

C Lawrence, Josephine R. (1929-1992), Collection, 1844-1986
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INTRODUCTION

Papers of the Jackson and Lawrence families of Pennytown and Marshall, Missouri. The papers include newspaper clippings and unpublished manuscripts on the history of Pennytown, a black community near Marshall. There are also funeral cards, copies of legal documents, church and school records, and photographs of Pennytown and its residents.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Josephine R. Lawrence Papers were loaned to the University of Missouri for copying by Lawrence on 16 May 1988 (Accession No. 4835).

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Pennytown was a community of black farmers and laborers near Marshall, Missouri. Land purchased in 1871 by Joseph Penny became the nucleus of Pennytown, which grew to become the largest black community in Saline County. Residents of Pennytown performed agricultural, domestic, and other kinds of labor for the region. The residents formed a strong community based on mutual cooperation.

Pennytown began to lose population in the 1920s as residents moved to other towns in Saline and Pettis Counties which were closer to their jobs. By the 1970s the only building still standing in Pennytown was the Free Will Baptist Church, which had always been one of the most important community institutions. Annual reunions are held in August so that former residents can retain their ties with Pennytown and preserve the history of their community.

Josephine R. Lawrence, who was born in 1929 in Pennytown is a local historian with a keen interest in preserving and recording the history of Pennytown. Josephine R. Lawrence's mother was Nellie Jackson and her father was Fred Robinson. Her grandmother was Beulah Jackson. Aaron Jackson was her mother's first husband; Aron Jackson was her cousin. She had two brothers, Aaron and James Jackson, and a sister, Lorene Jackson Crobarker. Josephine's former husband was Clarence L. Lawrence.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Lawrence collection contains newspaper clippings and unpublished manuscripts about the history of Pennytown and the reunion. These articles describe the rich social and communal heritage of Pennytown and help to put the community in historical context.

The collection will be valuable to genealogists researching families in Saline County. In addition to information about the Jackson and Lawrence families of Pennytown and Marshall, the collection contains a selection of funeral programs which often include printed biographical sketches of the deceased person and his/her family. There are also copies of early marriage records for the community as well as a list of those buried in Fennis Creek Cemetery, the local burial ground.

The records of the Free Will Baptist Church and its Sunday School are contained in several notebooks kept by Josephine R. Lawrence and her mother-in-law Josephine M.

Lawrence. These church records are not complete.

FOLDER LIST

- f. 1 Jackson-Lawrence Family Papers, 1923-1983. Jackson-Lawrence Family Papers. Death, financial, school, military, land, and inheritance records of Jackson family; newspaper clipping about Josephine Lawrence buying George Caleb Bingham's family Bible; birth and death certificates of Lawrence family, reminiscence about Richard Lawrence, Sr., and Lawrence family tree.
- f. 2 Jackson-Lawrence Family Papers, correspondence and notes, 1945-1983.
- f. 3 Pennytown History, 1967-1985. Newspaper clippings about town history and reunion, founding and settlement, major families, church, school, jobs, food and gardens, crops, women, houses, and animals, 1967, 1980; brochure about Penny Lewis and her certificate of freedom from slavery and about her family, n.d.; and article by Gary R. Kremer in *Gateway Heritage*, "A New Way of Doing Black History: The Cultural Resource Survey," which discusses Pennytown as a rich cultural resource, 1985.
- f. 4 Pennytown History, n.d. Reminiscences about living in Pennytown and its residents, medical care, illnesses, church, depression, work, food gathering, etc., written by Josephine R. Lawrence, n.d.; copy of 1880 U.S. census records for Salt Fork Township, Saline County (which included Pennytown); and maps of Saline County showing Pennytown.
- f. 5-11 Genealogy, 1909-1986. Funeral bulletins of former residents of Pennytown and others in Saline County collected by Josephine R. Lawrence. Some were buried in Fennis Creek Cemetery located two miles from Pennytown. In addition to funeral information and life dates, many of the bulletins give a biographical sketch of the deceased and information about his/her family. The bulletins are arranged chronologically by date of death.
 - f. 5 1909-1956
 - f. 6 1957-1962
 - f. 7 1963-1977
 - f. 8 1978-1983
 - f. 9 1984-1986
 - f. 10 Obituaries clipped from local newspapers.
 - f. 11 List of persons buried in Fennis Creek Cemetery and miscellaneous biographical notes, n.d.
- f. 12-13 Legal Documents, 1844-1977
 - f. 12 Copy of deed to land bought by Joseph Penny in 1871 and notes about inheritance of land at his death, 1908; copy of document giving title of land to Free Will Baptist Church, 1898; sale of land to lodge, 1912; deed of trust, Beulah and Aaron Jackson, 1922; sale of land to Nellie Jackson, 1933, 1944; and deeds of land, Lucy Lawrence, Francis and Willia Mae Spears, 1956, 1977.
 - f. 13 Copy of probate records of Thomas A. Smith listing names, ages, and value of his slaves, 1844; copy of marriage records of blacks in Saline County, 1865-1866; promissory note, Francis and Willia Mae Spears, 1968; and will of Mary Braun leaving money to Ronald Lawrence for his education, 1975.

- f. 14-18 Free Will Baptist Church, Records, 1943-1986
 - f. 14 Papers for nomination of church building to National Register of Historic Places. Statement of Significance written by Lynn Morrow places Pennytown's history in national, state, and local context. Includes agriculture, labor, slave holding, demography, black settlements and community, family life, churches, health care, schools, and the annual reunion, 1986.
 - f. 15 Clippings about annual reunion, 1973, 1984, 1985; church meeting minutes, n.d.; financial records, 1943-1946; and list of donations to Fennis Creek Cemetery Fund, 1980.
 - f. 16 Church financial records including donations and collections and lists of officers and trustees, 1942-1943.
 - f. 17 Sunday School records including attendance, donations, and activities, 1943-1945.
 - f. 18 Church financial records, 1946-1951, and financial records for annual reunion, 1963-1969.
- f. 19-22 School Records, 1907-1942. Photocopies of records of school district 8, township 49, range 21, Saline County.
 - f. 19 Minutes of school district meetings and board of directors meetings, including election of officers, funds and expenditures, location of schoolhouse, teachers, and schools for black and white children, 1907-1912.
 - f. 20 Financial records, receipts and expenditures, and teacher salaries, 1907-1912.
 - f. 21 Student census by race giving names and ages; rules and regulations; and description of boundaries, 1907-1927.
 - f. 22 Correspondence re black school not getting the appropriate amount of state funds, n.d.; teacher contracts, 1908-1916; oaths of directors, 1908-1922; and letters of application for teaching positions, 1942.
- f. 23 Photographs. Photographs of the Free Will Baptist Church, the reunion, and residents of the Pennytown community.
- f. 24-26 Miscellany, 1967-1982
 - f. 24 Sermons and songs.
 - f. 25 North Street United Methodist Church, Marshall, Missouri, bulletin of 111th anniversary which includes history of church, 1982; bulletins from other churches in Marshall, 1967-1987; recipes; and short manuscript about black history with brief mention of Pennytown, n.d.
 - f. 26 Newspaper clippings about people in Marshall and about Pleasant Grove, a community of blacks near Concordia, Missouri.

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