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Dawson, Ella Mai (Randolph), 1892-1991 (MSS 397)

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ella Mai (Randolph) Dawson was born 26 May 1892 to Sam Randolph and Ella Barbee. She spent most of her youth in Logan County, Kentucky, before marrying Preston Dawson (b. 1864) of Cadiz, Kentucky, and moving with him to Clarksville, Tennessee, where he worked on the L&N Railroad. They lived in the Gallows Hollow area of Clarksville, where Ella Mai worked as a domestic and was a longtime member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Clarksville, Tennessee. Ella Mai died on 20 March 1991 and is buried in Logan County, Kentucky.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists of personal papers of Ella Mai (Randolph) Dawson. Included are correspondence from numerous family members, including sisters Fannie (Randolph) Neeley and Bertha (Randolph) Smith in Springfield, Tennessee (Folder 2); cousins Airlean Barbee and Vera Sanders in Louisville, Kentucky (Folder 3); sister-in-law Eliza J. Randolph of Adairville, Kentucky (Folder 4); and nephew Fred Stovall of Flint, Michigan (Folder 5). Holiday letters from Meggs and Son Funeral Home of Adams, Tennessee (Folder 6) reflect on the changes in the Hopkinsville-Russellville, Kentucky and Clarksville-Springfield, Tennessee area during the twentieth century. Other personal correspondence includes greeting cards from Jody Cates of Clarksville (Folder 7), letters and cards from Cecil Crawford and Irene Holder of Clarksville, Tennessee and Florida (Folder 8), and miscellaneous letters from family and friends (Folder 9), which typically convey family news and express affection and deep religious faith.

The collection also contains letters and cards to Fannie Neeley from First Missionary Baptist Church, Springfield, Tennessee (Folder 10); Fannie Neeley’s death certificate and various funeral programs, including Ella Mai’s (Folder 11); and two flyers relating to voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives for African Americans in Clarksville, Tennessee in 1968 and 1970 (Folder 12). Miscellaneous items include Preston Dawson’s L&N Railroad retirement application and a notice to residents of the Gallows Hollow area of Clarksville, Tennessee regarding the acquisition of their homes for an urban renewal project (Folder 13); and items relating to Ella Mai’s membership in Mt. Olive Baptist Church, including programs, bulletins and
newsletters, a certificate of appreciation, and a program commemorating the church’s 94th anniversary (Folder 14).

Some greeting cards, as well as the photographs in this collection, were transferred to the Kentucky Library in 1991-1992.

SHELF LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1</th>
<th>Dawson, Ella Mai (Randolph)</th>
<th>1938-1991</th>
<th>149 items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Letters from sisters, Fannie (Randolph) Neeley and Bertha (Randolph) Smith, and niece Deanna Groves</td>
<td>1958-1977; n.d.</td>
<td>25 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Letters from cousin Airlean Barbee and Airlean’s sister, Vera Sanders</td>
<td>1966-1970; n.d.</td>
<td>9 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Letters from sister-in-law Eliza J. Randolph (Mrs. Dan Randolph) of Adairville, Kentucky</td>
<td>1968-1970; n.d.</td>
<td>6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Letters from nephew Fred Stovall and his wife, Gertrude, of Flint, Michigan</td>
<td>1969-1987; n.d.</td>
<td>9 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Greeting cards from “adopted grandson” Jody Cates</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>5 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Letters from Cecil Crawford and her daughter Irene Holder</td>
<td>1974-1984; n.d.</td>
<td>7 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Letters from family and friends</td>
<td>1967-1987; n.d.</td>
<td>29 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Correspondence between Fannie Neeley and the pastors and members of First Missionary Baptist Church, Springfield, Tennessee</td>
<td>1979-1985; n.d.</td>
<td>19 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Funeral items; death certificate</td>
<td>1968, 1987-1991</td>
<td>7 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Voters Registration Drive pamphlet and Montgomery County Voter’s Council flyer</td>
<td>1968, 1970</td>
<td>2 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Folder 13  Preston Dawson’s L&N Railroad retirement papers, Clarksville Housing Authority notice; greeting cards
Folder 14  Mt. Olive Baptist Church programs and related items; certificate of appreciation

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS  DAWSON, Ella Mai (Randolph),  1938-1991
397  1892-1991

Family correspondence, church materials, greeting cards and other personal papers of Ella Mai (Randolph) Dawson, a native of Logan County, Kentucky and resident of Clarksville, Tennessee. Includes voter registration and urban renewal materials relating to African Americans.

14 folders. 149 items. Originals.
SC2012.3.60

**SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

African Americans
Baptists – African-American – Relating to F14
Baptists – Tennessee – Relating to F14
Barbee, Airlean F3
Birthday cards, 1970s F2
Caroland, Mary Frances Howser F9
Cates, Jody F7
Christmas cards, 1971-1987 F2,4,6,8-10,13
Clarksville, Tennessee – Travel and description, 1929, 1936 F6
Crawford, Cecil F8
Dawson, Preston, b. 1864 – Relating to F13
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Groves, Deanna F2
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Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company – Employees, 1938 F13
Meggs, Emerson F6
Neeley, Fannie (Randolph), 1914-1987 – Correspondence F2,5,10
Neeley, Fannie (Randolph), 1914-1987 – Relating to F11
Oates, Myrtle F9
Postcards, 1963-1975     F2,9
Randolph, Daniel, 1894-1979 – Relating to     F11
Randolph, Eliza J.      F4
Sanders, Vera        F3
Smith, Bertha (Randolph)   F2
Stovall, Fred        F5
Stovall, Gertrude     F5
Thomas, Ruby         F9
Urban renewal – Clarksville, Tennessee – Relating to     F13
Valentines, 1970s(?)    F5

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