

Nelson W. Jordan Family Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms017008>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2017
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Collection Summary

Title: Nelson W. Jordan Family Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1864-2003

Bulk Dates: 1881-1949

ID No.: MSS86086

Creator: Jordan, Nelson W., 1842-1922

Extent: 1,100 items

Extent: 15 containers plus 15 oversize

Extent: 9.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2016086086>

Summary: Freedman, soldier, and clergyman. Photographs, correspondence, personal and family Bibles, family trees and other genealogical information, scrapbooks, diaries, speeches and writings, sermons, notebooks, school work, school publications, diplomas, posters, printed matter, and personal objects documenting Jordan family members and in-laws in Virginia and New Jersey in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Johns, Vernon, 1892-1965.

Jordan family.

Jordan, Carrie, 1862-1945.

Jordan, D. Mozella, 1882-1971.

Jordan, Julia D., 1881-1942.

Jordan, Nelson R., 1889-1958.

Jordan, Nelson W., 1842-1922.

Jordan, Walker Harrison, 1890-1951.

Price, Peter W., 1876-1944.

Turner, Ruth, 1920-1991.

Womack, G. H. (General Henry), 1873-1911.

Organizations

Saint Paul's College (Lawrenceville, Va.)--Students.

United States. Army. Field Artillery, 351st.

Subjects

African American families--New Jersey.

African American families--Virginia.

African Americans--Education.

African Americans--Genealogy.

African Americans--New Jersey.

African Americans--Segregation.

African Americans--Virginia.

Baptists--Virginia.

Education--Virginia--Prince Edward County.

Education--Virginia.

High school students--New Jersey--Jersey City.

Nightlife--New Jersey.

Nightlife--New York (State)

Segregation in education--Virginia.

World War, 1914-1918--France.
World War, 1914-1918--Participation, African American.
World War, 1914-1918--United States.

Places

New Jersey--Genealogy.
New Jersey--Social life and customs.
New York (State)--Social life and customs.
Virginia--Genealogy.
Virginia--Social life and customs.

Titles

Jordan family papers

Occupations

Clergy.
Freedmen.
Soldiers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of the Nelson W. Jordan family were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2016. Elizabeth Carroll Vannoy donated more material in 2017.

Processing History

The papers of the Nelson W. Jordan family were arranged and described by Joseph K. Brooks in 2017. The finding aid was revised by Matthew Darby in 2023 to clarify description and incorporate oversize items from the original purchase.

Transfers

Four tintypes have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Nelson W. Jordan Family Papers. Patrons are encouraged to contact the Prints and Photographs Division in advance of a research visit.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Nelson W. Jordan family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Nelson W. Jordan Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Nelson W. Jordan (1842-1922) was born with slave status in Albermarle County, Virginia. In 1863 he enlisted with the 1st Alabama (African Descent) Regiment in Corinth, Mississippi. Shortly after his enlistment, this unit was reorganized into the 55th Regiment, United States Colored Troops. Jordan campaigned with the 55th in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. After Civil War military service, Jordan became a Baptist minister, settled in Farmville, Virginia, the county

seat of Prince Edward County, and served four rural congregations in that county as pastor for approximately sixty years. In 1879 he married Carrie Walker (1862-1945), daughter of William Walker and Julia Spencer Walker. Carrie Jordan was active in church and denominational organizations, such as the Women's Baptist State Educational Conference. She bore ten children, nine of whom lived to adulthood to become ministers, teachers, principals, school system administrators, soldiers, a musician, an author, and a domestic labor contractor.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Nelson W. Jordan family span the years circa 1864-2003, with the bulk of the material focused on the period 1881-1949. The papers include photographs, correspondence, family and personal Bibles, vital records, diplomas, posters, books, genealogical material, and printed matter. The largest grouping in the papers is the family members file, which documents clergyman Nelson W. Jordan and his wife Carrie Jordan, their ten children (born 1881-1900), and four of their grandchildren. Nelson W. Jordan served with the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War. Carrie Jordan was an active Baptist churchwoman.

The first- and secondborn of Nelson's daughters, Julia D. Jordan (1881-1942) and D. Mozella Jordan (1882-1971) were both teachers in Prince Edward County, Virginia. Both of them taught Vernon Johns, later a pastor, scholar, and pioneering civil rights activist. Johns's correspondence with his former teacher Julia Jordan during her last illness in 1942 is part of the papers. She married G. H. (General Henry) Womack (1873-1911) in 1908. He was a domestic servant and professional lecturer on such topics as "intemperance" and "businessmen of the race," and he is well-documented in correspondence with Julia and others, and in miscellany, speeches, and writings. D. Mozella Jordan married Peter W. Price, a clergyman, and went on to become a longtime supervisor of schools in Appomattox County, Virginia, a tenure that included the desegregation of African American and white schools. With her husband she started Camp Winonah, a summer camp for children in Appomattox County.

