

A Guide to the
LOUISE DAVIS COLLECTION, 1939- 1955

Fisk University Archives

Processed by

Uzoma O. Miller, Archival Assistant

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Louise Davis Collection consists of two boxes, containing two series: **Correspondence**, and **Writings**. The **Correspondence** comprises three subseries: **Davis, Louise; Harwell, Coleman A.**; and **Myers, Anne**, and the **Writings** are divided into eight: **Clippings; Diary/Journal; Essays; Journalism; Manuscripts; Poetry; Spirituals;** and **Writings by Others**.

Series I: Correspondence

The **Correspondence** contains three subseries: **Davis, Louise; Harwell, Coleman, A.**, and **Myers, Anne**. Most of the Correspondence documents communication associated with Davis' efforts to publish her manuscript on the Jubilee Singers under the direction of Anne Myers. Communication with Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company, former Fisk president, Thomas Elsa Jones, vice-president, and editor of the Nashville Tennessean, Coleman Harwell, as well as between Mrs. Myers and Ms. Davis establishing thematic content are represented. Additionally, the series contains documents of the Department of State endorsed by Mrs. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. in support of the Jubilee Singers touring Europe and Africa, and from Puerto Rico raving in review as well.

Series II: Writings

The **Writings** are divided into eight subseries primarily from Louise Davis and Henrietta Myers: **Clippings; Diary/Journal; Essays; Journalism; Manuscripts; Poetry; Spirituals;** and **Writings by Others**. The **Clippings** hold copies of Davis' coverage of Jubilee Day 1946, a historical overview of the group's 75 year history, and promotion for an upcoming Latin American tour published in *The Nashville Tennessean Magazine*. Found in the **Diary/ Journal** subseries are pages of detailed daily routines with consistent mention of dynamics associated with taking care of her mother, and professional responsibilities and opportunities derived from free-lance writing. The week days are provided with no years. The **Essays** subseries has a copy of Myers' "The Negro Spiritual," and the **Journalism** subseries captures Davis' first-hand accounts of the Jubilee Singers' 1959 European tour through commissioned assignments from *The Nashville Tennessean*. London, Paris, and Rome are covered in extensive detail.

The most comprehensive subseries is **Manuscripts**, wherein Davis' unpublished book on the legacy of the Jubilee Singers under the guidance and direction of Henrietta (Mrs. James A.) Myers is contained. *Mission in Music* is the substantially edited and condensed form of the previous *Steal Away Jesus*. Corresponding text outlines and summaries are contained here also. The original *Steal Away Jesus* had thirty two chapters, and the revised *Mission in Music* ended up with thirteen. Despite extreme evidential value of the Jubilee Singers, and informational value regarding Fisk University's public relations in the 1940s and 1950s, the **Manuscripts** were never published. Two poems are found in the **Poetry** subseries, one unidentified to the author of "The Fire Regained," and the other an ode dedicated to Mrs. Myers by the Jubilee Singers in an unspecified year. The remaining two subseries are comprised of copies of several classic **Spirituals**, such as "Lord I Can't Turn Back," "Steal Away," and "Swing

Low," as well as **Writings by Others** on topics related to spirituals, the Jubilee Singers travels under Mrs. Myers, and graduate work in the respective fields.

BOX LIST

Box Folder

Series I: Correspondence

Subseries I: Davis, Louise

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Hartman, Joyce, 1947 |
| | 2 | Myers, Anne |
| | 3 | Richardson, Carolyn, 1948 |
- Subseries II: Harwell, Coleman A.**
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|--|---|------------------------|
| | 4 | Davis, Louise, 1959 |
| | 5 | Wallace, Richard, 1959 |
- Subseries III: Myers, Henrietta (Mrs. James A.)**
- | | | |
|--|----|--|
| | 6 | French, Mary Stewart, 1954 |
| | 7 | Gucite, Jose, 1946- 1947 |
| | 8 | Jones, Thomas Elsa, 1955 |
| | 9 | <i>Nashville Tennessean</i> , unidentified, 1947 |
| | 10 | Unidentified, 1959 |

