

# John Graves:

## An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator</b>	Graves, John, 1920-2013
<b>Title</b>	John Graves Papers circa 1955-1975, 1995
<b>Dates:</b>	circa 1955-1975, 1995
<b>Extent</b>	7 boxes, 3 galley folders (2.94 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	These papers consist of drafts of several of his books, including <i>Goodbye to a River</i> and <i>Hard Scrabble</i> , and unpublished novel titled <i>The Speckled Horse</i> , and a small amount of correspondence.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Access</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition</b>	Purchase, 1975, 1976 (R6540, R6883); and gift, 1995 (G10375)
<b>Processed by</b>	Katherine Mosley, 1995
<b>Repository:</b>	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

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## Biographical Sketch

Texas writer John Alexander Graves III was born August 6, 1920, in Fort Worth. He received a Bachelor's degree from Rice University in 1942 and then served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. After being wounded while serving in Saipan, Graves returned to the United States and enrolled at Columbia University; he completed a Master's degree in literature in 1948. From 1948 to 1950 Graves taught English at the University of Texas at Austin. Following that, he worked as a freelance writer and travelled to Mexico, Spain, England, and other areas. In 1958, Graves married Jane Cole, a designer for Neiman Marcus; they had two daughters, Helen and Sally. Graves was an adjunct professor of English at Texas Christian University from 1958 to 1965. He then spent three years working for Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall as a consultant and writer on preservation and conservation of the Potomac River Basin.

*Home Place: A Background Sketch in Support of a Proposed Restoration of Pioneer Buildings in Fort Worth, Texas* was published in 1958. As a freelance writer, Graves was published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Esquire*, *Holiday*, *The New Yorker*, and *Town and Country*, among other periodicals. His short story "The Green Fly" was reprinted in *Prize Stories 1955: The O. Henry Awards*, and "The Aztec Dog" was included in the 1961 edition of *Prize Stories*. Graves' first and best-known book, *Goodbye to a River*, was published by Knopf in 1960. A personal and historical account of a stretch of the Brazos River, *Goodbye to a River* won the 1961 Collins Award of the Texas Institute of Letters and earned Graves a reputation for writing in a naturalistic style about the relationship between people and land. *The Water Hustlers*, a book about the impact of water resource development on the environment in California, Texas, and New York, was published by the Sierra Club in 1971. Graves' contribution to the book was titled "Texas: You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet" and examined the 1968 Texas Water Plan.

In 1970, Graves moved from Fort Worth to live in a house he had constructed on 400 acres of land near Glen Rose, Texas. That land, which he called Hard Scrabble, was the subject of his next major book. Written in the same vein as *Goodbye to a River*, *Hard Scrabble: Observations on a Patch of Land* (1974) is a collection of essays incorporating physical description, history, and philosophical comments, as well as fictional characterizations. *Hard Scrabble*, like *Goodbye to a River*, won a Texas Institute of Letters Collins Award.

Over the next few years, Graves continued to write essays and short pieces for publication. He wrote the text for *Texas Heartland: A Hill Country Year* (1975), which was a book of photographs taken at Paisano Ranch by Jim Bones, Jr., as well as the introduction to *Landscapes of Texas: Photographs from Texas Highways Magazine* (1980). A collection of essays Graves wrote for *Texas Monthly* magazine also was published in 1980, under the title *From a Limestone Ledge: Some Essays and Other Ruminations about Country Life in Texas*.

Other published works by Graves include *The Last Running: A Story* (1974), a fictionalized version of a segment of *Goodbye to a River* that was first published in *Atlantic Monthly* in June 1959 and reprinted in *The Best American Short Stories 1960*; and *Blue and Some Other Dogs* (1981), taken from *From a Limestone Ledge*. Graves contributed to *The American Southwest, Cradle of Literary Art* (1981) and wrote the forewords to *A Thomason Sketchbook: Drawings* (1969) and James T. De Shields' *Cynthia Ann Parker* (1991), among others. He provided the text for *Of Birds and Texas* (1986) and published another version of that text as *Self-Portrait with Birds: Some Semi-Ornithological Recollections* (1991).

Graves died on July 31, 2013 in Glen Rose, Texas.

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## Scope and Contents

The John Graves papers consist of typescript drafts with holograph revisions, research notes, correspondence, and page proofs relating to Graves' work, primarily his books *Goodbye to a River* and *Hard Scrabble*, but also his contributions to *The Water Hustlers* and *Texas Heartland: A Hill Country Year*, as well as short pieces written for *Holiday*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *American Heritage*, and other magazines. Graves' original groupings of drafts, research material, and correspondence about a work have been retained and are arranged by title.

