

C Nolen, Rose M. (1935-2015), Papers, 1873-2004  
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## INTRODUCTION

The papers of Rose Nolen contain clippings, research materials, and manuscript drafts of a Sedalia, Missouri, journalist. Topics include the Katy Depot in Sedalia, the Methodist Inner City Church in Kansas City, Black Panthers and the Black Power Movement, Bothwell Regional Medical Center, and Sedalia history.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Rose M. Nolen on 14 October 2009 (Accession No. 6220).

## RESTRICTIONS

Donor retains copyright.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rose Mary Nolen was a civil rights activist, writer, publisher, and award-winning journalist from Sedalia, Missouri. In addition to essays, columns, newspaper stories, and the occasional poem, Nolen wrote about African American history, civil rights, and Sedalia history.

Nolen was born June 16, 1935, in Windsor, Missouri, to Norman and Opal Willis Rhodes. She had four sisters and three brothers; her father died when she was three years old. When she was seven, her family moved to Kansas City; later they moved to Sedalia, where she graduated from the C.C. Hubbard School in 1952. She married Samuel L. Wilkerson, Jr. in Kansas City in 1955. They divorced, and she married Thomas H. Nolen in Kansas City in 1962. They had one son, Mark Nolen, in 1965, and the family lived in Kansas City through the late 1960s. By the 1970s, Thomas and Rose were no longer together, and Rose and her son moved back to Sedalia.

Nolen began her journalism career in 1983, working as a columnist and staff writer for the *Pettis County Local Times-News*. Subsequently, she worked for the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, the *Columbia Missourian*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and the *Sedalia Democrat*. She founded a publishing company, Rosemark Communications, in 1985. Nolen wrote and published several books, including *Hoecakes, Hambone, and all that Jazz: African American Traditions in Missouri*; *African Americans in Mid-Missouri: From Pioneers to Ragtimers*; *Lost on the Prairie: George R. Smith College, Methodist School for Blacks, Sedalia, Missouri: 1888-1925*; *Bothwell Regional Health Center: a Lifetime of Caring, 1930-2005* (with William B. Claycomb and Becky Carr Imhauser); *Time Out! (For Working Class Women)*; and *Sedalia's Ragtime Man: the Story of Scott Joplin's Sedalia Years*. She also published the quarterly newsletter *Mid-Missouri Black Watch* from 1992-1998.

Nolen was a member of the Taylor Chapel United Methodist Church in Sedalia, and she was involved with the Center for African-American Studies Museum. In her later years, she helped open the Rose M. Nolen Black History Library in Sedalia. She died on January 1, 2015, at the age of 79.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection, by no means a comprehensive representation of Nolen's work, primarily consists of her later research into Sedalia history, as well as a small amount of primary source material documenting the civil rights and black power movements in Kansas City in the 1960s and 70s.

The papers have been arranged into the following two series:

#### **Sedalia History** **Civil Rights**

The **Sedalia History** series is the most substantial and includes research on a variety of subjects. The largest portion consists of research for and drafts of the book *Bothwell Regional Health Center: a Lifetime of Caring, 1930-2005*. There is also a significant amount of research accumulated in the process of developing historical materials on Sedalia and the Katy Depot on behalf of the Sedalia Heritage Foundation. This was in preparation for the Depot's reopening as a historical museum and welcome center in 2001-2003. Also included are written accounts collected from former railroad workers and other individuals, recalling their experiences with the Katy Depot and the railroad lines that ran through Sedalia. Other materials on Sedalia history cover topics such as the history of Sedalia parks, churches, libraries, and schools; Scott Joplin; Jack Oakie; and the Pearl River. A small amount of material relating to publishing is present, as well as scattered notes and manuscripts of essays and columns. These files primarily include clippings, notes, drafts, brochures, and copies from books and periodicals. Researchers interested in the history of Sedalia as well as Nolen's writing process will find much to explore in this series.

The **Civil Rights** series, though small, is significant in that it documents grassroots activism in Kansas City's African American community in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The heart of this series is a collection of clippings and other materials relating to Kansas City's Methodist Inner City Parish, a primarily African American church, whose pastor, Reverend Philip Lawson, was a civil rights activist with ties to the Black Panther Party. Lawson also traveled to Hanoi with an anti-war message using church mission funds, causing a scandal among the larger Methodist community. In response, Lawson was removed from his position and the church was defunded. The Methodist Inner City Parish, its mission and community activism, as well as the scandal, are extensively documented through clippings and various printed materials produced by the church. Also included is a short manuscript, "The Methodist Inner City Parish Twenty Years Later," possibly written by Nolen. Other materials in this series include community action training materials from the same time period, materials discussing the Methodist Church's relationship to the Black Power Movement, and published and semi-published articles on issues of race and civil rights.

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- f. 5 Whistlers – notes, n.d.
- f. 6-8 Katy Depot research, c. 1980-2001, n.d.
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- f. 12 Sedalia parks history – Liberty Park rose garden, 1958-2005
- f. 13 Charles Yeater, n.d.
- f. 14 Sedalia Public Library research, 2001-2002, n.d.
- f. 15 Jack Oakie research, 2002, n.d.
- f. 16 Sedalia church histories, 1927, 1988, n.d.
- f. 17 Municipal bonds, taxation, 1873-1981
- f. 18 Pearl River research, 1987-1990, n.d.
- f. 19 Sarah Elvira Cotton and Smith-Cotton High School research and notes, n.d.
- f. 20 “Naming Sedalia” research and drafts, n.d.
- f. 21 *Byline Magazine*, 2001
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