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

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
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 MSS Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
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 letters 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 Perspect 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1</th>
<th>Lillie Mae Carter (Bland)</th>
<th>1940-1975</th>
<th>617 items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Biographical information</td>
<td>1941-1985</td>
<td>54 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Carter (Bland)  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 Carter (Bland)  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 | *Doing it Our Way* – Preliminary Submissions | n.d. | 26 items |
| Folder 6 | *Doing it Our Way* – Manuscript | n.d. | 112 items |
| Folder 7 | Greeting cards | n.d. | 45 items |

**BOX 4**  
**Lillie Mae Carter (Bland)**  
1969-1982  
148 items

| Folder 1 | *Black Thoughts* – 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 Carter (Bland)**  
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

1919-1982

This collection documents native Kentuckian Lillie Mae (Bland) Carter's 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, b. 1935 – Letters to B1,F5,7,10; B2,F2-3

African Americans

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 B4,F5

At Christmas 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 – Related to B1,F4

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, Leon John, III, 1944-1984 B5,F1

Carter, Lillie Mae (Bland), 1919-1982 – Photos 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), d. 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 Edwards – Correspondence  B1,F9-10; B2,F1-2
Whispering Leaves  B3,F3
Whispering Leaves – Relating to  B1,F4

Ray/Jeoffrey  03/17/2016