

COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Inventory of the
Bell Family Papers, circa 1890 - 1972**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Bell Family Papers,
Dates:	circa 1890 - 1972
Creator:	Bell family.
Abstract:	<p>The African American Bell family of Charleston, South Carolina were descended from Sally (Sarah) Johnson, the matriarch of a free family of color who purchased 2 Green Street, in circa 1844. In 1912, the property was willed to Hiram L. Bell (died 1952), a son of Jesse Miles DeReef and Holten L. Bell.</p> <p>These papers document properties owned by the family, especially the historic home at 2 Green Street, Charleston, sold to the College of Charleston in 1971. With materials on the history of the Bell, DeReef, and Purvis families; health of Hiram Bell, Sr. and references to Friendly Union Cemetery. Printed materials and certificates from Morris Brown A.M.E. church, Avery Normal Institute, Shaw School and Hampton College; with various printed materials documenting the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterer's Union, of Charleston and elsewhere. The collection also contains awards and certificates of Hiram Bell, Jr. and James Bell. It also includes a program for the 50th anniversary of Charleston Bricklayers, Masons, and Plasterers, Local Chapter.</p>
Extent:	0.25 linear feet(1 archival box)
Repository:	Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston
Call Number:	AMN 1001
Language of Material:	Material in English

Biographical Note

The African American Bell family of Charleston, South Carolina were descended from Sally (Sarah) Johnson, the matriarch of a free family of color who purchased 2 Green Street, (built circa 1820) in circa 1844. In 1912, the property was willed to Hiram L. Bell (died 1952), a son of Jesse Miles DeReef and Holten L. Bell. Hiram married Louise Purvis. They had two sons, Hiram Lewis Bell, Jr., called "Lewis" and James A. Bell called "Jim".

Collection Overview

These papers document properties owned by the family, especially the historic home at 2 Green Street, Charleston, sold to the College of Charleston in 1971. With materials on the history of the Bell, DeReef, and Purvis families; health of Hiram Bell, Sr. and references to Friendly Union Cemetery. Printed materials and certificates from Morris Brown A.M.E. church, Avery Normal Institute, Shaw School and Hampton College; with various printed materials documenting the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterer's Union, of Charleston and elsewhere.

The collection also contains awards and certificates of Hiram Bell, Jr. and James Bell including photograph of latter's 1949 graduation from Hampton. It also includes a 1950 program for the 50th anniversary of Charleston Bricklayers, Masons, and Plasterers, Local Chapter. With diplomas of Louise Purvis from Howard University and those of Emmeline Lucille Mazyck, Avery Normal Institute and Shaw Memorial School.

Collection Arrangement

1. Correspondence
2. Certificates and Awards
3. Obituaries
4. Oversize Materials

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

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Subject Headings

African Americans -- Genealogy.

African Americans -- History.

African Americans -- South Carolina -- Charleston -- Families.

Avery Normal Institute.

Bell family.

Bell, Hiram L., d. 1952.

Bell, Hiram Lewis.

Bell, James A. (James Augustus).

Bell, Louise Purvis.

Bricklayers -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Bricklayers, Masons, and Plasterers International Union of America. Local No. 1 (Charleston, S.C.)

College of Charleston.

DeReef family.

Friendly Union Cemetery (Charleston, S.C.)

Hampton Institute.

Mazyck, Emmeline Lucille.

McMillan, Paul M.

Morris Brown A.M.E. Church (Charleston, S.C.)

Purvis family.

Shaw Memorial School.

South Carolina -- History -- 1865-

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Bell Family Papers, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.

Processing Information

Processed by Felice Knight, 2005

Encoded by Melissa Bronheim, July 2010

Edited by Amanda Ross, January 2010

Funding from the Council on Library and Information Resources supported the collection processing and encoding of this finding aid.

Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Correspondence, 1926-1972

Box 1 Folder 1 2 Green Street, Charleston, South Carolina

Materials regarding College of Charleston's purchase of 2 Green Street, including earlier 1949 letters between Louise Purvis Bell and attorney Paul McMillan regarding purchase price. Also includes a memo from Margaretta Childs regarding house marker and 1972 newspaper article regarding history of the house.

Originals in Folder 3.

Box 1 Folder 2 Letters from Louise P. Bell to Hiram Bell, Jr. and James Bell

Photocopies of letters and instructions of Louise P. Bell to her sons, Hiram and James. Subjects include family history and properties. Bell urges a son to apply to the Medical College of South Carolina, noting the quota for equal number of black and white students.

Originals in Folder 3.

Box 1 Folder 2 Miscellaneous

Includes instructions regarding Hiram Bell, Sr.'s health and settlement of accounts, taxes, and bills. Includes grocery list, prescription, payments to the Friendly Union Cemetery, and a 1926 The Roll of Honor printed by Morris Brown A.M.E. church. Also a New Testament Bible.

Originals in Folder 3.

Box 1 Folder 3 Originals of Photocopies in Folders 1-2

2. Certificates and Awards, 1949-1950

Box 1 Folder 4 Hiram L. Bell, Jr.

Includes Hiram L. Bell Jr.'s certificate and membership in Beta Kappa Phi, a National Honor Society. 1950 program for 50th Anniversary, Charleston Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers with Hiram Bell as treasurer.

Box 1 Folder 4 James Bell: Photograph - Graduation from Hampton Institute, 1949

Box 1 Folder 4 Emmeline Lucille Mazyck: South Carolina Teaching Certificate

3. Obituaries, 1890-1952

Box 1 Folder 5 Robert Purvis: Death Announcement, 1890

Box 1 Folder 5 Hiram Bell, Sr.: Obituary Notices

Includes four obituary notices for Hiram Bell, Sr., one of which appeared in *The Bricklayer, Mason and Plasterer* magazine.

4. Oversize Materials, 1911-1942

Oversize Paper Folder Emmeline Lucille Mazyck: Shaw Memorial School Certificate and Avery Normal Institute
1001-OPF/1 Diploma

Oversize Paper Folder Augustus G. Purvis: Letter and Certificate, 1911-1913, and 1942.
1001-OPF/1

Oversize Paper Folder Louis Purvis: Diplomas, Hampton University
1001-OPF/1