Guide to the Gladys Jordan Papers

Sean Dickerson
African American Museum & Library at Oakland
659 14th Street
Oakland, California 94612
Phone: (510) 637-0198
Fax: (510) 637-0204
Email: aamlo@oaklandlibrary.org
URL: http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/locations/african-american-museum-library-oakland
© 2013
African American Museum & Library at Oakland. All rights reserved.
Guide to the Gladys Jordan Papers

Collection number: MS 104

African American Museum & Library at Oakland
Oakland, California

Processed by:
Sean Dickerson
Date Completed:
February 10, 2017
Encoded by:
Sean Dickerson

© 2013 African American Museum & Library at Oakland. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: Gladys Jordan papers
Collection number: MS 104
Creator: Jordan, Gladys M.
Collection Size: .25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository: African American Museum & Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.)
Oakland, CA 94612
Abstract: Gladys Meriwether Jordan, pioneer educator and first African American woman to teach at the Emeryville High School, was born November 16, 1910 in Boynton, Oklahoma. The Gladys Jordan papers include teaching notes, lesson plans, school study aids, bibliographies, class handouts, brochures, attendance bulletins, and ephemera related to Jordan's work providing African American history content for primary and secondary education.

Physical location: African American Museum & Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.) Oakland, CA 94612
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
No access restrictions. Collection is open to the public.

Access Restrictions
Materials are for use in-library only, non-circulating.

Publication Rights
Permission to publish from the Gladys Jordan Papers must be obtained from the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

Preferred Citation
Gladys Jordan Papers, MS 104, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library. Oakland, California.

Biography / Administrative History
Gladys Meriwether Jordan, pioneer educator and first African American woman to teach at the Emeryville High School, was born November 16, 1910 in Boynton, Oklahoma. Her father A.L.J. Meriwether was a lawyer and surveyor. Jordan's mother, Susie Brown Meriwether, part Muscogee and a native of Oklahoma, was a teacher and land owner due to the federal recognition of the Muscogee Creek Nation. The family lost much of their money during the Depression while Jordan was studying at Spelman College in Atlanta. She returned to Oklahoma and received a teaching credential to support her family. Jordan finished her studies at Langston University in Oklahoma, then the only college in Oklahoma that admitted African American students, receiving her degree in 1941.

Jordan and her fiancé moved to Oakland, California, when he was drafted and stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco in 1942. The couple was married on February 7, 1943, before he was deployed overseas. From 1942 to 1948 Jordan worked as a time keeper at the Oakland Naval Supply Depot. In 1940 she was hired to teach at Tompkins Elementary School, a faculty integrated school in West Oakland. At the time there were only sixty African American teachers in the Oakland Unified School District and few teaching or library materials on African American culture to provide students. Jordan, together with Jesse and Marcella Ford, and Ruth and Eugene Lasartemay (founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society), began

Guide to the Gladys Jordan Papers

Gladys Jordan Papers

MS 104

2
compiling clippings, bibliographies and other materials pertaining to African Americas for teachers to use. Jordan earned her master’s degree in education from UC Berkeley and worked as a teacher at Tompkins Elementary School in West Oakland, beginning in 1958, and later at Santa Fe Elementary in North Oakland. She was in constant search for African American history content for primary and secondary education and developed classes on Social and Negro History for Contra Costa College. At Emeryville High School she was the first African American woman to teach, and worked there from 1966 until her retirement in 1975. She was awarded “Teacher of the Year” in 1974. Students of her Emeryville High School Negro History class would go on to join the Black Panther Party.

Jordan was also active as a trustee on the board of the African American Museum and Library at Oakland, and participated in the Alameda-Contra Costa chapter of The Links, Inc., an international black women's cultural and educational charity organization; as president of the Alpha Kappa Alpha, the country's oldest black sorority, and as chapter president of the Alpha Nu Omega chapter from 1955-1957; and with the California Council of Negro Women. In 2009, Jordan was awarded the Regional Award of the Women of Greatness Awards during the Ronald V. Dellums First Annual Model City Summit on Women.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Gladys Jordan papers include teaching notes, lesson plans, school study aids, bibliographies, class handouts, brochures, attendance bulletins, and ephemera related to Jordan's teaching career. The papers also include Jordan's notes on the 1966 California Reading Association of the International Reading Association conference. The papers are organized in three series: I. Teaching handouts and notes II. Student letters III. Assorted teaching materials. The bulk of the teaching handouts and notes series includes Jordan's complete lesson plans and class handouts for the Social and Negro History course she taught at Contra Costa College.

