

Western Kentucky University

TopSCHOLAR®

Manuscript Collection Finding Aids

Manuscripts

3-17-2016

Carter, Lillie Mae (Bland), 1919-1982 (MSS 558)

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives

Western Kentucky University, mssfa@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Carter, Lillie Mae (Bland), 1919-1982 (MSS 558)" (2016). *Manuscript Collection Finding Aids*. Paper 4125.

https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid/4125

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Manuscript Collection Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
 Department of Library Special Collections
 Western Kentucky University
 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

Descriptive Inventory

MSS 558 CARTER, Lillie Mae (Bland), 1919-1982

5 boxes. 36 folders. 1,731 items. 1940-1982. Originals, photos, and photocopies.

SC2015.83.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on 16 December 1919, the second daughter of six children of John and Maude W. (Husky) Bland. Carter attended Bowling Green's State Street High School and graduated valedictorian in 1936. She then matriculated at Tennessee State University (TSU), where she received her Bachelor's degree in business education in 1941. She retrained for elementary education at the University of Toledo, and pursued graduate work there. Carter received her Master's degree from TSU in 1969. She was the wife of Leon J. Carter, Jr. and mother of three: Michael, Leon, and Janice.

Lillie Mae Carter was employed by the Toledo, Ohio public schools, where she taught first grade in the Gunckel School for 11 years before beginning a long tenure as a remedial reading teacher at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. She motivated her students to strive for excellence in writing and frequently compiled anthologies of their poetry. She retired in 1981. Mrs. Carter was the author of several books, including a book of poems titled *Black Thoughts* (London: Mitre Press, 1971) and the anthology, *Doing It Our Way* (London: Mitre Press, 1975). Lillie Mae enjoyed a twenty-year correspondence with renowned African American poet Langston Hughes. He encouraged her to continue her writing and disregard rejection notices. Carter was pleased to participate in an African study abroad class sponsored by Kent State University in the summer of 1972. That 23-day excursion took her to Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Mrs. Carter was not shy to the public eye, she belonged to many organizations including Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Delta Kappa Gamma Society, Phi Delta Kappa, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Catholic Inter-racial Council. Although raised in the African Methodist Episcopal church, she converted to Catholicism and was a devout member of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Toledo. A public figure with definite ideas about race relations and vitally interested in history and education, Carter was frequently interviewed on television and radio.

Carter died of a heart attack in 1982.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection documents the life and career of African American teacher and poet Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter. Boxes 1 and 2 contain correspondence dated from 1941 to 1982, which is arranged chronologically. The correspondence chiefly concerns her efforts to get her poetry published, but contains other items about her family, her teaching career, as well as her participation in civic and church affairs. Many of the undated letters in Box 2, Folders 8 and 9 are incomplete. Of special note is Box 2, Folder 10 which includes photostatic copies of letter and notes from Langston Hughes. This correspondence, 1947 to 1967, contains short notes about poems that Carter had sent Hughes as well as his autograph on items; none of this material is original.

Box 3, Folder 1 contains programs from events at which Carter read poetry or talked about her poetry, as well as programs related to African American history events in the Toledo, Ohio area. Folder 2 includes material related to Carter's teaching career and many thank you notes from children. Folder 3 includes both published and unpublished poems by Carter. Folder 4 includes several miscellaneous items related to Carter's publications. Folders 5 and 6 include a draft manuscript, a final manuscript, and galley proofs for Carter's book *Doing It Our Way*. Folder 7 includes greeting cards sent to Carter, chiefly Christmas, birthday and Mother's Day cards.

