

Heath Merrill Rushin family papers
1855-2002
MS 17



Roswell Historical Society/City of Roswell Research Library and Archives

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Title: Heath Merrill Rushin family papers
Dates: 1855-2002
Extent: 1.75 linear ft. (4 boxes)
Identification: 1996-01

Biographical or Historical Note

Heath Merrill Rushin (1913-2002) (named Natalie Heath after her mother, but always called Heath) was the great-great granddaughter of town founder Roswell King and the great-great granddaughter of Roswell Presbyterian Church's first minister, Nathaniel A. Pratt, and his wife, Catherine Barrington King Pratt. The Pratts built the antebellum Roswell house on Mimosa Boulevard that came to be known as Great Oaks. Heath's maternal grandmother, Katherine Quintard Pratt, was born in the house. She married Alfred Taylor Heath who was at one time associated with the Roswell Manufacturing Company. The Heaths' daughter, Natalie (also born at Great Oaks), married Arthur Jesse Merrill. They lived in Atlanta when Heath was born. Great Oaks remained in the family, but was leased to renters from 1887 until 1921 when the Merrills bought out the rest of the family and began to use the residence as a summer home.

Heath married Emmett R. Rushin in 1935. Following WWII, the Rushins moved from Atlanta to Great Oaks (of which they were the sole owners) in Roswell. They raised two sons, Emmett (“Kip”) and Merrill. Both Heath and Emmett were civic leaders in the arts, education recreation, and historic preservation. They were both very involved with Roswell Presbyterian Church.

Heath was a founding member of the Roswell Woman’s Club, Roswell Garden Club, and Roswell Historical Society. She was one of a small group of parents who, in 1951, formed the Roswell Youth Recreation Committee, which established Youth Day and evolved into Roswell Recreation Association. She organized and taught the city’s first kindergarten in her home, Great Oaks, and helped establish the kindergarten program for St. David’s Episcopal Church where she taught for ten years. She also wrote a column for the *North Fulton Herald* during the 1960s.

Heath organized the Roswell Musical Arts Society with Fletcher Wolfe, director of Atlanta Boy Choir. The Society was responsible for outstanding programs presented at Roswell Presbyterian Church. Heath was also instrumental in the organization of the Chattahoochee Cotillion Club in the 1980s.

Heath and Emmett owned Great Oaks until 1981 and over the years opened her ancestral home many, many times for house tours that benefited community organizations. In 1976, they hosted a reception for 250 people prior to Roswell’s Grand Bicentennial Ball. Heath wrote the foreword for her mother’s history of Roswell, *Natalie Heath Merrill’s History of Roswell, Georgia*, which was published in 1996 from a manuscript that Mrs. Merrill was just completing at the time of her death in 1938.

Emmett Raoul Rushin (1909-1993) was the son of Sidney Norton Rushin (1868-1933) and Lilla Brown Reese Rushin (b. circa 1869). He was a graduate at Princeton University. He was the first chairman of Roswell Parks and Recreation Commission from 1965-79 and continued to serve on the commission until 1990. He was a founding member and second president of the Roswell Historical Society, chairman of the Roswell Historic Preservation Commission, first president of the Chattahoochee Nature Center, and Clerk and Elder of the Roswell Presbyterian Church.

Emmett’s siblings were Mary Gray Rushin (1895-1986), Jack J. Rushin (1898-1970), and Sydney Arthur Rushin (1903-2000).

Heath Merrill Rushin sold Great Oaks in 1981. She passed away in 2002.

Scope and Content

A large portion of the collection is dedicated to notes and manuscripts from Merrill’s *Natalie Heath Merrill’s Narrative History of Roswell, Georgia* and family genealogical records. The collection also contains papers relating to Rushin’s property at Great Oaks as well as other local historic sites. The contents of Box 1, Folder 19 (Obituary and papers relating to death of Heath Merrill Rushin) were added by Darlene Walsh when the

collection was processed. Box two contains one book given to Rushin as a gift. Box three contains notes on the King/Pratt families and sources and documents concerning local festivals, celebrations, and events. The majority of box four contains papers, news clippings, and correspondence of Emmett Rushin's parents and siblings.

Organization Note

Folders are organized chronologically by subject matter. An itemized list of each folder is available at the Research Library and Archives

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Selected Search Terms

Bulloch Hall (Roswell, Ga.)

Great Oaks (Roswell, Ga.)

Merrill, Natalie Heath (1876-1938)

Roswell Presbyterian Church (Roswell, Ga.)

Rushin, Heath Merrill (1913-2002)

Related Materials

Natalie Heath Merrill's Narrative History of Roswell, Georgia

Administrative Information**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Heath Merrill Rushin papers, Manuscript Collections, Roswell Historical Society/City of Roswell Research Library and Archives, Roswell, GA.

Source

Heath Merrill Rushin

Processing

Processed by Darlene Walsh, Hannah Mabry