Arrangement
Series I. Teaching handouts and notes Series II. Student letters Series III. Assorted teaching materials

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
African American children--Education--History--20th century.
African American women teachers.
Education, Primary--California--Oakland.
Multicultural education--California--Oakland.
Youth--Education--California--Oakland.

Teaching handouts and notes
Physical Description: 5 folders
Series Scope and Content Summary
Includes teaching notes, lesson plans, bibliographies and handouts; material related to the Social and Negro History course taught at Contra Costa College; and Jordan's notes on the 1966 California Reading Association of the International Reading Association conference.
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by function.

Bibliographies 1963-1968

Box 1:1 Bibliography "Cultural diversity" compiled in the office of the Interagency School Project 1963-06-11
Box 1:1 Bibliography "The American Negro" Berkeley Public library 1964-02
Box 1:1 Bibliography "Books in the McClymonds Library by and about negroes," McClymonds High School 1968-03-04
Box 1:1 Bibliography of books by and about the American Negro, James Madison Jr. High School Community Discussion Groups [two copies] circa 1960s
California Reading Association conference 1966

Box 1:2
Notes on reading conference by Gladys Meriwether Jordan California Reading Association of the International Reading Association 1966-10-28

Contra Costa materials circa 1960s

Box 1:3
The beginning of the peculiar institution of slavery in America during the colonial period circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Biographical reports of outstanding (but little known) Negroes [eleven copies] circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Black history circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Black history outline circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Divisions circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Introduction of the plan for the future circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Genetic race differences pamphlet circa 1960s
Box 1:3
List of Negro history reference books circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Major Topics for discussion circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Map (Africa) circa 1960s
Box 1:3
My objectives [two copies] circa 1960s
Box 1:3
The Negro in the United States the origin of a myth circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Objectives circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Origin of slavery - African background circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Purpose of the social and Negro history class circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Reconstruction and the Nation circa 1960s
Box 1:3
United States and Negro history desk copy circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Newspaper clipping "The profession and the media" circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Assorted notes circa 1960s
Box 1:3
Assorted notes circa 1960s

Teaching handouts circa 1960s

Box 1:4
Social and Negro history circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Black history alphabet of slavery [two copies] circa 1960s
Box 1:4
The origin and progress of Negro spirituals circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Notes taken from Echoes of African in Folk Songs of the Americas circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Music influenced by African music circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Your unit on African and Negro history circa 1960s
Box 1:4
African civilization before Columbus circa 1960s
Box 1:4
An instructional strategy and teaching ideas for a unit on the Negro in U.S. history circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Death of a dropout circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Guidelines for covering civil disturbances circa 1960s
Box 1:4
Negro history department circa 1960s

Teaching notes circa 1960s

Box 1:5
Black curriculum: Some factors circa 1960s
Box 1:5
Education system ghetto schools circa 1960s
Box 1:5
"If we must die" circa 1960s
Box 1:5
Referred to "Algiers incident" circa 1960s
Box 1:5
Students for a Democratic Society notes circa 1960s
Box 1:5
Assorted notes circa 1960s
Box 1:5
Assorted notes circa 1960s
Box 1:5
Assorted notes circa 1960s
Student letters

Physical Description: 2 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary
Includes a letter of correspondence and student thank you letters from Jordan's classes at Santa Fe Elementary and Emery High School.

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.

Letters from parents 1960

Box 1:6
Letter to Gladys Jordan from Helen Parker re: Elite Ladies Club ball 1960-04-09

Student thank you letters 1965-1967

Box 1:7
Santa Fe Elementary 1965-02-08
Box 1:7
Santa Fe Elementary 1965-03-30
Box 1:7
Santa Fe Elementary 1966-01-07
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Emery High School 1967-07-20
Box 1:7
Student letter 1967-07-31
Box 1:7
Student letter circa 1960s
Assorted materials

Physical Description: 1 folder

Series Scope and Content Summary
Includes notes on quotations, brochures, attendance bulletins, and ephemera related to Jordan's activities as an educator.

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.

Box 1:8
Attendance bulletin, Emery High School 1967-006-08
Box 1:8
Christmas Pageant "The Star in the East" at Longfellow School auditorium invitation 1960-12-18
Box 1:8
References on counseling minority youth: A four part series prepared by the Division of Instruction 1964-06
Box 1:8
Kahlil Gibran's (speaking about children) 1964-06
Box 1:8
"Education by capsule and hypodermic" circa 1960s
Box 1:8
Human relations in the intermediate grades brochure circa 1960s
Box 1:8
"If we must die" circa 1960s
Box 1:8
An open letter to a discouraged youngster circa 1960s