Box 4 Folder 1 contains a carbon copy of the manuscript for Carter's book *Black Thoughts*. Folder 2 includes the manuscript and published copies of *The Grass that Grew in the Tree* and the manuscript for *Our Majestic Mountain*. Folder 3 includes more greeting cards, chiefly Christmas cards, dated 1969 to 1982. Folder 4 houses six copies (1972-1977) of a small poetry magazine titled *The Dream Shop*, which was produced by the Verse Writers' Guild of Ohio; it also includes four small annuals (1971-72; 1972-73; 1975-76; 1976-77) for Martin Luther Jr. Elementary School in Toledo, Ohio. Folder 5 includes some teaching material for African American studies, chiefly images of well-known African Americans and text about their contributions to society. Of interest is a program for an event titled: "The Bicentennial: An Afro-American Perspective of The City Association of Colored Women's Club" which was held in Toledo, Ohio.

Box 5 Folder 1 includes information about and poetry by Carter's family members, particularly her son Leon J. Carter III. Folder 2 contains newspaper clippings about events in which Carter participated, membership cards, and Carter's Who's Who nomination form. Folder 3 includes more published and unpublished poetry by Carter, including another published compilation titled *At Christmas*. Folder 4 contains a few published and unpublished photos of Carter.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter	1940-1975	617 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Biographical information	1941-1985	54 items

Folder 3	Correspondence	1940-1969	64 items
Folder 4	Correspondence	1970-1971	47 items
Folder 5	Correspondence	Jan.-Aug. 1972	67 items
Folder 6	Correspondence	Sept.-Dec. 1972	87 items
Folder 7	Correspondence	1973	93 items
Folder 8	Correspondence	1974	79 items
Folder 9	Correspondence	Jan.-Aug. 1975	60 items
Folder 10	Correspondence	Sept.-Dec. 1975	70 items
BOX 2	Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter	1947-1982	566 items
Folder 1	Correspondence	Jan. 1976-June 1976	51 items
Folder 2	Correspondence	July 1976-Dec. 1976	61 items
Folder 3	Correspondence	1977	83 items
Folder 4	Correspondence	1978	83 items
Folder 5	Correspondence	1979	74 items
Folder 6	Correspondence	1980	35 items
Folder 7	Correspondence	1981-1982	23 items
Folder 8	Correspondence	n.d.	63 items
Folder 9	Correspondence	n.d.	71 items
Folder 10	Correspondence with Langston Hughes	1947-1967	22 items
BOX 3	Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter	1964-1980	308 items
Folder 1	Programs	1964-1980	25 items
Folder 2	Teaching Related	n.d.	36 items

Folder 3	Works by Carter	n.d.	59 items
Folder 4	Publications	n.d.	5 items
Folder 5	<i>Doing it Our Way</i> – Preliminary Submissions	n.d.	26 items
Folder 6	<i>Doing it Our Way</i> – Manuscript	n.d.	112 items
Folder 7	Greeting cards	n.d.	45 items
BOX 4	Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter	1969-1982	148 items
Folder 1	<i>Black Thoughts</i> – Carbon copy	1971	2 items
Folder 2	Works by Carter	1978	7 items
Folder 3	Greeting cards	Jan. 1969-Apr. 1982	75 items
Folder 4	Miscellaneous	1976-1980	23 items
Folder 5	Miscellaneous	1973-1976	41 items
BOX 5	Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter	1964-1981	94 items
Folder 1	Information and work by/of family	1964-1977	34 items
Folder 2	Awards and recognition memos	1975-1980	25 items
Folder 3	Poetry selections by Mrs. Carter	1974-1981	28 items
Folder 4	Photos	1972-1975	7 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS CARTER, Lillie Mae (Bland), 1940-1982
558 1919-1982

This collection documents native Kentuckian Lillie Mae (Bland) Carters' work as a poet and public school teacher in Toledo, Ohio. It includes correspondence, publications, unpublished poems, and printed material pertinent to her educational career and achievements. Of particular note is a folder of letters and autographs from African American poet Langston Hughes.

5 boxes. 36 folders. 1,731 items. Originals, photos and photocopies.

