



Southwestern Writers Collection

The Wittliff Collections at the Alkek Library
Texas State University-San Marcos

A Guide to the Beverly Lowry Papers

1950-1998

Collection 061

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Lowry, Beverly
Title:	The Beverly Lowry Papers
Dates:	1950-1998
Abstract:	Typescript drafts, correspondence, notes, clippings, journals, and photographs document the writing career of Beverly Lowry. The bulk of the papers relate to four of Lowry's seven published books, with <i>The Perfect Sonya</i> and <i>Crossed Over</i> being the most fully represented. The collection is arranged into the following seven series: Works, Correspondence, Clippings, Publicity, Computer disks, Personal, and Artifacts.
Identification:	Collection 061
Extent:	20 boxes plus artifacts (10 linear feet)
Language:	Materials are written in English
Repository:	<u>Southwestern Writers Collection, Special Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos</u>

Biographical Sketch

Beverly Lowry was born August 10, 1938, in Memphis, Tennessee, and moved with her family at age six to Greenville, Mississippi. She attended the University of Mississippi (1956-58) and graduated with a B.A. from Memphis State University in 1960. She married Glenn Lowry in June 1960, and moved with him to Manhattan. There, she pursued acting and experimented in writing. After relocating to Houston in 1965, and sending the younger of her two sons to nursery school Lowry began to write stories, some of which blossomed into novels. Lowry began teaching fiction writing as an associate professor at the University of Houston in 1976, while also pursuing acting, and serving on boards for the Cultural Arts Council of Houston, and for Houston Festival. Her fiction writing has typically been set in Texas and Mississippi. Her first two novels, *Come Back, Lolly Ray* and *Emma Blue* were both set in Eunola, Mississippi a fictional town much like her hometown of Greenville. Her next three novels and one work of non-fiction were set in Texas, with her most recent novel, *The Track of Real Desires*, being again set in the fictional Eunola, Mississippi.

The Lowrys lived just outside San Marcos along the San Marcos River from 1981-1991. One of the Lowrys' two sons, Peter, died in a hit-and-run accident on the highway from San Marcos to their home in 1984. This experience and other personal losses in the early 1980s "caused a marked change in the tone of Lowry's fiction. Gone is her unqualified faith in the future; present is a new preoccupation with fate or chance, even a hint that felicity may invite disaster," (*Contemporary Southern Writers*, St. James Press, 1999). These themes of isolation and alienation appear in *The Perfect Sonya* (1987), *The Track of Real Desires* (1994), and clearly in *Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir* (1992). Beginning in 1989, Lowry approached and visited convicted pickaxe murderer Karla Faye Tucker, on death row in Huntsville, Texas. *Crossed Over* relates the story of Karla Faye Tucker as well as some of Lowry's own personal

story, resulting in “far more than the usual true-crime tale. Lowry interwove the story of her own troubled son with a chilling account of Tucker’s dangerously out-of-control life to achieve an understanding of the human being behind an ostensibly inhuman act; her leap of imagination and empathy enabled her, at last, to make peace with Peter’s death,” (*Texas Monthly*, Feb. 2001).

Lowry moved to Los Angeles in the early 1990s, and currently teaches at George Mason University, in Virginia. She continues to write essays and non-fiction, and has been working on a biography of Madame C. J. Walker, the first African-American woman to become a self-made millionaire.

Scope and Content Note

Numerous typescript drafts, correspondence, notes, clippings, journals and photographs, ranging in date from 1950-1998, document Beverly Lowry's writing career. The bulk of the papers relate to four of Lowry's seven published books, with *The Perfect Sonya* and *Crossed Over* being the most fully represented.

Series Descriptions

Series I: Works (1950-1998)

Subseries A: Novels (1978-1998)

Annotated typescripts for *Daddy's Girl*, *The Perfect Sonya*, *Crossed Over*, and *The Track of Real Desires* comprise the bulk of this subseries, with extensive research notes, correspondence, and photographs related to *Crossed Over*. Correspondence includes letters from Lowry to Karla Faye Tucker, 1989-1992, 1998, plus scattered letters from Jackie Oncken, John Adams of Great Britain, Ronald Kuntz of Ohio, and Dee Dee of Dallas.

Subseries B: Poetry (n.d.)

Works in this subseries are undated, although they appear to date from early on in Lowry's career. Poems have been arranged in alphabetical order by title; most are handwritten or typed.

Subseries C: Short Stories (n.d.)

Lowry's short stories have been arranged in alphabetical order. Although they are undated, it is probable that some date from as early as the late 1970s, when Lowry began writing short stories, some of which became novels. One story at the end of this subseries is by Glenn Lowry.

Subseries D: Articles / Reviews by Lowry (1979-98)

This subseries includes a sampling of Lowry's published articles and reviews of books by others. Apart from one annotated galley, the remaining six articles and reviews are strictly photocopies of the published item.

Subseries E: Research papers and school notes (1956-59, n.d.)