Series II: Writings

Subseries I: Clippings

- | | | |
|--|----|--|
| | 11 | "Close to God, Singing," by Louise Davis, 1946 |
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- Subseries II: Diary/ Journal**

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|--|----|------|
| | 12 | n.d. |
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Subseries III: Essays

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| | 13 | "The Negro Spiritual," by Henrietta Myers (Mrs. James A.) |
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Subseries IV: Journalism --- 1959 *Nashville Tennessean* European Tour Reporting Stories

- | | | |
|--|----|--|
| | 14 | Itinerary/ Schedule of Stories, May 22 |
| | 15 | May 26 |
| | 16 | June 1 |

17 June 2
18 June 4
19 June 12
20 June 16
21 June 18
22 June 22

23 June 26
24 June 29
25 July 6

Subseries: V: Manuscripts (Unpublished)

26 *Mission in Music*, Table of Contents
27 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 1, "Musical Ambassadors"
28 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 2, "Beginning Her Work"
29 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 3, "James A. Myers"
30 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 4, "First Trip to Europe"
31 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 5, "20th Century Singers Return to Europe"
32 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 6, "The Critics Listen"
33 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 7, "Friends Abroad"
34 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 8, "Invited Back"
35 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 9, "Command Performance"
36 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 10, "A Hole in the Stocking Toe"
37 *Mission in Music*, Chapter 11, "Mr. Myers Sings for Last Time"
38 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter Summaries
39 *Steal Away Jesus*, Synopsis
40 *Steal Away Jesus*, Theme Development
41 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 1, "Mrs. Myers Steals Away"
42 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 2, "She Remembers White's Struggle"
43 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 3, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"
44 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 4, "Steal Away"
45 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 5, "They Sing Spiritual in Public for First Time"
46 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 6, "Concert Tour is Only Hope"
47 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 7, "They Give Their First Concert"
48 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 8, "They Get A Name"
49 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 9, "Their First Big Chance at Oberlin"
50 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 10, "New York Bound"
51 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 11, "Victory in New York"
52 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 12, "Home Again With Money in Their Pockets"
53 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 13, "Tour of Europe Grows Out of Second Tour Here"
54 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 14, "A Permanent Home for University, & Second Tour of Europe"
55 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 15, "The Years Between"
56 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 16, "Mrs. Myers Joins the Jubilee Singers"
57 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 17, "She Got the Answer"
58 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 18, "Second Generation Returns to Europe"

- 59 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 19, "The Critics Listen"
- 60 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 20, "Friends Abroad"
- 61 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 21, "Invited Back to Europe"
- 62 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 22, "Command Performance"
- 63 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 23, "A Hole in the Stocking Toe, and Other Adventures"
- 64 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 24, "Mr. Myers Sings for Last Time"
- 65 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 25, "Mrs. Myers Directs Jubilee Singers"
- 66 *Steal Away Jesus*, Chapter 26, "Magnolia Blossoms"
- 67 *Steal Away Jesus*, Miscellaneous Chapter Drafts
- 68 *Steal Away Jesus*, Miscellaneous Chapter Drafts

Subseries VI: Poetry

- 69 "To Sidney M. Hirsch," unidentified
- 70 "To the Jewel of Jewels, Mrs. Myers," by Fisk Jubilee Singers, n.d.

Subseries VII: Spirituals

- 2
 - 1 "Here de Angels Singin," New Born Again," "Keep Inching More," "You Goin to Reap Just What You Sow," "Lord I Can't Turn Back"
 - 2 Steal Away," "Swing Low," I'm A Rolling"

Subseries VIII: Writings by Others

- 3 "Our First Trip to Europe," by Carl Barbour, n.d.
- 4 "A Section of the Graduate Thesis," by William Collier, n.d.
- 5 "Philosophy, Experience, and the Present," by Bryant S. Cooper, 1946
- 6 "Spirituals," by Gordon Hempstead, 1939
- 7 "The Power of the Spiritual," by Esther B. Jones, n.d.
- 8 Miscellaneous Extracts from Various Sources