SC2015.83.1

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Adoff, Arnold, 1935-2021 – Letters to African Americans B1,F5,7,10; B2,F2-3
African Americans – Biographies B4,F5
African Americans – Illustrations B4,F5
Afro-American Heritage Club – Toledo, Ohio B4,F4
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. B2,F1; B5,F2; B4,F5
Angelou, Maya, 1928-2014 B2,F3
Association for the Study of African American Life and History – Related to *At Christmas* B4,F5 B5,F3
Bailey, Pearl Mae, 1918-1990 – Letters to, 1972 B1,F6,9-10
Becket, Walter Francis, 1898-1991 – Letter to B1,F4
Beins, Mary Bernadine, 1910-1993 B1,F3-4,6-7; B2,F1-4,9
Bicentennial – Related to, 1976 B4,F5
Birthday cards B3,F7
Black Thoughts B4,F1
Black Thoughts – Relating to B1,F4
Bland, James Curtis B1,F5,8-9; B2,F1,3-5,9
Calendars – African Americans, 1981 B4,F4
Carter, James Earl “Jimmy,” Jr., b. 1924 – Letters to, 1978 B2,F4-5
Carter, Leon John, III, 1944-1984 B5,F1
Carter, Lillie Mae (Bland), 1919-1982 – Photographs B5,F4
Carter, Michael Curtis – Correspondence B1,F8-9; B2,F3-4,6-7,10
Christmas cards B1,F6; B3,F7; B4,F3
Civil rights movement – Relating to, 1975 B4,F5
Clem, W. W., 1918-1990 – Correspondence B1,F6
Doing It Our Way B3,F5-6

Downing, Dero Goodman, 1921-2011 B1,F5
 Dunnigan, Alice (Allison), 1906-1983 – Correspondence B2,F2-6,8
 Gad, Tom B2,F2-3,5
 Glenn, John Herschel, Jr., 1921-2016 B1,F3
Grass That Grew in The Tree, The B4,F2
 Greeting cards B3,F7; B4,F3
 Guyton, Ruthe O., 1915-2007 B1,F7-8; B2,F1-2,8
 Hammersmith, George – Correspondence B1,F9-10; B2,F5
 Handy, Riley Dean, 1941-2010 – Correspondence B1,F6-10
 Handy, William Christopher, 1873-1958 B1,F3
 Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967 B2,F10
 Jones, Billy B2,F2-3,8
 Jones, Zacharia Keele, 1883-1977 B1,F6
 Kennedy, Caroline Bouvier, b. 1957 – Relating to B1,F3
 King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006 B1,F3,10; B2,F5-6
 King, Martin Luther, Sr., 1899-1984 – Letter to B2,F4
 Koch, Dorothy B1,F5
 Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School – Toledo, Ohio – Yearbooks B4,F4
 Michener, James Albert, 1907-1997 B1,F10
 Miller, Sandra – Correspondence B1,F7-8
 Moore, Arletta (Bland), 1917-2004 B1,F6-9; B2,F2-4,8-9
 Mother's Day – Related to B3,F7
Mt. Climm: Our Majestic Mountain B4,F2
Mt. Climm: Our Majestic Mountain – Relating to B1,F3
 Perry, Thelma D. – Correspondence B1,F4-7,9; B2,F9
 Peterson, Arthur B1,F2
 Poetry
 Poets – African Americans
 Neal, Mary Julia, 1905-1995 B1,F5
 Race relations B1,F3
 Racism – Comments, 1962 B1,F3
 Randals, Verna M., 1887-1988 B1,F8-10; B2,F2,5
 Rejection letters B1,F3-8; B2,F2-4,8
 Roberts, Granville Oral, 1918-2009 B2,F2
 Selassie, Haile, I, 1892-1975 – Letter to B1,F7
 Shaw, B. K. – Correspondence B1,F4-5,7-9; B2,F3-4
 Teachers and teaching – Toledo, Ohio B3,F2
 Thomas, McKinley B1,F7,10; B2,F1
 Torrence, A. P. B1,F4-5,7-8
 Townsend, Dorothy Louise (Edwards), 1915-1995 – Correspondence B1,F9-10; B2,F1-2
Whispering Leaves B3,F3
Whispering Leaves – Relating to B1,F4

Ray/Jeffrey 03/17/2016