



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

**GOWER FAMILY PAPERS**  
**1812-[1940-1973]-1990**

**(THS Collection)**

*Processed by:*

Amanda H. Womack  
Archives Intern  
Archival Technical Services

Manuscripts Accession Number: THS 887

Date Completed: 1-31-2003

Location: THS I-A-3

Microfilm Accession Number: 1703

**MICROFILMED**

## INTRODUCTION

This collection chronicles the personal papers and research of the Gower family of Middle Tennessee. Marie and Herschel Gower, whose documents comprise the majority of the collection, were seriously involved in genealogical research of the Gower family with some attention to their more distant Hudson, Groll, and Reed relatives. The papers include personal correspondence to and from Herschel, Marie, Betty, and Lemuel Gower; genealogical research materials including pension records, death certificates, land deeds, and newspaper clippings; printed histories of Robertson's founding of Nashville; and partially completed family trees.

Dr. Herschel Gower donated his family's papers to the Tennessee Historical Society on July 29, 1998. These items originally comprised one cubic foot, but have been reduced to one-half cubic foot by the removal of newspapers, duplicate documents, and extraneous paper. Because the materials were without organization, they have been arranged topically and chronologically.

Three other collections pertaining to the Gower family exist in the TSLA archives. These include the Irene Gower Collection, THS 458 located at THS V-B-3; the Gower Family Genealogical Charts, THS 639 located in THS Drawer 3, and the Gower Family Cemetery (Nashville) Tombstone Inscriptions, 1971.089 located at III-H-5, Box 1. Also of interest is a book, *Gauer-Gower Family*, written by Irene Gower (no relation), which is included in photocopied form in this collection.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

- 2/10/1895 Marie Maggie Jennetta Hudson is born to Joshua and Allison May Frizzell Hudson in Wilson County, Tennessee.
- 11/2/1915 Marie Hudson marries Lemuel Herschel Gower, the orphan son of Ephraim Gower who was killed by a motor car in 1889.
- 12/11/1919 Lemuel "Herschel" Gower, Jr. is born in Nashville.
- 8/1942 Herschel enters the Navy and trains Navy personnel and female pilots along with his sister, Jennie Lou.
- 3/24/1945 Herschel's first documented correspondence indicating his involvement in Gower family research.
- 6/6/1948 Lemuel Herschel Gower, Sr. dies of a long illness.
- 10/18/1962 Marie's first documented correspondence with other Gowers in her search for genealogical information.
- 2/14-5/4/1962 Herschel attempts to join the Sons of the American Revolution.
- 6/25/1966 Herschel marries Dona Lucia Spawn of Dallas, Texas.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Gower Family Papers, donated by Dr. Herschel Gower, evidence his and his mother, Marie Hudson Gower's, efforts to trace their family's history through data collection at state offices and through personal correspondence with other researchers across the United States. Out of their labor came this collection of letters, official documents (death certificates, deeds, pensions, and surveys), family legends, genealogical charts, photographs, and newspaper clippings ranging from 1812 to 1990, with the bulk of material between 1940 and 1973.

The history of the Gower family provided in these documents is scattered. Only three episodes in the Gower history are discussed at any length while the gaps in time are filled with names on genealogical charts and census records. The role of Abel Gower, ancestor of Herschel, in the founding of Nashville is detailed within two typed documents by unknown authors, as well as in several published articles (Box 1, Folders 7 and 8). From his role during the eighteenth century until the strange death of Ephraim Gower in 1899, the collection is silent. Although Herschel made attempts to locate members of the Gower family who fought during the American Revolution, the pension papers he acquired on Gowers who battled the British do not link with his Middle-Tennessean line (Box 1, Folder 6). Regarding Ephraim's death, Marie procured many newspaper articles detailing his death by a streetcar, the first-degree murder trial of the motorist, and the custody battle over his two children, Lemuel and Mary (Box 1, Folder 19). Other than these three events, the majority of the documents in the collection are the pieces that led to the complete genealogical tables. They are often hand-written and illegible without source notations (Box 1, Folder 9). However, the genealogical tables produced from them evidence their importance to the family line and the success of Marie's and Herschel's endeavors (Box 1, Folder 10).

Much of the Gower's information came from correspondence with other genealogical researchers across the United States. These letters, along with some personal family letters, are located in box 1, folders 2 and 3. Of particular interest is Herschel Gower's lengthy correspondence with Irene Gower, no relation. They shared information about Gowers across the United States from August 27, 1960, until at least 1966, from which Irene Gower produced the book *Gauer-Gower Family*.

## CONTAINER LISTING

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Correspondence to Lemuel H. Gower	1901-1947
	2	Correspondence to and from Marie Gower	1910-1973
	3	Correspondence to Herschel Gower	1945-1983
	4	Correspondence to and from Betty Gower	1971
	5	Correspondence—Miscellaneous	1987-1990
	6	Genealogical Research—Pension Records	1812
	7	Genealogical Research—Printed Histories	1838-1961
	8	Genealogical Research—Gower Stories	ND
	9	Genealogical Research—Notes	Ca. 1940-60
	10	Genealogical Charts—Gower	1819-1951
	11	Genealogical Research—Hudson Family	1889-1972
	12	Genealogical Research—Groll Family	ND
	13	Death Certificates	1891-1938
	14	Funeral Expenses—May Etta Gower	1901
	15	Land Entries	ND
	16	Land Deeds	1879-1909
	17	Family Crest: Abel Anthony Gower	ND
	18	Book— <i>Gauer-Gower Family</i>	1939
	19	Newspaper Clippings	1899-1977

## PHOTOGRAPHS

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Photograph Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>
2	1	Sir Robert Gower at Tunbridge Wells, Kent, 1918
	2	Portrait, unidentified young woman
	3	Postcard, unidentified mother and child
	4	Postcard, three unidentified children
	5	Gordon Wynne and Arthur Ligon laying in the Hudson Grave Yard
	6	Gordon Wynne and Arthur Ligon standing in the Hudson Grave Yard
	7	Arthur Ligon kneeling behind Marie Hudson
	8	Gordon Wynne sitting before Marie Hudson
	9	Annie Haralson Northern's funeral—loading the casket
	10	Annie Haralson Northern's funeral—unloading the casket, August 22, 1914 or 1915
	11	Annie Haralson Northern's funeral—processional
	12	Annie Haralson Northern's home on North Cumberland
	13	Nashville's "Founder's Day," Sunday, December 23, 1979
	14	Fourteenth Century English poet, John Gower shooting the world from <i>Vox Clemantis</i>
	15	Unidentified man at Gower's Island
	16	Gower's Island
	17	Walter Farmer Massey and his service station

# State of Tennessee



**RILEY C. DARNELL**  
*Secretary of State*

**EDWIN S. GLEAVES**  
*State Librarian and Archivist*  
(615) 741-7996

**FAX**  
(615) 741-6471

**TDD**  
(615) 741-2764

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

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**  
(615) 741-3158

**LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND  
AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED**  
(615) 741-3915 / FAX (615) 532-8856

**PUBLIC SERVICES**  
(615) 741-2764 / FAX (615) 532-2472

**RESTORATION AND REPRODUCTION**  
(615) 741-2997

**TECHNICAL SERVICES**  
(615) 741-2561

**GOWER FAMILY PAPERS**  
1812- [1940-1973] -1993  
Ac. No. 1703

ROLL

1.

(THS collection)

March 7, 2003  
35mm Film