

10-1-2015

## EGYPT, OPHELIA

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### Recommended Citation

Staff, MSRC, "EGYPT, OPHELIA" (2015). *Manuscript Division*. Paper 70.  
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OPHELIA EGYPT PAPERS

Collection 140-1 to 140-20

Prepared by  
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October 1986

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

## Scope Note

The papers of Ophelia Settle Egypt (1903-1984), sociologist, social worker, educator and writer, reflect the varied vocations and interests of a multifaceted Black woman. The initial deposit of papers was made by Mrs. Egypt in 1977, the balance being deposited after her death in 1984. The collection totals approximately 11 linear feet and span a period from the early 1930s to the 1930s.

A pioneer in family planning at a time when the words "birth control" were taboo in the black community, Ophelia Egypt promoted the concept of family planning among her clients at the Parklands Neighborhood Clinic in Southeast Washington, D.C., which she established in 1956. Prior to that, she had assisted in the development of Howard University's School of Social Work, where she was on the faculty for ten years. From Probation Officer in the D.C. Juvenile Court to Director of the Ionia R. Whipper Home (for unwed mothers), she moved easily into family planning work, for which she is most remembered.

It was during the 1930's at Fisk University, where Ophelia Egypt helped Dr. Charles S. Johnson organize the fledgling Social Science Department, that her literary career was launched. The interviews with 100 former slaves in West Tennessee which she conducted as Dr. Johnson's research assistant, established this project as one of the earliest uses of oral history documentation in the United States. The interviews became the basis for two manuscripts. One entitled *Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Accounts of Negro El-Slaves* was published by Fisk University in

1968. The other, *Raggedy Thorns*, remains unpublished in spite of attempts over many years to get it published. As the oldest founding member of the D.C. Black Writers' Workshop, at the age of 71, Mrs. Egypt also wrote a children's biography of James Weldon Johnson, published by Crowell in 1974.

Her writings and correspondence comprise the bulk of the collection. The correspondence is primarily from family members. There is also a smaller collection of letters from life-long friends and colleagues, such as Langston Hughes, poet; Barrington Dunbar, Quaker activist; Ruth Lewis Hall, artist and confidant; and Glenn Carrington, bibliophile. The correspondence also contains letters regarding the publication of her works. Notable among her writings in the collection are the published articles; the book *Unwritten History of Slavery*; an unpublished manuscript of 10 chapters entitled, "Walk Through the Valley", based on her own childhood; and the many drafts and versions, though not the final draft, of her unpublished manuscript, *Raggedy Thorns*. The documentation of her organizational affiliations consists of small assortments of correspondence and printed materials related primarily to family planning organizations. Mrs. Egypt was interviewed in 1981-82 by Dr. Elinor Sinnette, the head of the Oral History Department of Moorland- Spingarn. The transcript of that interview, entitled "Transcript of an Oral Memoir of Mrs. Ophelia Settle Egypt", and the Ophelia Egypt Papers were formally installed in the MSRC Manuscript Division in a special program on February 20, 1985. The transcript is available for research in the MSRC Oral History Department.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ophelia Settle Egypt

- 1903 Feb. 20      Born near Clarksville, Texas to Green Wilson and Sarah Settle.
- 1921              Graduated high school in Denver, Colorado.
- 1925              Received A.B. degree, Howard University.
- 1925-26          Teacher, Orange County Training School, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
- 1928              Received M.A. in Sociology, University of Pennsylvania.
- 1928-33          Instructor and Research Assistant, Social Science Department, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee.
- 1933-35          Caseworker, Provident Association, St. Louis, Missouri.
- 1935-39          Director, Medical Social Work, Flint Goodridge Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 1939-48          Instructor and field Work Supervisor, School of Social Work, Howard University.
- 1940              Married Ivory Lester Egypt. Born of this union a son, Lester, in 1942.
- 1944              Received M.S. degree, New York School of Social Work.
- 1948-51          Assistant Professor and Field Work Supervisor, School of Social Work, Howard University (on leave 1949-51, part of which time she worked with D.C. Juvenile Court).
- 1950              Received advanced certificate (toward Ph.D.), Pennsylvania School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania.
- 1950-52          Probation Officer, D.C. Juvenile Court.
- 1952-54          Executive Director, Ionia R. Whipper Home (for unwed mothers), Washington, D.C.

