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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 571 DURSTON, James Marion, 1920-2011

2 boxes. 22 folders. 268 items. 1945-2009. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

2005.137.4; SC2018.73.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Marion “Brandy” Durston, the son of Reginald Durston and Ernie V. (Scott) Durston, was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky on 27 February 1920. He entered kindergarten at WKU’s Training School in 1925 and graduated from College High in 1938. He then graduated from the Lincoln Chiropractic College, Indianapolis, Indiana. In 1941, he married Luella Lord (1921-1989) and they were the parents of two sons, James “Dusty” Durston and Reginald “Reggie” Durston II.

Durston practiced in Bowling Green for four months before being commissioned an officer in the U.S. Army Medical Corps in March 1942. He resumed his practice in 1945. After 22 years treating patients from Bowling Green, Warren County and surrounding counties, Durston relocated his practice to Southaven, Mississippi. A lifelong Episcopalian, he was a member of Bowling Green’s Christ Episcopal Church and of Holy Communion Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Durston died in Southaven, Mississippi on 6 April 2011.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists mostly of letters of “Brandy” Durston to his friends Cora Jane Spiller, Oakland, Kentucky, and/or her husband, Robert E. “Bob” Spiller. Also included are miscellaneous written materials, principally Durston’s essays on autobiographical, religious and health-related topics, and printed material from his church. An inventory is in Box 1, Folder 1.

After Durston moved to Mississippi, Cora Jane regularly forwarded to him newspaper clippings, obituaries, and other items of interest relating to Bowling Green. Durston’s replies evidence his encyclopedic memory for people, families, places and events as he responds to the mailings with anecdotes, gossip (sometimes scandalous) and reminiscences about his youth, education, World War II service, College High alumni, fellow citizens, and family and professional life in Bowling Green. He also supplies current information about his two sons and their careers and families, and about his church, its leadership and activities. Some of the letters include printouts of photographs. Of interest are:

a. Durston’s remarks about treating, at the request of coach Frank Moxley, African American athletes from Bowling Green’s State Street High School, race relations in Bowling

Green, and various African American residents and their businesses and entertainments (Box 1, Folders 4, 6, 7, 11);

b. his references to some of the “low culture” of Bowling Green, such as gambling (Box 1, Folders 5, 9) and a lady wrestling match (Box 1, Folder 5);

c. his reminiscences about well-known Bowling Green madam Pauline Tabor Webster, who was also a patient of his (Box 1, Folders 5, 6, 11; Box 2, Folders 9, 10);

d. his pride in his work with the Lions Club to build a school in Bowling Green for handicapped children (Box 1, Folders 5, 9);

e. his story about an assistant postmaster in Bowling Green who stole from the mails, and the scheme he used to avoid detection (Box 1, Folder 5);

f. his experience of joining the Masons (Box 1, Folder 5);

g. his antipathy toward homosexuality and his fierce opposition to his church’s liberality toward gays, including the 2004 consecration of Gene Robinson, an openly gay Episcopal priest, as Bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire (Box 1, Folders 4, 6, 8, 10; Box 2, Folders 8, 9); and

h. his devotion to his church, his interest in Christian history and mythology (Box 1, Folders 3, 7, 8), and his explorations of extraterrestrialism (Box 1, Folder 2), global warming (Box, 1 Folder 5), and “one-world” conspiracies (Box, 1 Folder 11).

Box 2 also contains printed matter (programs, newsletters, directories) relating to Durston’s church, Holy Communion Episcopal Church, and to St. Mary’s Cathedral, both in Memphis, Tennessee (Folders 4-7). Included is Durston’s photo essay on the reunion of College High’s Class of 1938 and a narrative of his years at the Training School and College High (Folder 1); a collection of recipes (Folder 2); a photograph of Durston during his World War II service, various biographical anecdotes, and an article about a patient of Durston’s, musician Billy Vaughn of the Hilltoppers Quartet (Folder 3). Folders 8-10 contain a later accretion to this collection and consist of Durston’s letters dating from 2005 to 2009.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	James M. Durston	1994-2005	157 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Letters	1994-1997	4 items
Folder 3	Letters	1999	4 items
Folder 4	Letters	2000	11 items
Folder 5	Letters	2001	11 items
Folder 6	Letters	2002	12 items
Folder 7	Letters	Jan.-June 2003	20 items

