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LEON RANSOM PAPERS
Collection 173-1 to 173-15

Prepared by:
Helen Rutt
February 1995

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

Scope Note

The papers of Leon Ransom (1900-1954), lawyer and educator, span the period from 1936 to 1948, and measure six linear feet. This collection primarily documents Ransom's career as an attorney. Ransom argued numerous cases, both in private practice and as a member of the N.A.A.C.P.'s legal staff. In 1931, after practicing law in Columbus, Ohio for four years, Ransom moved to Washington, DC. Among the subjects of Ransom's cases are educational and salary discrimination, jury exclusion, and race riots.

In addition to his work as a practicing attorney, Ransom served on the faculty of the Howard University School of Law. In 1941, after teaching for ten years, Ransom became Acting Dean of the School. He held this position until 1946, when the university appointed George Johnson to permanently assume the position. Ransom abruptly severed his affiliation with the university. The collection contains a copy of Ransom's letter of resignation to President Mordecai Johnson, a memo outlining problems with Ransom's leadership abilities, and newspaper clippings.

In 1946 Ransom founded the Chairman of the Committee for Racial Democracy in the Nation's Capital, an organization set on eliminating racial discrimination in Washington D.C. The collection includes minutes, correspondence, fliers, case material, and clippings concerning this organization's efforts.

In 1988 Mary Ransom Hunter donated the collection to Moorland- Spingarn.

Biographical Data

Leon Andrew Ransom

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 1900 | Born to Charles and Nora Ransom in Zanesville, Ohio |
| 1917 | Graduated from Zanesville High School, Zanesville, Ohio |
| 1920 | Received B.S. degree from Wilberforce University |
| 1923 | Married Willa Carter; two children, Mary and Leon Jr. |
| 1927 | Graduated from Ohio State University Law School; first black at OSU to be elected to the Order of Coif, an honor law society |
| 1927-1931 | Practiced law in Columbus, Ohio |
| 1931-1946 | Rose from Instructor to Professor at Howard University School of Law |
| 1934-1935 | Recipient of a research fellowship from the Harvard University School of Law; received degree of Doctor of Juridical Science |
| 1941-1946 | Served as Acting Dean of the H.U. School of Law |
| 1946-1949 | Served as Chairman of the Committee for Racial Democracy in the Nation's Capital |
| 1954 Aug. 25 | Died |

Source: Leon Ransom Papers, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Series F, Printed Material

Series Description

- Series A** **Personal and Family Papers**
Box 173-1 Includes programs and writings about Ransom, documents pertaining to his organizational affiliations, and photographs. Also contains correspondence and writings of Ransom's wife, Willa.
- Series B** **Correspondence**
Box 173-1
to Box 173-2 Consists mainly of professional correspondence between Ransom and attorneys, clients, activists, and government officials. Documents Ransom's roles within the N.A.A.C.P. and the Committee for Racial Democracy in the Nation's Capital. See also Series E, Cases, for correspondence emanating from Ransom's legal cases; see also Series D, N.A.A.C.P., for organizational correspondence.
- Series C** **Writings by Ransom**
Box 173-2 Includes speeches, articles, and an incomplete book manuscript, "Fiduciary Problems in Suretyship."
- Series D** **N.A.A.C.P.**
Box 173-2
to Box 173-3 Correspondence and press releases from both the national headquarters and D.C. Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. form most of this series. See also Series B, Correspondence, for Ransom's N.A.A.C.P. correspondence; see also Series E, Cases, for legal disputes in which the N.A.A.C.P. participated.
- Series E** **Cases**
Box 173-3
to Box 173-14 These files chronicle disputes in which Ransom participated or for which he accumulated documents, including correspondence, notes, briefs, transcripts, affidavits, and printed material. Some files contain only a single item. Among the issues addressed are teachers' salaries, transportation discrimination, and murder. Most cases are arranged alphabetically, either by plaintiff or issue. Because the issue of teacher salaries often addressed several cases within a school system, these files comprise a subseries, and are arranged geographically, at the end of the series. See also Series B, Correspondence, for a small amount of letters pertaining to legal disputes; see also Series F, Printed Material, for newspaper clippings concerning cases.

Series Description

Series F Printed Material

Box 173-14 Includes clippings, most of which highlight Ransom's legal cases and civil rights struggles.

Series G Restricted

Box 173-15 Contains materials that are closed to research either because of preservation or confidentiality concerns. Copies of items that are restricted due to physical deterioration are available in other parts of the collection.