- 1956                      Established Parklands Planned Parenthood Clinic in Southeast, Washington, D.C.
- 1957-68                  Director, Parklands Neighborhood Clinic.
- 1968                      Publication of Unwritten History of Slavery by Fisk University.
- 1974                      Publication of James Weldon Johnson, children's biography, Crowell Publishing Company.
- 1981 October 15        Ophelia Egypt Day in Washington, D.C. New Planned Parenthood facility in Parklands renamed the Ophelia Egypt Clinic.
- 1984 May 25             Died of lung ailments, Washington, D.C.

Sources: Ophelia Egypt Collection, Box-1, Folder - "Curriculum vita, ca. 1951", MSRC, Howard University. Transcript of an Oral Memoir of Mrs. Ophelia Settle Egypt, Dr. Elinor Sinnette, interviewer, 1981-82, MSRC Oral History Department, Howard University, 211pp.

## Series Description

### **Series A      Personal Papers**

Box 140-1      The personal papers of Ophelia Egypt include biographical data, programs in which she participated, membership cards and certificates. Also included is a poem written in her honor by Annetta Capdeville, a Washington, D.C. poet.

### **Series B      Family Papers**

Box 140-1      The family papers consist primarily of items relating to the family farm in Texas and memorabilia concerning Mrs. Egypt's son, Lester and grandson, Kevin. Included also are gas rationing coupons from World War II and a newsclipping on the 1978 Settle-Garth family reunion.

### **Series C      Writings about Egypt**

Box 140-2      Includes newsclippings highlighting her career and accomplishments.

### **Series D      Correspondence**

Box 140-2  
to Box 140-1      Consists primarily of personal correspondence, largely from family members. It also includes some letters from long-time friends and leagues. Of particular interest is the correspondence from Langston Hughes; Barrington Dunbar, Black Quaker activist; Glenn Carrington, bibliophile; and Ruth Lewis Hall, artist and confidante. Other correspondence related to organizations and subject areas such as honors, retirement tributes, manuscript publication, and invitations, is filed at the end of the series or by organization.

### **Series E      Writings by Egypt**

Box 140-10  
to Box 140-14      Includes published journal and newspaper articles; a 1945 edition of Unwritten History of Slavery; unpublished manuscripts, particularly the many drafts and versions of "Raggedy Thorns," and "Walk Through the Valley," a story based on her childhood.

### **Series F      Organizations**

Box 140-15  
to Box 140-17      Consists of correspondence, reports, newsletters, brochures and programs of the organizations with which Mrs. Egypt was affiliated. Planned Parenthood materials predominate.

## Series Description continued

### **Series G Church Affiliations**

Box 140-17 Includes programs, brochures and newsletters from the various churches with which Mrs. Egypt was affiliated, arranged by church names. Also included is a cassette recording of a sermon delivered by Rev. J. Taylor Stanley, People's Congregational Church, Washington, D.C., 1978.

### **Series H Memorabilia**

Box 140-18 to 140-19 This series consists primarily of programs of Black concert and theatrical performances. These are divided into concerts, plays, dance and literary, and are arranged chronologically within each category. Also included are materials on the life and work of Barrington Dunbar, Black Quaker activist; sketches by Vango, Washington, D.C. artist; and published articles on the history of Anacostia, a southeast Washington, D.C. neighborhood.

### **Series I Writings by Others**

Box 140-19 Includes articles related to social issues written by colleagues and proteges of Mrs. Egypt; reprints of articles on race relations and family planning.

### **Series J Photographs**

140-19 This series is primarily comprised of snapshots of Mrs. Egypt, friends and family members.

### **Series K Greeting Cards**

Box 140-20 This consists of 1 storage box of greeting cards.



## Container List

### Series A: Personal Papers

Box	Folder	
140-1	1	Autobiographical sketch
	2	Biographical information
	3	Obituary, funeral program, tribute
	4	Curriculum vita, ca. 1951
	5	Membership cards
	6	Poem by Annetta Capdeville, "Alabama Avenue First Lady"
	7	Personnel action, Juvenile Court, Washington, D.C., 1952
	8	Graduate Directory, New York School of Social Work, 1898-1956
	9	Personnel Registers, Howard University
	10	Black Oral History Program, Fisk University - correspondence
	11	Black Oral History Program, Fisk University - brochure, program, itinerary
	12	Black Oral History Program, Fisk University, Oral History Manual
	13	Certificate of Appreciation, Kennedy Center
	14	Certificates, National Association of Social Workers, 1955, 1975
	15	Programs in which Egypt participated

