

**Della Lewis Jones Papers
MS-15**

INTRODUCTION:

Size: 5.56 linear feet (4 manuscript boxes, 1 artifact box, and 2 oversize boxes)

Span Dates: 1872-2013

Bulk Dates: 1920-1960

Accession Number(s): NKU2010-003, NKU2012-007, NKU2013-007

Donor: Received from Connie Taylor in three installments beginning in 2010.

Creator: Jones, Della Lewis, 1903-2009.

Custodial History: Della Lewis Jones was a close friend of and fellow Grant County, Ky. resident to Connie Taylor. Taylor received collection items from Jones and her estate, which was managed by one of Jones' nieces.

Summary: The Della Lewis Jones Papers include materials from Della Lewis Jones (1903-2009), an African American educator, school librarian, and long-time resident of Grant County, Kentucky. Her personal papers include biographical materials, correspondence, school work, financial records, church materials, and unpublished writings. The papers also contain correspondence, financial records, funeral programs, and photographs related to her family members and the African American community of northern Kentucky as well as random teaching records and publications from her professional life as an educator.

ACCESS AND USE:

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research access.

Physical Access: Due to the presence of mold on the original item, *Proceedings of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association*, 53rd annual session (Louisville, Ky.), 1929 is available only through electronic access provided by Special Collections staff and by Kentucky State University at the Kentucky Digital Library http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt7n028pcp8j_1/details.

Use Restrictions: The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, US Code) governs the reproduction of copyrighted material. The User assumes full responsibility and any attendant liability for the fair use of materials requested in total compliance with the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) that may arise through the use of any requested materials.

Preferred Citation: [Box #, Folder #], MS-15 Della Lewis Jones Papers, Eva G. Farris Special Collections, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University.

Related Information:

A first-person narrative from Della Lewis, "Ogg CME Church – Williamstown, Kentucky" appears in the *Northern Kentucky African American Heritage Task Force Newsletter* 6, 2, (Covington, Ky.), Summer 2002 which can be found in MS 20, Theodore H.H. Harris Local Historical Research Papers, Eva G. Farris Special Collections, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University.

"Della Jones celebrates 100 years." *Northern Kentucky African American Heritage Task Force Newsletter* 7, 4 (Covington, Ky.), Fall 2003 in MS 20, Theodore H.H. Harris Local Historical Research Papers, Eva G. Farris Special Collections, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University.

See also Grant County School Census books, book 1916-1920, May 1, 1918 Census for Subdistrict 1, Educational Division No. 2 Colored for entry of Della May Lewis age 14.

Processing Information: processed by Anne Ryckbost, Fall 2013.

ACCESS POINTS

Subject(s):

African Americans--Education--Kentucky--Congresses.
African American schools.
African American students.
African American Sunday schools.
African American teachers--Training of.
African American women educators.
Christianity--20th century.
Churches--Kentucky--Grant County--history.
Education.
Education, Rural.
Obituaries.
Students--Kentucky--Williamstown.

Person(s):

Blythe, Lenamae Coleman.
Ellis, James.
Gray, Caroline, 1887-19?.
Hume, John Sanford [Font?].
Jones, Bradley, 1902-1969.
Jones, Della Lewis, 1903-2009.
Jones, Helen, 18?-1930?.
Lewis, Charles.

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Lewis, Richard, 1869-1935.
Lewis, Sarah, 18?-1940.
Petty, Annie Laurie, 1873-1965.
Sleet, Shelby, 1894-1935.
Tungate, Mariah, 1852-1938.
Utz, Roberta.
Warrick, Mary Ellis.
White, Pauline Hill, 1929-1972.
Williams, Jennie Bell.

Organizations/Corporate Body(ies):

Crittenden Baptist Association. (Williamstown, Ky.)
Dry Ridge Consolidated Colored School. (Grant Co., Ky.)
First Baptist Church. (Dry Ridge, Ky.)
Kentucky Negro Education Association.
Lincoln Institute. (Simpsonville, Ky.)
Kentucky State University. (Frankfort, Ky.)
National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers.
Ogg's Chapel Christian Methodist Church. (Williamstown, Ky.)
Woodward High School. (Cincinnati, Oh.)