Container List

| Series A | Personal and Family Papers | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Box | Folder | |
| 173-1 | 1 | Business card |
| | 2 | Membership certificate - Sigma Delta Tau Legal Fraternity 1941 |
| | 3 | Programs on which Ransom's name appears no date, 1939, 1944-1947 |
| | 4 | Programs on which Ransom's name appears 1948, 1958 |
| | 5 | Writings about Ransom |
| | 6 | Financial papers 1939, 1946-1947 |
| | 7 | National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital |
| | 8 | Committee for Racial Democracy in the Nation's Capital 1946-1948 |
| | 9 | Committee for Racial Democracy in the Nation's Capital/ Council for Civil Rights in the Nation's Capital 1946-1948 |
| | 10 | Joint Citizens' Committee of the District of Columbia |
| | 11 | Photographs |
| | 12 | Willa Ransom |
| | 13 | Willa Ransom - correspondence |
| | 14 | Leon Ransom III and Mary Ransom |
| | | |
| Series B | Correspondence | |
| | 15 | A-B |
| | 16 | Carter, Robert L. |
| | 17 | C-D |
| | 18 | E-G |
| | 19 | H |
| | 20 | Hill, William A. |
| | 21 | Houston, Charles H. |
| | 22 | J-L |
| | 23 | M-P |
| | 24 | Marshall, Thurgood |
| | 25 | R |
| | 26 | S |
| | 27 | T-Z |
| | | |
| 173-2 | 1 | White, Walter |
| | 2 | First names only, unidentified |

Container List

Series C Writings by Ransom

| Box | Folder | |
|-------|--------|---|
| 173-2 | 3 | Address to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education of the City of Alexandria, Virginia |
| | 4 | Address to the President's Amnesty Board [re: Conscientious Objectors] |
| | 5 | Address re: Timing of Committee for Racial Democracy rally. Broadcast on "We Are Americans Too" radio program 18 May 1946 |
| | | <u>Fiduciary Problems in Suretyship [incomplete] 1934-1935</u> |
| | 6 | Special, Chapter 1 |
| | 7 | Chapters 1-2 |
| | 8 | Chapters 1-2 |
| | 9 | Notes |
| | 10 | Notes |
| | 11 | Notes |
| | 12 | Notes |
| | 13 | Notes |
| | 14 | Interview with Ransom 19 May 1946 |
| | 15 | "Negro History in the Making." Broadcast on radio program of the D.C. Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. 17 Feb. 1946 |
| | 16 | "The Supreme Court Speaks." <u>New Negro Alliance Yearbook</u> (1939): 17-19. |
| | 17 | "Supreme Court Upholds Lloyd Gaines." <u>The American Teacher</u> 23(Jan. 1939): 14-17. |
| | 18 | Notes |

Series D N.A.A.C.P.

| | |
|----|--|
| 19 | List of outgoing mail from the N.A.A.C.P. Jan.-Feb. 1946 |
| 20 | Correspondence no date, 1930, 1937 |
| 21 | Correspondence 1939-1945 |
| 22 | Correspondence 1946 |
| 23 | Correspondence 1947 |
| 24 | Office files |

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| Series D | N.A.A.C.P. continued | |
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| Box | Folder | |
| 173-2 | 25 | Affidavits, testimonies re: discrimination |
| | 26 | Financial papers |
| | 27 | Plans, reports |
| | 28 | Press releases 1946-1947 [D.C. Branch] |
| | 29 | Committees 1942-1947 [D.C. Branch] |
| 173-3 | 1 | Minutes of Executive Committee meetings 1946-1947 [D.C. Branch] |
| | 2 | Reports of the Legal Dept. 1942-1947 |
| | 3 | Position papers, statements |
| | 4 | Press releases [National] Jan. 1942, Feb-July 1946 |
| | 5 | Press releases [National] Aug. - Oct. 1946 |
| | 6 | Pamphlets |
| Series E | Cases | |
| | 7 | Adamson v. People of the State of California - <u>Opinion of the Court</u> [in the Supreme Court of the U.S.] 1947 |
| | 8 | A.M.E. Church members v. Davis 1947 |
| | 9 | Bone v. State of Arkansas 1938-1939 |
| | 10 | Bone v. State of Arkansas - <u>Brief of Appellants</u> [in the Supreme Court of Arkansas] |
| | 11 | Bradshaw v. Commonwealth of Virginia 1939 |
| | 12 | Branch v. School Board of Greensville County [Virginia] 1941 |
| | 13 | Braxter v. Hosey, Creel, Thompson - Complaint |
| | 14 | Canty v. State of Alabama 1940 |
| | 15 | Carr v. Corning 1950 |
| | 16 | Carruthers and Clayton v. Reed 1936-1939 |
| | 17 | Carruthers and Clayton v. Reed - <u>Brief On Behalf of Appellants</u> [in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals] |
| | 18 | Chambers v. State of Florida 1939-1940 |
| | 19 | Chambers v. State of Florida - briefs |
| | 20 | Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Burnam 1939 |
| | 21 | Commonwealth of Virginia v. Turpin/Commonwealth of Virginia v. Johnson 1943 |
| | 22 | Congress v. Clarke |