Graves' best-known book, *Goodbye to a River*, was an outgrowth of an article commissioned by *Sports Illustrated* and eventually published in *Holiday* magazine. Drafts and correspondence relating to that article, "A Piece of River," are present in the collection. Correspondence with Graves' agent John Schaffner and with Harold Strauss, Alfred A. Knopf, and others at Knopf publishers follows the writing and publication of the book. Included with the correspondence are letters between Graves and J. Frank Dobie, along with a draft of Dobie's review of the book. Designer Carl Hertzog's layouts and correspondence regarding the book are also present. Along with *Hard Scrabble* material, there are drafts and correspondence relating to its publication in condensed form in *Esquire*.

A joint effort with noted Texas nature photographer Jim Bones, Jr., *Texas Heartland: A Hill Country Year* is represented by drafts by both Bones and Graves and correspondence between Graves, Bones, and publisher Frank Wardlaw. Accompanying correspondence, research material, and drafts of Graves' contribution to *The Water Hustlers*, a book about water resource development, are reviews of the book and Graves' research for an updated later edition.

Research material, correspondence, and drafts of Graves' articles for *Holiday* about Rice University, Carlsbad Caverns, and the Mexican border are present. An article about artist Clara Williamson is accompanied by notes from Graves' interview with her. A piece on John W. Thomason, Jr., written as an introduction for *A Thomason Sketchbook: Drawings* and also published in *Southwest Review*, includes photocopies of sketches by Thomason. Also present is a typed draft for a talk delivered at a Ransom Center sponsored gathering of Knopf authors in September 1995, where Graves discussed his

thoughts on his association with Knopf publishers.

Two carbon typescript drafts for Grave's unpublished novel *The Speckled Horse* were previously restricted at Graves' request. These materials, dating from the mid-1950s, were opened in May of 2019. Included with them are several letters to and from Graves explaining the restriction.

The bulk of John Graves' papers were acquired by the Ransom Center in 1975 and 1976 through William Wittliff of the Encino Press.

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## Related Material

Other manuscripts at the Ransom Center relating to Graves and his work are located in the Margaret Cousins, James Frank Dobie, and Genesis West collections. In addition, the Center's Art Collection houses drawings by John Groth for *The Last Running*, and the Center's Photography Collection houses one sheet of halftone reproductions of twelve photographs used to illustrate the original edition of *Goodby to a River*.

The Southwestern Writers Collection, Special Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos holds a large collection of Graves' papers.

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## Index Terms

### Correspondents

Dobie, J. Frank (James Frank), 1888-1964.

Gannett, Lewis, 1891-1966.

Guthrie, A. B. (Alfred Bertram), 1901-1999.

Hartley, Margaret L., 1909-1983.

Knopf, Alfred A., 1892-1984.

Langbein, Walter Basil, 1907- .

Lish, Gordon.

Mitchell, John G.

Rosenfeld, Arnold.

Rothberg, Abraham.

Schaffner, John.

Wardlaw, Frank Harper.

### Subjects

Authors, American.

Authors and publishers.

Literary agents.

**Organizations**

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

**Document Types**

Galley proofs.

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**Series I. Works by John Graves, 1957-1975, 1995**

"Aunt Clara's World," correspondence, research notes, and draft, 1969-1970	<b>box 1 folder 1</b>
"The Biggest Hole in the Ground," [Carlsbad Article], correspondence, research notes, and draft, 1960-1961	<b>folder 2</b>
<i>Goodbye to a River</i>	
Brazos Book--Correspondence, 1959-1964	<b>box 1 folder 3-5</b>
Typescript draft, bound, undated	<b>folder 6</b>
Printer's typescript, ca. 1960. With design and layouts by Carl Hertzog	<b>box 2 folder 1-3</b>
Corrected galley proofs, April and May 1960. Two sets, one with illustrations (housed in galley files)	
<i>Hard Scrabble</i>	
Correspondence, bibliography, notes and passages, [notebook], 1970-1974	<b>box 2 folder 4</b>
<i>Esquire</i> Condensation, correspondence and drafts, 1972	<b>box 3 folder 1</b>
Old Working Draft, heavily revised typescript, undated	<b>folder 2-4</b>
Working Copy--Final Version, revised photocopy final typescript, May 1973	<b>folder 5</b>
Revised final typescript, with printer's, editor's and designer's markings, Oct. 1973 (1 of 3 folders)	<b>folder 6</b>
Revised final typescript, with printer's, editor's and designer's markings, cont.	<b>box 4 folder 1-2</b>
Page proofs (slicks), [1974]	<b>folder 3-4</b>