Geographic Location(s):

Boone County. (Ky.)
Crittenden. (Grant County, Ky.)
Cynthiana. (Harrison County, Ky.)
Dry Ridge. (Ky.)
Grant County. (Ky.)
Williamstown. (Grant County, Ky.)

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

This collection documents the life of Della Lewis Jones, who was an African American educator, school librarian, and long-time resident of Grant County, Kentucky, as well as the lives of some of her family and fellow community members. The information captured in the papers reflects a broad range of activities and individuals from the small African American community of Grant County and highlights the deep connections between families, churches, and schools in the area.

The papers are divided into five series. **Series I, Della Lewis Jones Personal Materials**, includes biographical materials and incoming and outgoing correspondence. Notable correspondents include Mary Ellis Warnick, Della's first cousin on her maternal side, and her niece, Pauline Hill White. It includes records and publications from various schools where Jones was a student, including Woodward High School (Cincinnati, Oh.); the Lincoln Institute (Simpsonville, Ky.); the extension program of Eastern Kentucky University (previously known as the

Eastern Kentucky State Normal School and Teachers College); and Kentucky State University (previously named Kentucky State Industrial College). Other personal materials include financial records; those regarding the house that Jones' and her husband Bradley purchased from his mother, Helen Jones, may be of particular interest. Della Lewis Jones was also actively involved in her church, Ogg's Chapel Christian Methodist Church (previously named Bowman Chapel), its' denomination, and other religious organizations. There are financial receipts for Ogg's Chapel, various church conference meeting minutes, programs, and a few unpublished works on church history, Sunday school, and religion written by Jones. Also included in her personal papers are obituaries or eulogies written by Della for several area residents including ones for Mariah Tungate (1852-1938) and Mr. Shelby Sleet. Series I also contains a personal telephone directory in which Jones recorded names and phone numbers, two pharmacy boxes for medication, and a leather wallet.

Series II, Jackson, Jones, and Lewis Family Materials, is comprised of materials collected by Della Lewis Jones from various family members. The series is organized alphabetically by last name of the individual to which the items relate. Included is an account book spanning 1884 to 1895 from John Henry Jackson, Della Lewis Jones' maternal grandfather, which contains a list of his wages from various jobs and a note about building a school in Crittenden for African American students. The account book is filled with scribbles and drawings possibly made by one of his children. The series also contains financial and legal records from Della Lewis Jones' in-laws, Alvin and Helen Jones, regarding the property they owned in Grant County. Items from Della's husband Bradley Jones include assignment and identification cards from the Kentucky Emergency Relief Administration, a subprogram of the Works Progress Administration which oversaw the administration of direct-relief programs in Kentucky for the Federal Relief Administration during the Great Depression for unemployed individuals through local work projects. It also has a report card from the Lincoln Institute for Pauline Hill White that was sent to Bradley Jones as her guardian. There are scattered correspondence and financial records from Jones' own parents, Richard and Sarah (Jackson) Lewis. There is a one-day diary dated June 25, 1940 created by Pauline Hill White (also referred to as Pauline Jones) during summer school. Family member death announcements and funeral programs collected by Jones offer particularly rich information for genealogists interested in northern Kentucky family history.

Researchers will find items related to Jones' teaching career in **Series III, Della Lewis Jones Professional Materials**. It includes correspondence to and from Jones about teacher's certifications and positions. There is one monthly teacher's report from January 1926 that records how many boys and girls were present at school each day for the period. The series also has a 1945 teaching contract Della signed with Cynthiana City Schools, when she returned to education after a professional absence. There are also certification exam books and brochures on state laws regarding teacher certification in Kentucky and Tennessee. It contains an unpublished history of the Colored Parents-Teachers

Association (PTA) and a few programs and published literature from the Kentucky Negro Educational Association (KNEA) and the Northern Kentucky Education Association. KNEA, organized in 1877 as the State Association for Colored Teachers, operated as a professional organization for African American teachers and lobbied for African American education issues in Kentucky during racial segregation in schools. The organization joined the previously all-white Kentucky Education Association around 1956. There is also a small amount of published teaching materials and classroom resources. Many of these publications advocate the importance of industrial education for students with the belief that having vocational skills would ensure employment.