These research papers and school notes are from Lowry's drama and music coursework at the University of Mississippi and at Memphis State University, and are arranged in alphabetical order.

Subseries F: Sketches, n.d.

One folder of pencil sketches of flowers, human figures, and other subjects, undated and unsigned, but likely by Lowry.

Series II: Correspondence (1978-90, n.d.)

This series is comprised of one folder of correspondence including personal notes and publishers' requests of Lowry to read specific books and comment on them.

Series III: Clippings (1977-82, n.d.)

Newsclippings in this series relate to Lowry's writing career, and have been arranged chronologically.

Series IV: Publicity (n.d.)

Four undated photographs are included in this series: 3 black and white photographs of a *Come Back, Lolly Ray* manuscript exhibit, and 1 color photograph of Lowry at a book signing for the short story compilation, *Common Bonds*, with other authors.

Series V: Computer disks (n.d.)

Fourteen 5.5" floppy disks, many labeled as "Pauline," which was a working title for *The Perfect Sonya*.

Series VI: Personal (1960-75, n.d.)

This series includes journals, a college diploma, and materials related to Lowry's sons. The three bound journals are undated, and include notes about Lowry's daily life and writing projects. The college diploma is from Memphis State University, 1960, and includes a torn photograph of Lowry from that time period. The materials related to Lowry's sons include poetry and drawings to and by Peter and Colin Lowry.

Series VII: Artifacts (n.d.)

This series contains one item: a Kaypro word processor.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research.

Preferred Citation

Beverly Lowry Papers, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University-San Marcos

Acquisition Information

Gifts donated by Beverly Lowry, 1994-1998.

Processing Information

Processed by Amanda York, 2001. Finding aid revised by Maggie DeBrecht, 2011.

Note to Researchers

Contact the archivist for information about additional materials from this writer that have not yet been fully processed.

Container List

Series I: Works

Novels

Box Folder

		<u>Daddy's Girl</u>
1	1-3	Typescript, ca. 1978?
1	4-6	Typescript, ca. 1980?
		<u>The Perfect Sonya</u>
		"Pauline"
2	1-3	ATS, very early, many handwritten pages re: characters and plot, with sketches
2	4-6	Early ATS, assorted pages
3	1	1977
3	2	"Scraps"
3	3	"A Secret Attachment" synopsis, pages 1-11 and asst.
3	4	"A Fragile Balance" ATS
		Untitled
3	5-6	ATS, "stack 2-B," pages 1-321
4	1	ATS, "stack 3-A"
4	2-4	ATS, "stack 3-C"
4	5	Assorted pages, through page 195
4	6	Assorted pages, 1-65
5	1	Assorted pages, 41-68
5	2	Assorted pages, 149-251 and others
5	3	Assorted pages, 47-168
5	4	Assorted pages, 47-341 and 26-81
5	5	Assorted pages, 52-183
5	6	Pages 1-224, photocopy
6	1-5	Assorted pages
6	6	"Footwork," typescript
7	1-2	"The Bear," typescript
7	3	"Snake Creek," typescript
		"The Perfect Sonya"
7	4	Typescript, pages 1-222 and 77-125
7	5-6	Typescript, pages 1-307
8	1	Typescript, pages 1-77
8	2-3	Typescript "Copy sent to NY, 11/1985"
8	4-5	Typescript, "1/1986 #1"
8	6-7	Typescript, "1/1986"
9	1-2	Typescript, "2/1986"
9	3	Typescript, fragment, "1/1986 and 6/1986"
9	4	Typescript, "6/25/86"
9	5-7	Typescript, "#2"
9	8-9	Typescript, pages 1-334

Series I: Works-continued

Novels-continued

Box Folder

		<u>The Perfect Sonya-continued</u>
		“The Perfect Sonya”- continued
10	1-2	Typescript, with copy editing
10	3	Galley
		<u>Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir</u>
		Correspondence
10	4	1989
10	5	1990, January-March
11	1	1990, April-July
11	2	1990, August-December
11	3-4	1991
11	5	1992
11	6	1998
11	7	No date
11	8	Notes, 1997 and n.d.- includes photos of interview with Lowry outside the Texas Prison Museum and prison in Huntsville, TX
		Clippings (photocopies followed by originals)
11	9	1985
11	10-11	1997
		1998
12	1-2	January
12	3-4	February 1-4
13	1-2	February 5-10
13	3-4	February 11-28
13	5-6	March-April
13	7	No date
13	8	German language articles
13	9	New Kids on the Block (collected by Karla Faye Tucker)
13	10-11	Criminal Justice System documents (1997-1998)- petition for 30 day reprieve from execution (also includes e-mail correspondence and articles printed from web regarding Tucker’s execution)
13	12	Texas Department of Criminal Justice public info file on Karla Faye Tucker Typescripts- annotated typescripts arranged in chronological order
14	1	12/1989
14	2-3	5/1990
14	4	6/1990
14	5	10/1990
15	1-3	11/1990
15	4-5	No date
16	1-2	No date
16	3-4	Clean typescript
16	5	Publicity- two black and white 5x7 publicity stills, one Knopf booklet of excerpts