### Series B: Family Papers

16	Newsclipping re family union
17	Survey map of Texas farm
18	Tax assessment on Texas farm
19	Correspondence re sale of Texas farm
20	Ivory L. Egypt, identification card
21	Ivory L. Egypt, Gas Ration Coupons
22	By-laws-of Operation Heritage organization founded by Lester Egypt
23	Kevin Egypt, grandson, piano recital programs
24	Johnny Allen Chandler, cousin, memorial tribute

Container List

**Series C: Writings About Egypt**

Box	Folder
140-2	1 Published articles, 1956-1981

**Series D: Correspondence**

	2 A-Ba
	3 Best, Corinne
	4 Bi-Bro
	5 Bridgman, Charlotte
	6 Brown, Sterling
	7 C-Cap
	8 Carrington, Glenn
	9 Carroll, Addie L.
	10 Cart-Cr
140-3	1 D-Du
	2 Dunbar, Barrington, 1967-1976
	3 Dunbar, Barrington, 1977-1978
	4 Dunbar, Barrington, n.d.
	5 E-Ev
	6 Egypt, Lester, 1956-1964
	7 Egypt; Lester, 1966
	8 Egypt, Lillian Jackson
	9 Egypt, Thurman, Jr.
	10 F
	11 G
	12 Garth, Maggie
140-4	1 Gray, Naomi, 1964-70
	2 Gray, Naomi, 1971-78
	3 Gre
	4 Hall, Ruth, 1968-1976
	5 Hall, Ruth, 1977-1978
	6 Hall, Ruth, n.d.
	7 Har-J
	8 Hughes, Langston
	9 Lyndon B. Johnson

Container List

**Series D: Correspondence continued**

Box	Folder
140-4	10 K 11 L 12 M-Mar
140-5	1 Mathes, Willie Bell, 1966-1971 2 Mathes, Willie Bell, 1972-1978 3 Mathes, Willie Bell, n.d. 4 Mathis, Sharon Bell 5 Mayfield, Romeo 6 McIntyre, Gordon 7 McK-Mu 8 N 9 O 10 Okala, Ollie Sims, 1975-1976 11 Okala, Ollie Sims, 1977-1980 12 P
140-6	1 R 2 S-Se 3 Settle, Archie Mae 4 Settle, D.C., 1966-1975 5 Settle, D.C., 1967-1977 6 Settle, D.C., 1978-1979 7 Settle, D.C., n.d. 8 Settle, G.W.
140-7	1 Settle, J.T., 1959-1967 2 Settle, J.T., 1968-1970 3 Settle, J.T., 1971-1975 4 Settle, Thelma 5 Sh-Sm 6 Shereshefsky, Pauline Miller 7 Slotter, Caroline 8 Smith, Maudie Smith, 1966-1969

## Container List

### **Series D: Correspondence continued**

Box	Folder
140-7	9 Smith, Maudie Settle, 1970-1971 10 Smith, Maudie Settle, 1972-1974
140-8	1 Smith, Maudie Settle, 1975-1976 2 Smith, Maudie Settle, 1977 3 Smith, Maudie Settle, 1978 4 Smith, Maudie Settle, 1979 5 Sn-Su 6 T 7 V-Z 8 Thank you notes 9 Thank you notes, cards 10 Partial names 11 Unsigned
140-9	1 Honors, program participation, congratulatory 2 James Weldon Johnson publication 3 Raggedy Thorns, 1942-1969 4 Raggedy Thorns, 1970-1978 5 Tributes to Egypt upon retirement from Planned Parenthood 6 Unwritten History of Slavery publication 7 Graduation announcements 8 Appreciation of sympathy cards 9 Invitations
140-10	1 Envelopes

### **Series E: Writings by Egypt**

140-10	2 "Birth Control and the Family" 3 "Family Planning" 4 "Helping a Tuberculous Patient to Face Surgery" 5 "Helping People to Help Themselves" 6 "Learning to Use Time Structure in Casework with Tuberculous Patients" thesis, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, 1950
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## Container List