Series IV, Materials related to the African American Community in Northern Kentucky, contains a folder with programs from several northern Kentucky Baptist churches including Zion Baptist Church (Boone Co.) and First Baptist Church of Dry Ridge, Ky. It has one folder of school records (programs, correspondence, and a report card) from Dry Ridge Consolidated Colored School. There are also financial records such as store receipts made out to various individuals including Rev. Moses Daniels, Edward Garrett, and Edgar Elliot. The series contains obituaries and funeral programs of community members arranged alphabetically by last name of the deceased. Della Lewis Jones may have known these individuals as many of their names appear in other collections' items. There are also general social records including a postcard, pageant tickets, and other event ephemera. There are a few publications about religion, African American history, women's history, and magic tricks; sales literature and printed ephemera; and news clippings as well as two whole editions of the *Cincinnati Bulletin*, one dated June 17 and one July 4, 1929. The *Cincinnati Bulletin* appears to have only existed for a short period and mainly served an African American readership. There are also newsletters and a program from the Northern Kentucky African American Heritage Task Force (NKAHATF).

Series V, Photographs, has images of family members, friends, and individuals from the African American community in northern Kentucky. Most of the individuals are identified through labeling on the back of the photographs, but some do not have identification. Notable image subjects include Grant County resident Addie Williams, who is rumored to have housed an illegal still and distributed illegal alcohol behind the courthouse; Della's father Richard Lewis; Mariah Powell Tungate (c.1852-1938), who had married a Civil War veteran; Lenamae Coleman Blythe, a childhood classmate and friend of Della Lewis Jones; James Coleman; Reverend Moses Daniels, the minister of Ogg's Chapel; and Caroline Gray (1887-?), for whose family Jones' maternal grandmother Jennie Jackson worked. There are also several images of members of the Utz family. Jones lived with the Utz family while teaching in Boone County (Ky.). The majority of the unidentified images are portraits of African American individuals. Some of the photographs in this series were taken at Rensler's Studio, a popular photography studio located in downtown Cincinnati from 1900 to 1989.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Della Mae Lewis Jones (1903-2009), born in Williamstown, Ky. to Richard and Sarah Jackson Lewis on July 7, 1903, was a long-time resident of Grant County, Kentucky. On her maternal side, Jones' grandparents were John Henry and Jenny (also seen spelled as Jennie) Jackson. Jenny Jackson worked as a domestic for the Gray family in Grant County. According to several oral history interviews conducted with Della, she believed all four of her grandparents had been slaves.¹ John Henry and Jenny Jackson had at least three children: Shirley, Willie, who died in 1936, and Sarah. Richard Lewis, Jones' father, was the brother of Charles (Elizabeth "Lizzie") and Gracie [?]. Richard and Sarah Lewis had two children, Della and Allen, and raised the family in Grant County.

In 1904, the Day Law took effect in Kentucky, making it illegal for white and black students to be educated in the same classroom. The law was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court upon challenge in 1908. Therefore, Della Lewis Jones attended a segregated primary school in Grant County for grades one through eight. Since a secondary school for African American children did not exist in Grant County when she was of age, Della lived with her Aunt Gracie in Cincinnati, Ohio and attended Woodward High School. When Gracie moved to Chicago, Jones transferred to the Lincoln Institute in Simpsonville (Shelby County, Ky.), from which she graduated around 1923. The Lincoln Institute was a secondary school for African American students which offered courses that met the Kentucky Department of Education requirements for granting teacher certification. Della began teaching in Wayne County, Kentucky and, in 1926-1927, taught in Boone County schools. While teaching in Boone County, she boarded with the Utz family. After taking a break from the classroom upon her marriage, Jones returned to teaching in the late 1940s and taught in Cynthiana City Schools and Owen County Schools. She retired from Owen County Schools as librarian in 1974.