Printed copy--in gatherings, unbound, 1974. Copy editor's set of folded and gathered sheets	<b>folder</b> 5-6
Corrected galley proofs, Jan. 1974 (housed in galley files)	
"The Hard-Used Land," correspondence, research notes, and drafts, bound, 1974-1975	<b>box 4</b> <b>folder</b> 7
"The Old Breed: A Note on John W. Thomason Jr.," correspondence; research material, including photocopy sketches by Thomason; drafts; and printed text from <i>Southwest Review</i> , 1966-1969	<b>box 5</b> <b>folder</b> 1
"The Overlap Land," correspondence, research notes, and drafts, 1960-1963	<b>folder 2</b>
"A Piece of River," correspondence and drafts, 1957-1959	<b>folder 3</b>
"Remarks for HRC/Knopf Gathering at Scholz Garten, Austin, Wednesday 9/13/95" [speech], typescript, undated	<b>folder</b> 4
"Rice University: The Pangs of Change," correspondence, research material, drafts, and tearsheet, 1962-1964	<b>folder</b> 5-6
<i>Texas Heartland: A Hill Country Year</i> , with Jim Bones, Jr., correspondence, research notes, and drafts, 1974-1975	<b>folder</b> 7
<i>The Water Hustlers</i> . "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet: Water Planning in Texas"	
Correspondence, notes, text, later material 1970-1971	<b>box 6</b> <b>folder</b> 1-3
Material for possible updating and reviews and recent correspondence, 1971-1973	<b>folder</b> 4
The Speckled Horse [Previously Restricted]	
Correspondence, 1975-1985	<b>box 7 folder 1</b>
1st carbon typed draft, circa 1955-1958	<b>folder</b> 2-5

2nd carbon typed draft, circa 1955-1958

**folder**  
6-9



## John Graves Papers--Index of Correspondents

- Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (Susan Burke, Ashbel Green, Sidney R. Jacobs, Cynthia Johnston, Alfred A. Knopf, William A. Koshland, Harding Lemay, Bill McCullough, Harold Strauss, and Sophie Wilkins)--1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.4
- American Heritage Publishing Company (Robert L. Reynolds and E. M. (Ernest Milton) Halliday, 1913-)--1.1
- *Atlantic Monthly* (Robert Manning, 1919-)--4.7
- Atlantic Monthly Press (Peter Davison)--1.3
- Ballew, W. V., Jr.--6.4
- Baskin, C. R. (Texas Water Development Board)--6.1
- Bates, Marston, 1906-1974--1.4
- Bones, Jim--2.4, 5.7
- Book-of-the-Month Club (Elizabeth Easton)--1.5
- *Boston globe* (Frederick J. O'Neal)--5.5
- Brown's Book Shop. Houston, Texas (Ted Brown)--1.5
- Curtis Publishing Company--1.2
- Davison, Peter--1.3
- Dobie, J. Frank (James Frank), 1888-1964--1.5
- *Esquire* (Margaret Falk and Gordon Lish)--2.4, 3.1
- Gannett, Lewis, 1891-1966--1.4
- Guthrie, A. B. (Alfred Bertram), 1901- --1.4
- Halliday, E. M. (Ernest Milton), 1913- --1.1
- Hartley, Margaret L., 1909- --5.1
- Henry Holt and Company (Walter Bradbury)--1.3
- Hertzog, Carl--1.4, 1.5
- *Holiday* (James Cerruti, Irene G. Corson, Arnold W. Ehrlich, Richard L. Field, Ruth Graves, and Arno Karlen)--1.2, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5
- *Horizon* (Margery Darrell)--1.5
- *Houston chronicle*--5.5
- *Houston post*--5.5
- see also Rosenfeld, Arnold
  
- Jackson, Harry, 1924- --1.3
- Kingsport Press--1.4
- Knopf, Alfred A., 1892-1984
- see Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
  
- Langbein, Walter Basil, 1907- --6.1, 6.4
- Lish, Gordon
- see  
*Esquire*
  
- Macmillan & Co. (R. Q. Yeatman)--1.5
- Manning, Robert, 1919- --4.7
- Mitchell, John G.
- see Sierra Club
  
- Nicholson, Patrick James, 1921- --1.3
- Office of the Collector of Customs. Dallas, Texas--1.5
- Random House (Firm) (Martha L. McGill)--2.4
- *The Reporter* (New York, 1949-) (Cyrilly Abels)--1.5

- Rosenfeld, Arnold--5.1
- Rothberg, Abraham--2.4, 6.4
- Schaffner, John (Victor Chapin, 1907-1966 and Hubert Creekmore)--1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.4, 3.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 6.4
- Sierra Club (Peter Graves, John G. Mitchell, Richard Shannon, and Connie Stallings)--6.1, 6.4
- *Southwest Review* (Margaret L. Hartley, 1909-)--5.1
- *Sports Illustrated* (Time, inc.) (Percy Knauth, 1914-)--5.3
- Texas A&M University Press (Margaret Ingram and Frank Harper Wardlaw)--5.7
- Thomason, John W., Mrs.--5.1
- Turner, Dechard--7.1
- Twichell, Trigg--6.1
- University of Texas Press (Margaret Sharpe, Frank Harper Wardlaw, and John Edward Weems)--5.1
- Vandiver, Frank Everson, 1925- --5.5
- Wardlaw, Frank Harper--5.1, 5.7
- Watkins, T. H. (Tom H.), 1936- --6.1
- Williams, George (Rice University)--5.5
- Young, R. A.--6.1