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CARL R. GROSS COLLECTION  
Collection 41-1 to 42-2

Prepared & Revised by:  
Karen L. Jefferson  
June 1980

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

## Scope Note

The Carl R. Gross Collection consists primarily of biographical materials and memorabilia of some outstanding Blacks who resided in Providence, Rhode Island during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It was assembled by Dr. Gross, a native of Providence, whose interest in the Black history of Rhode Island was stimulated by his appointment to the Governor's Tercentenary Committee in 1935. The collection, totaling 52 items and spanning the period 1856-1966, was donated to Howard University by Dr. Gross January 23, 1967.

The majority of the collection contains materials related to Matilda Sissieretta Joyner Jones (1869-1933), "The Black Patti," famed singer of the concert stage. These materials include photographs and memorabilia as well as biographical data. There are also brief biographical sketches and newspaper clippings about Edward M. Bannister, Emma C. Clements George Henry, John C. Minkins, Malon A. Van Horne, Joseph H. Banks, John A. Jenkins and Joseph H. Monroe. The collection concludes with several items of memorabilia, including a postcard of Phillis Wheatley, a form letter dated 1901 from the John Brown Association of Torrington Connecticut, and Leach's Complete Spelling Book (1856) by Daniel Leach.

## Biographical Sketch

- 1888, July 24 Carl Russell Gross was born to William H. and Lena L. (Smith) Gross in Providence, Rhode Island.
- 1894-1901 Attended the Thayer and Arnold Street Elementary Schools.
- 1903 Graduated from Thayer Street Grammar School.
- 1903-1905 Student at Providence Technical High School.
- 1905-1907 Left high school to work.
- 1907-1909 Attended Howard Academy, Washington, D.C.
- 1909 -1913 Attended and graduated from the Howard University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C., wits Senior Class President. Licensed to practice medicine by the State Department of Health of Rhode Island.
- Opened his office in Providence.
- 1917 Joined the Providence Medical Association.
- 1917-1919 Served in the United States Army Medical Corps.
- 1935-1936 Appointed and served on State Tercentenary Committee of Rhode Island.
- 1939 Member of the board of the Crispus Attucks Association. Applied for positions on the staffs of hospitals in Providence, but was turned down because of his race.
- 1942 Resigned from district draft board of medical examiners after being sent only black draftees.
- 1943 Elected a fellow of tile Rhode Island Medical Society.
- 1946 Elected President of the John Hope Community Association.
- 1950 Appointed by Governor John O. Pastore to serve on the Rhode Island Committee to the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth.
- 1958 Member of the board of directors of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Southern New England Region.

## Biographical Sketch continued

- 1960 Honored by the Irreproachable Beneficial Association.
- 1965 Honored by Northeastern Federation of Women's Clubs along with U.S. Senator Clifford Case (D-NJ), U.S. Senator Edward Brooke (R-MA), and U.S. Representative Gerald Ford (R-MI).
- 1970, June 6 Awarded honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities (DH) by Rhode Island College.
- 1971, April 7 Died at his home in Providence.

## Series Description

- Series A**  
Box 41-1  
**Carl R. Gross**  
Biographical data and several letters written to Dr. Gross in reference to Matilda S. J. Jones
- Series B**  
Box 41-1  
**Biographical Files**  
Biographical sketches and news clippings of some of the outstanding Blacks living in Providence, Rhode Island during the early 1900's. The majority of the materials relate to Matilda S. J. Jones.
- Series C**  
Box 41-1  
**Memorabilia**  
Pamphlets, news clippings, postcard of Phillis Wheatley, form letter of the John Brown Association, and Leach's Complete Spelling Book by Daniel Leach.
- Series D**  
Item 41-2  
**Oversize Items**  
Advertisement flyer of the "Black Patti Troubadours."

## Container List

### **Series A**

#### **Carl R. Gross**

Box

Folder

41-1

- 1 Biographical data
- 2 Correspondence

### **Series B**

#### **Biographical Files**

Bannister, Edward Mitchell

- 3 Clippings, exhibition program

Clement, Emma Clarissa

- 4 Biography, clippings

Henry, George

- 5 Biography, clippings

Jones, Matilda Sissieretta Joyner

- 6 Biography by Carl R. Gross
- 7 Newsclippings (xerox)
- 8 Advertisement flyer
- 9 Scrapbook of her career 1892-1899
- 10 Postcard from Dolena A. Overton
- 11 Photograph
- 12 Medals

Minkins, John C.

- 13 Biography, clippings, speech

Negroes in the General Assembly 1885-1896 - Providence, Rhode Island

- 14 Biography, clipping

### **Series C**

#### **Memorabilia**

- 15 Postcard of Phillis Wheatley
- 16 Scrapbook of newspaper clippings ca. 1896-1902
- 17 The John Brown Association (form letter, 1901)
- 18 George Washington and Rhode Island (pamphlet)
- 19 Ingenious Americans (pamphlet - of Afro-Americans)
- 20 Leach's Complete Spelling Book (belonged to Mable L. Poole)

### **Series D**

#### **Oversize Items**

Item 41-2

Jones, Matilda S.J. Advertisement Flyer (original)

"Thirteenth California Tour, Season 1908 - 1909, Black Patti Troubadour