### Series E: Writings by Egypt continued

Box	Folder		
140-10	7	Letter to the Editor, Washington Post, January, 1968	
	8	"Memories of Sterling Brown," drafts	
	9	"Population Explosion," Washington Afro-American, Jan. 2, 1960	
	10	"Prevention of Blindness"	
	11	"Remembrance of Things Past: Slavery and Fannie"	
	12	"Requirements for Establishing Family Planning Clinic"	
	13	"Saving Sight in the Young Adult through Social Service"	
	14	"Social Attitudes during the Slave Regime: Household Servants Versus Field Hands"	
	15	"Sterling A. Brown: A UMUM Tribute"	
	16	"Unruly Slaves" (Fighters for Freedom'), rough drafts	
	17	"Unruly Slaves" (Fighters for Freedom), final draft	
	140-11	1	Untitled typescript re Planned Parenthood
		2	Unwritten History of Slavery, Social Science source Documents, no.1, Fisk University School of Social Science, Institute, Nashville, Tennessee, 1945.
		3	"A Visit to the Prophetess," typescript of interview conducted by Egypt and Lewis Wade Jones
		4	"Walk through the Valley," 10 chapters
		5	"Zema Hill," typescript of interview conducted by Egypt, 1929
			Raggedy Thorns, (Unpublished Manuscript)
6		Abstract, rough draft typescripts	
7	Abstracts, 1970 version		
140-12	1	Introductory material for submission to the University of North Carolina Press	
	2	Introductory material (original version, not revised)	
	3	Introductory material (original version, not revised, carbon)	
	4	Introductory material (original version, typescript)	
	5	Methodological note (original version, typescript)	
	6	Chapter 1 (typescript, revised 1969)	
	7	Chapter 1 (typescript, "old copies")	

## Container List

### Series E: Writings by Egypt continued

Box	Folder	
140-12	8	Chapter 1 (original version, typescript)
	9	Chapter 2 (original version, corrected)
	10	Chapter 2 (original version, revised)
	11	Chapter 2 (typescript, old copy)
	12	Chapter 2 (revised carbons)
	13	Chapter 3 (original version, typescript)
	14	Chapter 3 (revised typescript)
	15	Chapter 3 (revised typescript, carbon)
	16	Chapter 4 (original version, typescript)
	17	Chapter 4 (revised typescript)
18	Chapter 4 (revised typescript)	
140-13	1	Chapter 4 (revised typescript, carbon)
	2	Chapter 5 (original version, unrevised)
	3	Chapter 5 (revised typescript)
	4	Chapter 5 (original version, revised)
	5	Chapter 5 (original version, revised, carbon)
	6	Chapter 6 (revised typescript)
	7	Chapter 6 (revised typescript)
	8	Chapter (unrevised typescript, carbon)
	9	Chapter 7 (revised typescripts)
	10	Chapter 7 (original version, unrevised)
	11	Chapter 7 (revised typescripts)
	12	Chapter 7 (revised typescript, carbon)
	13	Chapter 8 (original version, revised)
	14	Chapter 8 (revised typescript)
	15	Chapter 8 (revised typescript, carbon)
	16	Chapter 9 (unrevised typescript)
	17	Chapter 9 (revised typescripts)
140-14	1	Chapter 10 (revised typescript)
	2	Chapter 11 (revised typescripts)
	3	Chapter 11 (original version, carbon)
	4	Chapter 11 (various mss pages)
	5	Chapter 12 (original version, carbon)

## Container List

### Series E: Writings by Egypt continued

Box	Folder	
140-14	6	Chapter 13 (revised typescript)
	7	Chapter 14 (unrevised typescript)
	8	Chapter 14 (revised typescript)
	9	Chapter 15 (unrevised typescripts)
	10	Chapter 15 (original version)
	11	Chapter 15 (revised typescript)
	12	Chapter 15 (revised typescript)
	13	Chapter 15 (unrevised typescript)
	14	Chapter (revised typescript)
	15	Chapter 18 (original version, typescripts)
	16	Various pages
	17	Various pages
	18	Notes - typescripts, handwritten
	19	Notes - typescripts

### Series F: Organizations

140-15	1	Advisory Neighborhood Commission - newsletters
	2	American Association of Medical Social Workers, newsletter
	3	Amistad Research Center - correspondence
	4	Amistad Research Center - brochures
	5	Amistad Research Center - newsletters
		Anacostia Museum & Historical Society
	6	Correspondence
	7	Programs
	8	Minutes
	9	Crowell Publishing Co. - newsletters
	10	D.C. Black Writers' Workshop, newsletters, fliers
	11	Frederick Douglass Co-op - brochure
	12	East Harlem Projects House - brochure
	13	Garfield-Douglass Heights Civic Association - program, announcements of meetings
	14	Heifen Project International - donor - card
	15	Homemaker - Home Health Aide Service- correspondence
	16	Homemaker - Home Health Aide Service- minutes of the Board of Directors Meetings
	17	Homemaker - Home Health Aide Service- newsclipping
18	Homemaker - Home Health Aide Service- Training Manual	