Two of Nelson W. Jordan's sons, Nelson R. Jordan (1889-1958) and Walker Harrison Jordan (1890-1951), served with the 351st Field Artillery Regiment, 92nd Division in France during World War I. Walker wrote about the regiment's war service in his book *With Old Eph in the Army*, published in 1919. Nelson R. Jordan was a musician during his military service and in civilian life pastor of three Baptist churches in central Virginia, including fifteen years at First Baptist Church in Bedford where he organized a youth orchestra. Walker was a regimental clerk and in civilian life contracted domestic staff for resorts and wealthy clients' summer homes.

The elder Nelson's youngest child, Elizabeth Hayes Jordan (1900-1988) taught high school in Lynchburg, Virginia, for many years. She was known in the Jordan family for her creatively compiled photo albums. Numerous photographs, professionally produced images and snapshots spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are a prominent feature of the family members file. Additional images in the photographs file cover the same time span.

Nelson W. and Carrie's most documented grandchild in these papers is Ruth Turner (1920-1991), daughter of Anna Viola Jordan (1886-1949), who moved from Virginia to her husband's hometown, Jersey City, New Jersey. Turner, a government worker and telephone company supervisor, created files documenting high school in Jersey City and student life at Saint Paul's College, Lawrenceville, Virginia, during the 1930s. She also compiled a scrapbook with life at Saint Paul's College and nightlife in New York and New Jersey as the major themes.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material or subject. The family members file is arranged in a parent-child-grandchild generational order, under which Nelson's children are grouped and arranged in birth order, and grandchildren are grouped and ordered alphabetically.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Books, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Books, undated (2 folders)
BOX 3	Family members
BOX 3	Jordan, Nelson W. (1842-1922), and Carrie Jordan (1862-1945), parents
BOX OV 10	Bowler hat, John B. Stetson Co., circa 1900
BOX OV 9	Family Bible, 1883-2002
BOX 3	Miscellany, circa 1864-1935
BOX 3	Photographs
BOX 3	Jordan, Carrie, undated
BOX OV 1	Jordan, Carrie, undated
BOX OV 15	Jordan, Carrie, undated
BOX 3	Jordan, Nelson W., undated
BOX OV 2	Jordan, Nelson W., undated
BOX 3	Walker, Julia Spencer (mother of Carrie), undated
BOX 3	Children
BOX 3	Jordan, Julia D. (1881-1942) (married G. H. Womack)
BOX 3	Bible, undated
BOX 3	Correspondence
BOX 3	Womack, G. H. (husband) <i>See also Container 7, same heading</i>
BOX 3	Letters
BOX 3	1906-1907 (4 folders)
BOX 4	1908 (8 folders)
BOX 5	1909-1910 (2 folders)
BOX 5	Postcards, 1906-1910, undated (2 folders)
BOX 5	Others 1912-1915
BOX 5	Letters, 1906-1915, 1942 (2 folders)
BOX 6	Postcards, 1907-1913, undated (3 folders)
BOX 6	Johns, Vernon, 1906, 1953
BOX OV 3	"Jubilee Chart, Officers of the Women's Baptist State Educational Convention of Virginia," 1917
BOX 6	Marriage and death, 1908, 1942
BOX 6	Miscellany, undated
BOX 6	Photographs, undated
BOX OV 3	Photographs, undated

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 6	Postcards, undated
BOX 6	Womack, G. H. (husband) (1873-1911) <i>See also Container 4, same heading</i>
BOX 6	Correspondence
BOX 6	Letters, 1909-1911
BOX 6	Postcards, 1909-1910
BOX 6	Miscellany, 1897-1911
BOX 6	Speeches and writings, undated
BOX 7	Jordan, D. Mozella (1882-1971) (married P. W. Price)
BOX 7	Bible, undated
BOX 7	Camp Winonah, Appomattox, Va., undated
BOX 7	Carver-Price High School, Appomattox, Va. 1934-1952, 1962, 2003
BOX 7	Class notebooks, 1930
BOX 7	Correspondence, 1929-1971
BOX 7	Death and funeral, 1971
BOX 7	Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va., 1968
BOX 7	Newspaper clippings, undated
BOX OV 3	Panoramic photograph, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Ala., 1930
BOX 7	Photographs, undated
BOX 8	Price, P. W. (husband), 1903-1927
BOX 8	Hasadiah Baptist Association, 1947
BOX 8	Jordan, Anna Viola (1886-1949) (married Otis Turner)
BOX 8	Correspondence with
BOX 8	Turner, Ruth Carolyn (daughter), 1943-1946 (2 folders)
BOX 8	Others
BOX 8	Get-well cards, 1937-1938
BOX 8	Letters, 1918-1937
BOX 8	Post and greeting cards, 1907-1908
BOX 8	Marriage and death records, 1918, 1949
BOX 8	Miscellany, undated
BOX 8	Notebook, 1916-1917
BOX OV 3	Photograph, color portrait of Anna Viola Jordan, undated
BOX 8	Photographs, undated
BOX 9	Turner, Sebastian D. (father-in-law), 1917-1918, 1927, 1931
BOX 9	Jordan, Nelson R. (1889-1958) and family
BOX 9	Bible, undated
BOX OV 3	Diploma, Howard University School of Religion, 1925
BOX 9	Miscellany, 1925-1999
BOX 9	Photographs, undated
BOX OV 4	Howard University, military training, panorama, 1918
BOX OV 5	Portrait with violin, undated
BOX OV 5	Youth orchestra, Bedford, Va., undated
BOX 9	Jordan, Walker Harrison (1890-1951)
BOX 9	Book, <i>With Old Eph in the Army</i> , Baltimore: H. E. Houk and Company, 1919
BOX OV 5	Diploma, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, 1908
BOX OV 11	German military helmet, World War I, circa 1915

