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Guide to the American 1919 Race Riots Collection

JWJ MSS 126



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2024 April

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: JWJ MSS 126

TITLE: American 1919 race riots collection

DATES: 1919–1922

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: Correspondence, printed material, and reports documenting the response of African American activists to the race riots of the summer of 1919, including efforts to aid victims and defend arrestees in Chicago, Knoxville, and Elaine, Arkansas. Material relating to the Chicago branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is particularly well represented. Prominent correspondents include James Weldon Johnson, John Shillady, Walter White, and the Citizens Defense Fund Commission, led by attorney Scipio A. Jones. The collection also includes press releases and reports from of the National Conference on Lynching and the Provident Hospital, documentation of the criminal proceedings against riot participants, and clippings reporting events surrounding the riots.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.american1919>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.american1919>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from William Reese Co. (Swann African Americana sale, New York, 2012 March 1, lot 271), on the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters Fund and the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2012.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research

Preferred Citation

American 1919 Race Riots Collection. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Biographical / Historical

In the summer of 1919, termed "Red Summer" by activist James Weldon Johnson, racially motivated lynchings and riots broke out in over three dozen American cities. High numbers of fatalities occurred in Chicago, Knoxville, and Elaine, Arkansas.

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, printed material, and reports documenting the response of African American activists to the race riots of the summer of 1919, including efforts to aid victims and defend arrestees in Chicago, Knoxville, and Elaine, Arkansas. Material relating to the Chicago branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is particularly well represented. Prominent correspondents include James Weldon Johnson, John Shillady, Walter White, and the Citizens Defense Fund Commission, led by attorney Scipio A. Jones. The collection also includes press releases and reports from of the National Conference on Lynching and the Provident Hospital, documentation of the criminal proceedings against riot participants, and clippings reporting events surrounding the riots.

Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	National Conference on Lynching	1919
b. 1, f. 2	Handbill	
b. 1, f. 3	Chicago. Office of the Coroner	1919
b. 1, f. 4	Shillady, John	1919-1920
b. 1, f. 5	Provident Hospital	1919
b. 1, f. 6	Supreme Court	1922
b. 1, f. 7	NAACP	1919-1920
b. 1, f. 8	Clippings, Knoxville	1919-1920
	Clippings and correspondence	
	Folder 9 reported missing March 2024. Contents were partially digitized and are available in the digital library.	
b. 1, f. 10	Clippings	1919
b. 1, f. 11	Joint Committee to Secure Equal Justice...	1919
b. 1, f. 12	Johnson, James Weldon	1919
b. 1, f. 13	Connor, J.M.	1920
b. 1, f. 14	Springarn, Arthur Bratton, U.S.	1920
b. 1, f. 15	Hill Extradition	1920
b. 1, f. 16	Arkansas	1919-1920
b. 1, f. 17	Chicago	1919-1920
b. 1, f. 18	Bratton, U.S.	1920
b. 1, f. 19	Jones, Scipio A.	1920
b. 1, f. 20	Crisis	