## Container List

### **Series F: Organizations continued**

Box	Folder		
140-16	1	Lincoln Farms - brochure	
	2	National Association of Social Workers newsletter	
	3	Negro Book Club -newsletter	
	4	Operation Heritage, Inc. - constitution, flier	
	5	William Penn House -brochure and newsletter	
			Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, D.C.
	6	Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. -newsletter	
	7	Correspondence	
	8	Board Reports	
	9	Annual Program and Report	
	10	Newsletters	
	11	Pamphlets, Announcement	
	12	Statement to Sub-committee on Employment, Manpower and Poverty, 4/28/67	
	13	Statement re resignation of Naomi Gray	
	14	Parklands Clinic correspondence	
	15	Parklands Clinic -brochures, newsletters	
16	Parklands Clinic -typescript of paper regarding		
		Planned Parenthood - World Population	
17	Correspondence		
18	Minutes		
19	Pamphlets		
20	Printed materials		
21	Statement on sterilizations		
22	Workshop program		
23	Otto Rank Association correspondence		
24	Otto Rank Association - conference agenda, 1973		
25	Otto Rank Association - membership meetings minutes		
26	Otto Rank Association - newsletters, program		
27	Otto Rank Association - tribute to Sterling Brown		
140-17	1	Volt Technical Corporation - correspondence	
	2	Washington Performing Arts Society- newsletters	
	3	Ionia R. Whipper Home - correspondence	



## Container List

### **Series F: Organizations continued**

Box	Folder	
140-17	4	Ionia R. Whipper Home - board report, 1953
	5	Ionia R. Whipper home - annual report, 1953
	6	Ionia R. Whipper Home - constitution
	7	Ionia R. Whipper Home - Report on Case Load, 1954 (rough draft)
	8	Women's Health Care Center - brochure

### **Series G: Church Affiliations**

140-17	9	First Baptist Church, Highland Park, Maryland
	10	First Baptist Church, Highland Park, Maryland - programs
	11	Calvary Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C.
	12	East Washington Heights Baptist
	13	Trinitarian Congregational Baptist Church Wayland, Mass
	14	People's Congregational Church, sermon by Rev. J. Taylor Stanley, 1978 (cassette tape)
15	Metropolitan area Churches	

### **Series H: Memorabilia**

140-18	1	Barrington Dunbar materials on his life and work
	2	Sketches by Vango, art exhibit flier
	3	Poetry
	4	Local History, Anacostia - newsclippings
	5	Local History, Anacostia - published article
		Programs
	6	Conference
	7	Concerts, 1950-1979
	8	Concerts, n.d.
	9	Plays, 1941-1970
	10	Plays, 1971-1973
	11	Plays, 1975-1977
	12	Plays, 1978-1979
	13	Plays, n.d.
	14	Dance

## Container List

### **Series H: Memorabilia continued**

Box	Folder
140-19	1 Art Exhibits
	2 Literary
	3 Sterling Brown Day
	4 Commencement
	5 Memorial

### **Series I: Writings by Others**

140-19	6 "Black Intellectual Achievement in New York City, 1890-1920," Guy Edmond Witcher
	7 "Culture Class and the Behavior of Low income Families," Hyland Lewis
	8 "Poverty and the Behavior of Low Income Families," Hyland Lewis and Camille Jeffers
	9 "Preparation of the Physician for Today's Social Responsibility," Dr. Robert H. Ebert
	10 Preventive Medicine Bibliography
	11 "The Problems and Promises of Family History in the Recovery of the Black Post," Michael N. Searles
	12 "The Processes of Discord and Estrangement, Divorce and Reconciliation," Ralph Bridgman
	13 Reprints re: Family Planning
	14 Reprints re: Race Relations
	15 Slide Script for "Reading is Fundamental" (RIF)
	16 Social Hygiene Bibliography, 1934
	17 "Three Generations: Case Materials in Low Income Urban Living" Camille Jeffers
	18 "Turning College Women on to Health Care," Margaret Birdwell, et. al.

### **Series J: Photographs**

18	Ophelia Egypt
19	Ophelia Egypt with Friends
20	Family of Ophelia Egypt
21	Friends of Ophelia Egypt
22	Unidentified

### **Series K: Greeting Cards**

140-20	1 Storage box of greeting cards
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