Jones graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Kentucky State University, previously named Kentucky State Industrial College, in 1957 after attending summer sessions for 17 years. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was her commencement speaker. In recognition of her contributions and accomplishments, Kentucky State University awarded Della an honorary doctorate in May 2009.

In 1929, she married Bradley Jones (1902-1969), child of Alvin and Helen Jones. He was a barber in Williamstown in the 1930s. They raised her niece Pauline Hill White. Pauline, whom the Joneses considered a daughter, attended Dry Ridge Consolidated Colored School, which was built in 1924-1925 with funds provided by the Grant County African American community and the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The Rosenwald Fund was established to support the construction and

¹ "Della Jones: A Grant County Treasure." *The Grant County Historical Society Newsletter* 77, (Mason, Ky.) Summer 2003.

maintenance of southern rural schools for African American students. In 1930, Kentucky had 140 Rosenwald funded school buildings.² As a consolidated school, Dry Ridge served students from a wide geographic range.

Throughout her life, Della was actively involved in church and church organizations. She belonged to Ogg's Chapel Christian Methodist Church in Williamstown, successor to Bowman Chapel, and served as a representative to the Crittenden Baptist Association. Jones was also a member of the Retired Teacher's Association and a Kentucky Colonel.

Della Lewis Jones passed away on July 14, 2009.

CONTAINER LISTING:

| <u>Description</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Series I: Della Lewis Jones Personal Materials | | | |
| Biographical information and obituary | 1978-2009, undated | 1 | 1 |
| Outgoing correspondence from Della Lewis Jones | 1933, 1971, April 29, 19? | 1 | 2 |
| Incoming correspondence to Della Lewis Jones | 1929-1998, undated | 1; O/S Box 6 | 3-5 |
| Holiday cards and invitations to Della Lewis Jones | undated | 1 | 6 |
| High school report cards and commencement programs | 1920-1924 | 1 | 7 |
| School records and Woodward High School assignment book | 1922 | 1 | 8 |
| College grammar assignment | 1926 | 1 | 9 |
| Publications, Lincoln Institute of Kentucky | 1930, 1937-38 | 1 | 10 |
| School records from Kentucky State University | 1947, 1955, 1957 | 1 | 11 |
| Grade report, Eastern Kentucky University | October 16, 1948 | 1 | 12 |
| Lot deed and news article about lot sale | 1872, 1932 | 1 | 13 |
| Property tax bills | 1957, 1958 | 1 | 14 |
| Financial (receipts) and legal records | 1922-1957, undated | 1; O/S Box 6 | 15 |

² Turner-Adams, Alicestyne. *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932*. Frankfort: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1997.