Folder 8	Letters	July-Dec. 2003	19 items
Folder 9	Letters	Jan.-June 2004	20 items
Folder 10	Letters	July-Dec. 2004	17 items
Folder 11	Letters	2005	26 items
Folder 12	Letters – Partial, undated	n.d.	12 items
BOX 2	James M. Durston	1945-2009	111 items
Folder 1	Training School/College High – Reminiscences , reunion	1982-1998	2 items
Folder 2	Recipes	n.d.	6 items
Folder 3	Miscellaneous biographical; photographs	1945, n.d.	9 items
Folder 4	Church of the Holy Communion – Memphis, Tenn.	2000-2005	7 items
Folder 5	Church of the Holy Communion – Memphis, Tenn.	2002-2004	9 items
Folder 6	Episcopal Church – Publications, etc.	1994-2004	7 items
Folder 7	St. Mary's Cathedral – Memphis, Tenn.	2004	7 items
Folder 8	Letters	Feb. 2005- June 2006	20 items
Folder 9	Letters	July 2006- March 2007	23 items
Folder 10	Letters	April 2007- Feb. 2009	21 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS DURSTON, James M., 1945-2009
571 1920-2011

Letters of James M. "Brandy" Durston, a Bowling Green, Kentucky chiropractor and later a resident of Southaven, Mississippi, with copious reminiscences of people and places in Bowling Green. Includes material relating primarily to Durston's church in Memphis, Tennessee.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

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 Barkley, Alben William, 1877-1956 – Relating to B1,F7
 Boucher, Edwina (Tanksley), 1931-2015 – Relating to B1,F5
 Carson, William Oliver, 1909-2003 – Relating to B1,F7
 Cayce, Edgar, 1877-1945 – Relating to B1,F5
 Cheney, Reynolds S., II, b. 1936 – Relating to B1,F5-9,11
 Cherry, Henry Hardin, Jr., 1916-1980 – Relating to B1,F4
 Chiropractors
 Christianity – History B1,F7,8,10
 Civilization – Extraterrestrial influences B1,F2,3
 Davenport family – Relating to B1,F9,12
 Deemer, Paul Caleb, Jr., 1920-2006 – Relating to B2,F8
 Denes, Nicholas George "Nick," 1906-1975 – Relating to B1,F4,6
 Diddle, Edgar Allen, 1895-1970 – Relating to B1,F4; B2,F3
 Dulaney family – Relating to B1,F11,12
 Durston family – Photographs B2,F3
 Durston, James Lord "Dusty" – Photographs B1,F6-8,11
 Durston, James Lord "Dusty" – Relating to B1,F4,5,7,9,10,12; B2,F8-10
 Durston, James Marion "Brandy," 1920-2011 – Photographs B1,F4,7-9; B2,F3
 Durston, Luella (Lord), 1921-1989 – Photographs B1,F7,8; B2,F3
 Durston, Luella (Lord), 1921-1989 – Relating to B1,F5,7-9,12; B2,F9,10
 Durston, Reginald, II – Photographs B1,F6,7,11
 Durston, Reginald, II – Relating to B1,F3,5-7,9,10; B2,F8-10
 Durston, Stephanie, b. 1986 B1,F2-4
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Fitch family – Relating to B1,F11; B2,F8
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 Gaines family – Relating to B2,F10
 Gambling – Bowling Green B1,F5,9
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 Hall, Ernest Hilary, Sr., 1919-2006 – Relating to B2,F8
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 Lampkin, Clifton Wallace, 1884-1959 – Relating to B1,F4
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 Marshall, Joseph Abraham, 1924-2010 – Relating to B1,F5
 Masons (Fraternal Organization) – Relating to B1,F5
 McGinnis, Tandy J., Jr., 1921-2000 – Relating to B1,F4,12
 McGown, James Robert, 1920-2003 – Relating to B1,F8
 Moxley, Frank Otha, 1908-2004 – Relating to B1,F6,7
 Muslims – Comments about, 2002, 2005 B1,F6,11
 Myers, Rodes Kirby, 1900-1960 – Relating to B1,F5,7
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 Osborne, William Harry “Bill,” 1919-2001 – Relating to B1,F5
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 Siddens, James E. “Jimmie,” 1906-1979 – Relating to B1,F4
 Spiller, Cora Jane (Morningstar), 1928-2020 – Letters to B1,F2-12; B2,F8-10
 Spiller, Robert Ernest, 1928-2018 – Letters to B1,F2-12; B2,F8-10
 Surface, H. Howard, Jr., d. 2011 – Letter to B2,F8
 Terrorism – United States – Comments about, 2003, 2004 B1,F7
 Thesz, Aloysius Martin “Lou,” 1916-2002 – Relating to B1,F11
 Thompson, Edwin Kelly, 1909-1993 – Comments about, 2007 B2,F10
 Travelstead, Nelle (Gooch), 1888-1974 – Relating to B1,F2; B2,F9
 Vaughn, William Richard “Billy,” 1919-1991 – Relating to B1,F6; B2,F3
 Walker, David Cooper, d. 2002 – Relating to B1,F6
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Webster, Pauline (Martin) Tabor, 1905-1992 – Relating to B1,F5,6,11; B2,F9,10
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SEE or SEE ALSO

Durston, Brandy, 1920-2011
See
Durston, James Marion

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