

A Guide to the  
JOHN B. NAIL COLLECTION, 1888- 1928  
Fisk University Archives

Processed by Uzoma Miller, Archival Assistant  
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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

As the first fully paid Life Member of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1928, John B. Nail was a businessman who, along with his brother, established the Nail Brother's Saloon, Restaurant, and Pool & Billiard Parlor in Harlem New York in 1881. As a pioneer African-American proprietor, Nail expanded his exploits to include real estate in Harlem in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nail became active in advocating the protection of civil and human rights of African-Americans through organizational ties with the N.A.A.C.P., The Society for the Ethical Culture of New York, and the Pan- African Congress.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The John B. Nail Collection contains one box, and consists of three series. This collection documents **Correspondence, Memorabilia and a Press Release** regarding activity with civic, civil rights and educational groups, or institutions such as the N.A.A.C.P., The Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls, The Fourth Pan-African Congress and The Society for the Ethical Culture of New York. The John B. Nail Collection is valuable to researchers who are interested in N.A.A.C.P. work and Nail's correspondence with Mary White Ovington, Aurthur Spingarn, Robert Bagnall and James Weldon Johnson, professional colleagues, personal friends, and, in the case of Johnson, his son-in-law. In addition, correspondence with Mary McLeod Bethune appears as well.

### **Series I: Correspondence**

The **Correspondence** series consist of two subseries: **Personal** and **Professional**. The **Personal Correspondence** consists mostly of letters written from Nail's children, Jack and Grace, and personal friends such as Mary McLeod Bethune. The various organizational and institutional leaders identified above are represented in the **Professional Correspondence**. The majority of the **Personal Correspondence** reflects holiday and birthday greetings while the **Professional Correspondence** typically covers expressed gratitude for Nail's contribution towards a particular cause or endeavor.

### **Series II: Memorabilia**

The **Memorabilia** series encompasses nine subseries: **Business Cards; Bereavement Greeting Cards; Best Dad in the World Greeting Cards; Birthday Greeting Cards; Christmas Greeting Cards; City Key; Lyrics; Programs; and Ribbons**. This series contains greeting cards, the key to Atlantic City, lyrics from James Weldon and Rosamond Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and a copy of a program of Packard Business College's 1888 graduation exercises.

### **Series III: Press Release**

The **Press Release** series contains an official N.A.A.C.P. announcement in 1924 whereby Nail's wife is memorialized.

## BOX LIST

Box    Folder

### Series I: Correspondence

#### Subseries I: Personal Correspondence

1	1	Gardner, Grace, 1927, n.d.
	2	Nail, John E., 1923, 1924, 1928
	3	Ovington, Mary White, n.d.
	4	Unidentified, 1926

#### Subseries II: Professional Correspondence

	5	Bagnall, Robert W., 1928
	6	Balch, Mary, 1915, 1916
	7	Bethune, Mary McLeod, 1915
	8	Darrow, Clarence, 1928
	9	Johnson, James Weldon, 1928
	10	Martin, Alfred W., 1915
	11	Moton, Robert R., 1916
	12	Ovington, Mary White, 1928
	13	Pan- African Congress Executive Committee, 1927
	14	Scott, Emmett, 1915
	15	Spingarn, Aurthur B., 1928

### Series II: Memorabilia

#### Subseries I: Business Cards

	16	Nail Brother's Saloon, Restaurant, Pool & Billiard Parlor, n.d.
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#### Subseries II: Greeting Cards, Bereavement

	17	Washington, Mrs. Booker T., 1915
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#### Subseries III: Greeting Cards, Best Dad in the World

	18	Unidentified, n.d.
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#### Subseries IV: Greeting Cards, Birthday

	19	Children, Grandchildren, 1923, 1924, n.d.
	20	Morgck, Brenda Ray, n.d.
	21	Unidentified, n.d.

#### Subseries V: Greeting Cards, Christmas

- 22 Allison, Anne, n.d.
- 23 Bethune, Mary McLeod, n.d.
- 24 Boutte, Etnah & Mathieu, n.d.
- 25 McMann, Charlotte E., n.d.
- 26 Morgck, Brenda Ray, n.d.
- 27 Nail, Grace & Jack, 1914, 1923, 1925, 1927
- 28 Thompson, Jack, 1914
- 29 Unidentified, 1925
- 30 Unidentified, n.d.

**Subseries VI: City Key**

- 31 Atlantic City Key, n.d.

**Subseries VII: Lyrics**

- 32 "Lift Every Voice and Sing," James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, n.d.

**Subseries VIII: Programs**

- 33 Packard Business College Graduation, 1888

**Subseries IX: Ribbons**

- 34 Mayor's Committee of Welcome to Homecoming Troops, n.d.

**Series III: Press Release**

- 35 "Maintains Membership in N.A.A.C.P. in Memory of Wife Who is Dead," 1924