Marguerite Gilstrap was born at St. Paul in Madison County, Arkansas, on February 2, 1907. She majored in journalism at the University of Arkansas and earned her bachelor of science in education degree in 1930. Prior to beginning her career with the Farm Security Administration, she was the principal at St. Paul Consolidated High School, from 1934 through 1935, where she befriended Orval E. Faubus. The following year she was the assistant editor of the Progressive Star in Fayetteville and later became the editor of the Arkansas Alumnus for the University of Arkansas News Bureau. In 1942 she began working as an assistant information specialist for the Farm Security Administration in Little Rock. She moved to Washington in 1944 to work for the United States Department of Agriculture in its Division of Information and, later, at its Graduate School. She retired in 1966.

The material is arranged in five series and consists mainly of biographical information, correspondence, memoranda, typescripts of articles, broadcast scripts, speeches, and magazine and newspaper articles, the majority of which were written or edited by Gilstrap during her career with the United States Department of Agriculture. Other materials in the collection include memorabilia from the Women's National Press Club Annual Dinner and Stunt Parties, clippings about Gov. Orval E. Faubus during the Central High crisis of 1957, and photographs of Gilstrap dating from 1924 through 1988.
Contents
11 containers


Series 1
Box 1
Education and Career in Arkansas, 1918-1944

Papers, clippings, radio scripts, and general memorabilia date from Gilstrap's high school and college days through her early editorial career and culminate at the end of her career with the Farm Security Administration when she moved to Washington, D.C. The series is arranged in chronological order.

Box 1
1. Biographical Information.
2. Early Education, 1918-1924.
5. Early Press Career, 1931-1942.
7. AAUW, Arkansas Division Bulletin Editor, 1942-1944.
11. Farm Security Administration Radio Scripts, 1944.

Series 2
Boxes 2-8
Washington, D.C., Career, 1941-1988

Correspondence, memoranda, broadcast scripts, press releases, periodicals, and other publications written and edited by Gilstrap during her career with the United States Department of Agriculture and its graduate school. Folders are arranged chronologically except those in subseries 4, which are arranged alphabetically by speaker.


Box 2
Subseries 2. USDA Periodicals, 1948-1953.


Box 3
5. "50 Years of Plant Sciences," 1951.


Box 4

Box 5


Box 6

Box 8

3. Articles Pertaining to the USDA Graduate School, Nov. 1951-Nov. 1982.
9. USDA Graduate School (Notebook), June 1964.

Series 3
Box 9

Personal Correspondence and Activities, 1943-1988

Principal correspondents are Daisy Holcombe and Joseph Thalheimer. This series includes clippings concerning Orval E. Faubus and integration in the south and programs and clippings from the Women's National Press Club Annual Dinner and Stunt Party.

Box 9

Box 9 (cont.)

Series 4
Box 10
Post-United States Department of Agriculture Projects, 1967-1988

Consists of publications and papers resulting from Gilstrap's continuing involvement with organizations, such as The Young Women's Christian Association and Green Thumb, which attempted to mobilize senior citizens experienced in rural life.

Box 10

Series 5
Box 11
Photographs, ca. 1923-ca. 1988

Included among the many well-known persons are Gov. Orval E. Faubus, Sen. J. William Fulbright, and Pres. Lyndon Baines Johnson. With the exception of #30, all pictures are in black and white. Measurements are height by width.

Box 11
Folder 1. Photographs 1-7.
1. Lions Club High Girls. "The girls were seniors from both Fayetteville High and University High. The luncheon was at the Central Presbyterian Church. UHS principal, George N. Cade, is sitting on the steps." Ca. 1923 or 1924. 8 X 10.
2. University High School Class of 1924. All but one class member identified on verso. 8 X 10.
Folder 1. (cont.)
3. Spectators at basketball game. "Press Box - old
Field House - U of A-1934." Some members of the
press identified.
3 1/2 X 7.
4. Scene of downtown Fayetteville. "Gilstrap in
white dress crossing Block Street [N. East
Street]. I was then asst. editor of The
Progressive Star. 1935.
8 X 10.
5. Christmas card with photograph. "Gilstrap - 1943
- This picture was made at the D.D. Terry home
(Albert Pike House) 411 E. Rock St., Little
Rock." 4 1/4 X 2 1/2.
Photo by Gilstrap, FSA Specialist from Little Rock
regional office to the right."
4 1/2 X 6 3/4.
7. "1944-An FSA borrower photo by Gilstrap."
4 1/2 X 6 3/4.

8. "U of A Journalists in Washington 1946..." All
identified.
7 X 9.
9. "Information Division - Bureau of Plants, Soils
and Ag. Engineering. Gilstrap recording (wire
recorder) ceremony giving honors to editors..."
Most identified.
Ca. late 1940s. 8 X 10.
10. "USDA exhibit at Dairy Show in Indianapolis 1949
or 1950. Gilstrap talking with visitors.
5 X 3 1/2.
11. "Panel in USDA Graduate School program...1950s."
Most panelists identified.
5 X 7.
12. "UN - early 1950s - Madame Pandit talking with
delagation from the Women's National Press Club
- Liz Carpenter and Gilstrap."
4 X 5.
serving as guide for group to Plant Industry
Station. Bald-headed man in center, Dr. Foster, plant
physiologist."
8 X 10.
tour. Dr. Emsweller, head of ornamentals
research, 4th from left."
8 X 10.
15. "Beltsville - Dr. Lyle Alexander (BS, UA, 1927),
soil scientist, taking Gilstrap and [Liz]
Carpenter through the new greenhouse lab for
research with radioisotopes - early 1950s."
8 X 10.

8 X 10.
8 X 10.
8 X 10.
8 X 10.
10 X 8.
8 X 10.
22. "1962 - Dr. Frank Welch, asst. secretary of agriculture, Secretary Orville Freeman, Gilstrap, Lyle Webster, director of USDA information, back of Dr. Welch. This was taken at exhibit in Administration Building, USDA."
8 X 10.


25. "Hugh Shell, cave explorer, being let down by harness and rope to the floor of Half-Mile Cave in the Ozark National Forest near Mountain View, Arkansas. He is about half-way down the 70-foot drop leading to the cave. This picture taken from the floor of the cave shows the iron grillwork cover placed over the entrance to keep out trespassers. (Photo by Gilstrap 10/29/63)." 7 1/2 X 7 3/4.
8 X 10.
Folder 4. (cont.)

27. "I made these pictures when I attended the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild Fair in Asheville, NC, July 1966. The craftswoman said a sailor taught her to tie the knots used in making this shopping bag."
8 x 10.


28. "December 1967. President Johnson shakes hands with Gilstrap, who represented the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association on an ad hoc advisory committee on consumer interests and was invited to see the President sign the measure to protect consumers from flammable fabrics."
11 1/2 x 7 1/2.

29. "At the USDA Graduate School faculty dinner in the diplomatic function rooms at the State Department about 1950 [sic]. Gilstrap and John B. Holden." Ca. 1980.
8 x 10.

30. Marguerite Gilstrap. "This was made by Cherry Clark in a sitting for a picture for the church directory, All Souls Unitarian. Sitting #28 in roll 13. He gave the pix to me February 10, 1988."
14 x 10.

31. "Winter scene showing the Administration Building of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Plant Industry Station, Beltsville, MD." n.d.
8 x 10.