contracts, 1896-1928
14. Newspaper Clippings, 1944-1953, n.d.

### Box 2

1. Photographs, 1935-1955, n.d.
2. Poems, 1894-1919
3. Printed Materials -- *A Good Breakfast A Good Beginning*, 1947
4. Printed Materials -- *Annual Report of the Carnegie Library*, 1929
5. Printed Materials -- Downtown Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee, 1955-1958, n.d.
6. Printed Materials -- E. Bowinkel's Art Store, n.d.
7. Printed Materials -- Esher Surrey Art Gallery, 1928, n.d.
8. Printed Materials -- *Exhibition of Portraits*, 1908
9. Printed Materials -- First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee, 1940-1955, n.d.
10. Printed Materials -- *Overweight and Underweight*, n.d.
11. Printed Materials -- *Some Medical References in Shakespeare*, 1937
12. Printed Materials -- *The Presbyterian Church in the United States*, 1913
13. Printed Materials -- *The Presbyterian Woman's Workbook*, 1955
14. Printed Materials -- *Tours Et La Touraine*, n.d.
15. Receipts, 1906
16. Recipes, n.d.
17. Scrapbook, 1906
18. Voter Registration -- Felicia Grundy Porter, 1939-1944
19. Watercolor, n.d.
20. Writings, n.d.