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 9	Miscellany, 1908-1951
BOX 9	Jordan, Arthur E. (1893-1959), and family, 1925-2015
BOX 9	Jordan, Elsie Mae (1894-1990) (married Frank Carroll), undated
BOX OV 5	Diploma, Virginia Normal and Technical Institute, Petersburg, Va., 1913
BOX 9	Miscellany, undated
BOX 9	Jordan, Joseph D. (1896-1929), 1920-1929
BOX 9	Jordan, Elizabeth Hayes (1900-1988)
BOX 9	Correspondence, 1940-1941
BOX OV 5	Diploma, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 1928
BOX 9	Miscellany, 1926-1980
BOX 9	Notebooks, diaries, and calendars
BOX 9	1918
BOX 10	1929-1982
BOX 10	Photographs
BOX 10	Albums, 1915
BOX 10	Miscellaneous, 1911-1988
BOX 10	Printed matter
BOX 10	Articles about Elizabeth Hayes Jordan, 1984-1989
BOX 10	Miscellaneous, 1922-1984
BOX 10	Plays, undated
BOX 11	Grandchildren
BOX 11	Carroll, Caroline Lorraine, Frank, and Sally (children of Elsie Mae Jordan), undated
BOX 11	Carroll, Elizabeth Josephine (Vannoy) (daughter of Elsie Mae Jordan), documents regarding 311 Franklin Street, Farmville, Va., 1989, 2003
BOX 11	Carroll, Rodman (son of Elsie Mae Jordan), World War II scrapbook, undated
BOX 11	Turner, Ruth (daughter of Anna Viola Jordan)
BOX 11	Correspondence
BOX 11	Greeting cards, 1920, 1937-1941, undated (4 folders)
BOX 11	Letters, 1937-1941, 1952
BOX 12	Death and funeral, 1991
BOX 12	Five-year diary, 1936-1940
BOX 12	Henry Snyder High School, Jersey City, N.J.
BOX 12	Miscellany, 1933-1938 (2 folders)
BOX 12	<i>The Scroll</i> , yearbook, 1938
BOX 12	<i>Snyder Life</i> , newspaper, 1936
BOX 12	Micheaux, Oscar, <i>The Wind from Nowhere</i> . New York, N.Y.: Book Supply Company, inscribed novel, 1943
BOX 13	Miscellany, 1936-1944, 1962
BOX 13	Photographs, undated (3 folders)
BOX 13	Printed matter, undated
BOX 13	Scrapbook, 1938-1939 (2 folders)
BOX 14	Scrapbook, 1938-1939 (2 folders)

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 14	Saint Paul's College, Lawrenceville, Va.
BOX 14	Correspondence, circa 1938 (3 folders)
BOX 14	Miscellany, 1939
BOX OV 6	Family tree, undated
BOX 14	Lists and miscellaneous material, undated
BOX 15	Miscellany, undated
BOX OV 7	Cannon, George E., obituary poster, 1927
BOX OV 16	General, undated
BOX OV 12	Tablecloth, undated
BOX OV 13	Woman's hat, undated
BOX OV 14	Woman's hat, undated
BOX 15	Photographs
BOX 15	Album, undated (3 folders)
BOX 15	Other photographs
BOX 15	Five Jordan daughters, undated
BOX 15	Miscellaneous, undated
BOX 15	Teachers and students, rural school, undated
BOX 15	Unidentified women and girls, group portrait, undated
BOX 15	Printed matter, 1918-1919, 1946-1948
BOX 15	Virginia Baptist State conventions, 1899, 1927
BOX OV 8	Virginia Seminary, Lynchburg, Va., fundraising poster, 1941