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| <u>Description</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Financial receipts and records for Ogg's Chapel | 1926, 1941-1951 | 1 | 16 |
| C.M.E. church conference minutes and convocation program | 1931, 1939 | 1 | 17 |
| Programs, meeting minutes and history of the Crittenden Baptist Association | 1892, 1943- 1976 | 1 | 18 |
| Hymn lyrics | 1950, undated | 1 | 19 |
| Unpublished literary works on church history and religion | 1936-1950, 1989, undated | 1 | 20 |
| Unpublished speeches | 1955, undated | 1 | 21 |
| Unpublished obituaries and eulogies | 1926-1965, undated | 1 | 22 |
| Personal notes | undated | 1 | 23 |
| Personal telephone directory | undated | 1 | 24 |
| Artifacts: wallet, 2 pill boxes | | O/S Box 5 | |
| | | | |
| <u>Description</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> |
| Series II: Jackson, Jones, and Lewis Family Materials | | | |
| John Henry Jackson account book with note about building school in Crittenden and drawings [by a child?] | | 1 | 25 |
| Jackson family members: envelope, name card, receipt | 1892, 1936, undated | 1 | 26 |
| Alvin Jones: tax receipts | 1898-1901 | 1 | 27 |
| Bradley Jones: Kentucky Emergency Relief Administration assignment and identification cards; incoming correspondence | 1934, 1935, 1944 | 1 | 28 |
| Helen Jones: state and county tax receipts, property record | 1915-1934 | 1; O/S Box 6 | 29-31 |
| Richard Lewis: incoming correspondence from a niece | December 13, 1907 | 1 | 32 |
| Sarah Jackson Lewis: financial receipts, bank deposit book, incoming correspondence | 1918-1938 | 2 | 1 |
| Pauline Hill White: one day diary | June 25, 1940 | 2 | 2; See staff |
| Funeral programs of family members | 1947-2010 | 2 | 3 |
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| <u>Description</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> |
|--|--------------------|------------|--|
| Series III: Della Lewis Jones Professional Materials | | | |
| Incoming correspondence about teaching positions, certifications, and students | 1926-1958, undated | 2 | 4 |
| Teacher's monthly report | 1926 | 2 | 5 |
| Teaching contract with Cynthiana City Schools | September 7, 1945 | 2 | 6 |
| Teacher and student examination book for Kentucky certification | c. 1923 | 2 | 7 |
| Kentucky teacher certification and retirement brochures | 1932, 1940, 1946 | 2 | 8 |
| Certification of Teachers, <i>Tennessee Educational Bulletin</i> | February 1942 | 2 | 9 |
| Temperance Day program | 1927 | 2 | 10 |
| Unpublished writing on the history of the Colored Parents and Teachers Association | February 10, 1951 | 2 | 11 |
| Proceedings and programs, annual sessions, K.N.E.A. | 1927-1949 | 2 | 12, See staff |
| <i>K.N.E.A Bulletin</i> | 1928, 1930, 1952 | 2 | 13, also https://dspace.nku.edu/handle/11216/4429 |
| <i>K.N.E.A. Journal</i> | 1948, 1950 | 2 | 14, also https://dspace.nku.edu/handle/11216/4430 |
| Meeting program, Northern Kentucky Education Association | November 3-4, 1960 | 2 | 15 |
| Unit Teaching in the Elementary School, <i>Commonwealth of Kentucky Educational Bulletin</i> v. XIX, no. 3 | May 1951 | 2 | 16 |
| Teaching materials and resource books | 1941-1942, undated | 2 | 17 |
| Series IV: Materials related to the African American community in northern Kentucky | | | |
| Church programs and news bulletins | 1949-1972 | 2 | 18 |
| Dry Ridge Consolidated Colored School | 1923-1957 | 2 | 19 |
| Financial records, including receipts of Rev. Moses Daniels, Edgar Elliot, and Edward Garrett | 1899-1951, undated | 2 | 20 |
| Funeral programs and obituaries of friends | 1935-2004, | 2 | 21-22 |

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| | undated | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Description | Date | Box | Folder |
| Social ephemera (notes, postcard, program, ticket, map) | 1946-1984 | 2 | 23 |
| Telephone almanac, directories for Lexington and Covington, Ky. | 1906, 1932, 1954 | 3 | 1 |
| Publications about religion | 1934, undated | 3 | 2 |
| Publications related to African American and women's history | 1938, undated | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Black Herman's Easy Pocket Tricks</i> , 7 th ed. | circa 1890 | 3 | 4 |
| Printed material: sales literature and ephemera | circa 1920-1960s | 3 | 5 |
| <i>The Cincinnati Bulletin</i> v. 4, nos. 26-27 | June 27 and July 4, 1929 | O/S Box 7 | 1-2 |
| News clippings about African American churches, individuals, jockeys, and schools | 1982, 1990, undated | 3 | 6 |
| NKAAHTF newsletters and program | 1997-2004, undated | 3 | 7 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Series V: Photographs | | | |
| Della Lewis Jones and family members | circa 1910-2009 | 4 | 1 |
| Friends and community members (identified) | circa 1900-1950 | 4 | 2 |
| Utz family members | 1926, circa 1920-1929 | 4 | 3 |
| Unidentified individuals | circa 1850- 1960 | 4; O/S Box 5 | 4-5 |

Last rev: 2015/01/15, A. Ryckbost

Basic format revisions (e.g. adding hyphen in MS-#, spelling out circa): 2016/01/27, A. Ryckbost

Update with digital links: 2023/05/09, L. Hamill