Series I: Works-continued

Novels-continued

Box Folder

Crossed Over: A Murder, A Memoir-continued

New Yorker article, 1998

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| 16 | 6 | Typescripts and editorial correspondence |
| 16 | 7 | Annotated galleys |
| | | Interviews- of Lowry regarding Tucker, videotapes from television programs, audiotapes from radio interviews |
| 17 | 1 | 1/1998 Diane Rehm Show, WAMU radio (1 audiocassette) and 1/9/1998 "DAR" (1 audiocassette) |
| 17 | 2 | 1/12/1998 Fox in Depth (1 videotape) |
| 17 | 3 | 2/2/1998 and 2/3/1998 interviews: Today Show, CNN, and Charles Grodin CNBC (1 videotape) |
| 17 | 4 | 2/2/1998 and 2/3/1998 interviews: Biran Williams MSNBC, and CNN Talkback Live (1 videotape) |
| 17 | 5 | No date, Newsnight, BBC (1 videotape) |

The Track of Real Desires

Typescripts- partial, annotated drafts

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|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| 18 | 1 | 8/21/1989- working title "Those Two" |
| 18 | 2 | 8/25/1989 |
| 18 | 3 | 9/8/1989 |
| 18 | 4 | 9/11/1989 |
| 18 | 5 | No date |

Poetry

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 18 | 6 | Go Down Death |
| 18 | 7 | I Love You |
| 18 | 8 | IOU |
| 18 | 9 | Murder She Says |

Short Stories

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 18 | 10 | What Love Can Do |
| 18 | 11 | The Almost Perfect Day |
| 18 | 12 | And Nice Girls Don't Finish at All |
| 18 | 13 | A Half Moon is a Broken Moon |
| 18 | 14 | Home for Christmas |
| 18 | 15 | If It's Not One Thing, It's Another |
| 18 | 16 | Letha-or-Sometimes Knowing Knows Nothing |
| 18 | 17 | [Lila Lee Shannon Story] |
| 18 | 18 | [Lily story fragments] |
| 18 | 19 | Luckiest Person I Know |
| 18 | 20 | Mother's Day |
| 19 | 1 | Old Love on a Cold Night |
| 19 | 2 | One of Life's Small Necessities |
| 19 | 3 | The Pail Lady |
| 19 | 4 | Some Time to Myself |
| 19 | 5 | Thomas |

Series I: Works-continued

Short Stories-continued

Box	Folder	
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19	6	Unanswered Prayer
19	7	Virgin
19	8	Untitled
19	9	Notes and fragments
19	10	It's Just a GAME, by Glenn Lowry

Articles / Reviews by Lowry

19	11	"Born to Preen: Why Southern Girls Dominate Beauty Contests" September 1997 (photocopy of published article)
19	12	<i>The Creoletown Crux</i> , 1980 (photocopy of published review)
19	13	"Grilled Portobellos and William Faulkner," <i>New York Times</i> , 4/1998
19	14	<i>The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor</i> , edited by Sally Fitzgerald, review by Lowry, 1979 annotated galley
19	15	"Puberty" <i>Southern Magazine</i> , n.d. (photocopy of published article)
19	16	"Separated at Birth?" (film review) <i>American Way</i> , n.d. (photocopy of published article)
19	17	"Southern Daddies, Southern Girls" <i>Southern Magazine</i> , 2/1987 (photocopy of published article)

Research Papers and School Notes, 1950s

19	18	British theater paper, n.d.
19	19	English drama class notes, n.d.
19	20	An Examination of Barabas, 12/1959
19	21	I Speak for Democracy
19	22	King Lear- an analysis paper
19	23	Mourning Become Electra
19	24	Music 423 class notes
19	25	Original Oratory
19	26	The Paths of Glory
19	27	Play fragment, untitled
19	28	Religion
19	29	Success in Securing Desirable Employment, 12/1956
19	30	We Seek the Higher Things

Sketches

19	31	Sketches
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Series II: Correspondence

20	1	1978-1990, n.d.
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Series III: Clippings

20	2	1977-1982 (scrapbook of clippings was removed to room 780 row 9)
20	3	No date

Series IV: Publicity, n.d.

Box	Folder	
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20	4	Three black and white photographs of <i>Come Back, Lolly Ray</i> manuscript exhibit
20	5	One color photograph of Lowry at book signing for <i>Common Bonds</i> , with other authors

Series V: Computer disks, n.d.

20	6-7	Computer disks
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Series VI: Personal, 1960-1975, n.d.

20	8-10	Journals, n.d.
20	11	Diploma. Memphis State University, 1960
20	12	Children- poetry, drawings to and by Peter and Colin Lowry, 1966-1975

Series VII: Artifacts, n.d.

-	-	Kaypro word processor
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