David J. Jackson, 1910-1984

Press Clipping Collection, 1927-1987

Bulk, 1932-1955

4.8 linear feet (12 legal-sized boxes)

Historical Note

David J. Jackson was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 23, 1910. He received a B.A. degree in education from Xavier University of Louisiana in 1932. During the summer of 1933, he attended Tuskegee Institute, where he began his graduate work. While attending Tuskegee, a position was held for him at Xavier upon his completion of graduate requirements. He remained in correspondence with Sister Mary Madeleine Sophie, Dean of Xavier. She charted his progress and sent materials he requested for various projects. She was his lifeline to Xavier for the duration of his stay at Tuskegee and Howard. By the summer of 1934, his study included methods of research through Tuskegee’s Department of Records and Research. This course of study emphasized fundamental concepts in the fields of history and sociology, as well as a firm foundation in teaching methods as applied to Negro history. This endeavor provided him with the tools he would use in his later work at Xavier.

Mr. Jackson had formulated the basis for the teaching of African-American history on the elementary school level in 1932. His Bachelor’s thesis was a virtual primer in this approach. He placed great emphasis on race consciousness, early education of African-American children to embrace their history, the importance of social harmony, and the need for good parenting skills to render future students respectful of their community and themselves. The teaching and research skills he would later hone at Tuskegee and Howard had their genesis in this work. From 1935 to 1936, he attended Howard University, where his major concentration was in the field of African history under Professor Leo H. Hansberry. This work entailed study of Egyptian and Ethiopian history and culture. He received his Master’s degree in history in June 1936 at Howard.

He was the head of the Negro History Department at Xavier from 1933 to 1939. In 1939, he became head of the Negro Education Department. Ever curious about the history of African Americans, he conducted extensive research into the history of black people of New Orleans. His research extended into the history of black people during Reconstruction in Louisiana, social customs of African Americans, and Roman Catholicism and black New Orleanians. Though there is no record of his attendance, his presence was requested at a conference on police brutality held in New Orleans in June 1938.

In 1940, Mr. Jackson relocated to New York City and eventually worked in the New York Public School system as an elementary school teacher and later
as the principal of an evening adult school at P.S. 194 in Manhattan. He was a member of the national Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, the Association of Drama and Speech Arts, and the Standing Committee on Bibliography and Current Research of the Association of Social Science Teachers in Negro Schools. He was also a member of the N.A.A.C.P. and the Friends of Amistad Research Center. He returned to New Orleans in 1970, received a doctorate from the London Institute for Applied Research in 1975, and, as a member of St. Francis De Sales Catholic Church, received the Archdiocesan Medal of St. Louis for outstanding laymen in 1982.

The David Jackson Collection consists of press clippings gathered from numerous black newspapers of the time and stored as a vertical file in the Xavier Library. Beginning in the early thirties, Jackson realized the importance of preserving articles pertaining to black life that could be used by current and future generations of students. These clippings span five decades of African-American history, covering numerous aspects of the black experience. As early as 1925 Mother Katherine Drexel had established the Negro History Association at Xavier, which raised money to purchase rare books, manuscripts, and other research materials. Mr. Jackson’s assemblage of press clippings added to the growing body of historical, literary, and sociological references that made up Xavier’s early library.

Negro history as a course of study at Xavier experienced numerous changes over a period of almost forty years. From 1933 to 1937 there existed a Department of Negro History with courses that covered a wide range of study. A sample of course headings conveys the diversity that was offered in those early years: “Ancient African Kingdoms,” “History of Ethiopia and Egypt in Ancient Times,” “The Negro in American Literature,” and “Sources of Negro History.” But by 1938, the Department of Negro History was absorbed by History (in the general), and many of the aforementioned courses were removed. And in 1959 the only surviving course over the previous decade, Survey of Negro in American History, had vanished. This deficit would continue for nine years, ending in 1968 with the advent of Afro-American Studies through the Humanities Department.

Oscar A. Bouise succeeded Mr. Jackson in promoting black studies at Xavier. Like Jackson, Bouise was also a faculty member during the 1930’s. He taught English, wrote numerous articles on African-American history, wrote book reviews, and later became the coordinator of African-American Studies at Xavier in 1968. Under Jackson and Bouise, black studies courses at Xavier remained mostly elective, and, in both cases, most of the courses eventually were discontinued. It was not until the late 1980’s that African-American Studies became part of the general degree requirements at the University. By then, Xavier Archives had been founded, and the Library staff had stopped adding to the Jackson Collection. In 1989, the Archives staff, with the help of student workers, began the long process of photocopying the highly-acidic newsprint of most of the clippings to acid-free paper. In 1997, Research Archivist Eric Joseph completed the arrangement and produced this finding aid.
Scope and Content Note

The David J. Jackson Press Clipping Collection consists of acid-free photocopies of articles from various African-American newspapers compiled over five decades. They occupy all but the first folder in the collection. Folder 1 in Box 1 contains biographical data about Jackson, the originator of the collection. The folder consists of excerpts from his personnel file at Xavier, an interview with Phyllis J. Pope, his daughter, copy photographs of him donated by Ms. Pope, articles by him from *The Claverite*, the official publication of the Knights of Peter Claver. The entire interview with Ms. Pope is on audiocassette, with lengthy excerpts transcribed on paper. All the folders of the collection are set up by topics and all are alphabetized.
David J. Jackson, 1910 - 1984

Press Clipping Collection, 1932 - 1987

Container List

Box 1  Africa to Cartoons

1/1  Data about David J. Jackson
1/2  Africa, Colonization of
1/3  Africa, Liberia
1/4  Africa, Race Problems
1/5  Africa, Social Life
1/6  Africa, World War II
1/7  Africa, Other
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1/25  Cartoons, from “Interesting People” by George L. Lee
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