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| Series E | Cases continued |
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| 173-4 | 1 re: Conscientious objectors 1947 |
| | 2 re: Conscientious objectors 1947 |
| | 3 Davis v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia 1944 |
| | 4 Duffin v. Superintendent of the District of Columbia Jail 1947 |
| | 5 Fleming v. Cincinnati Union Terminal Co., Inc. [Reply brief only] 1940 |
| | 6 Freeman v. County School Board of Chesterfield County - Order |
| | <u>Grant and Pinckney v. State of South Carolina</u> |
| | 7 Correspondence 1941 |
| | 8 Correspondence Jan. - April 1942 |
| | 9 Correspondence May - Nov. 1942 |
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| | 14 Briefs |
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| | 17 <u>Population: Characteristics of the Population [of] South Carolina</u> 1941 |
| | 18 re: Greyhound and Trailways bus companies' discrimination 1946-1947 |
| | <u>Hale v. Commonwealth of Kentucky</u> |
| | 19 Office files no date |
| | 20 Office files 1936 |
| | 21 Office files 1937 |
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| 173-5 | 1 Office files 1939 |
| | 2 Office files 1940-1944 |
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| | 4 Briefs 1936-1937 |

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| | | <u>Hale v. Commonwealth of Kentucky</u> |
| 173-5 | 5 | Briefs 1936-1937 |
| | 6 | Harold v. McShain 1942-1943 |
| | 7 | Henderson v. E Street Theatre Corp. [National Theatre] 1946-1947 |
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| | 9 | Hill v. Capital Transit Co. 1944 |
| | 10 | Hollins v. Oklahoma 1944-1945 |
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| | 12 | Kraemer v. Shelley [Opinion only] 1946 |
| | 13 | Lane v. Wilson 1938-1939 |
| | 14 | McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education... 1949 [opinion only] |
| | 15 | Mays v. Southern Railway Co. [opinions only] 1947 |
| | 16 | Morgan v. State of Virginia - <u>Brief on Behalf of the</u> <u>Commonwealth</u> [in the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia] 1944 |
| | 17 | N.A.A.C.P. v. D.C. Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. 1937 |
| | 18 | re: North Brentwood (MD) School overcrowding 1940-1942 |
| | 19 | re: police brutality in Washington D.C. 1940-1947 |
| | 20 | Redmond v. University of Tennessee 1936-1937 |
| | | <u>Robinson v. State of Alabama/</u> |
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| | 22 | Office files 1943 |
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| | 2 | Brief and Argument on Behalf of Appellant [Robinson] 1942 |
| | 3 | Brief and Argument on Behalf of Appellant [Robinson] 1942 [2 copies] |
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| 173-6 | 6 Brief and Argument on Behalf of Appellant [Daniels] 1942 [2 copies] |
| | 7 Briefs [Daniels] 1942-1943 |
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| | 12 State of Maryland v. Taylor and Washington - transcript of testimony [pages 1-106] 1946 |
| | 13 State of Maryland v. Taylor and Washington - transcript of testimony [pages 107-215] 1946 |
| 173-7 | 1 State of Maryland v. Taylor and Washington - transcript of testimony [pages 216-319] 1946 |
| | 2 State of Missouri ex. rel. Bluford v. Canada 1939 |
| | 3 State of Missouri ex. rel. Gaines v. Canada 1937 |
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| | 5 State of North Carolina ex. rel Tyler v. Kittrell College 1943 |
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| | 13 Vol. 2 [pages 291-393] |
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| | 6 | Vol. 10 [pages 2105-2200] |
| | 7 | Argument to the Jury |
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| | | <u>State of Tennessee ex. rel. Michael v. Witham</u> |
| | 9 | Notes |
| | 10 | Correspondence no date, 1939 |
| 173-10 | 1 | Correspondence Jan. - May 1940 |
| | 2 | Correspondence June - Dec. 1940 |
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| | 4 | Correspondence Jan. - Oct. 1942 |
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| | 11 | Petitions for Mandamus |
| | 12 | Amended Petitions for Mandamus |
| | 13 | Briefs |
| | 14 | Briefs |
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| | 2 | Pamphlets re: practicing law in Tennessee |
| | 3 | <u>Rules of the Supreme Court of the State of Tennessee</u> 1934 |
| | 4 | <u>Docket of Cases, Supreme Court</u> Sept. Term, 1942 |
| | 5 | Stephens v. Biggs [complaint only] 1947 |
| | 6 | Sweatt v. Painter 1948-1949 |

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| | | <u>Texas Primary Cases</u> |
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| | 10 | Printed briefs - <u>Brief for Petitioner and Petitioner's Appendices</u> [in the Supreme Court of the U.S.] Oct. Term, 1943 |
| | 11 | U.S. v. Bullock 1946 |
| | 12 | U.S. v. Johnson, Price, and Smith 1946 |
| | 13 | re: Virginia bus incident/Howard Univ. students |
| | 14 | Ward v. Texas 1942 |
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| | | <u>Washington v. State of Arkansas</u> |
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| | | <u>Clippings</u> |
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