

James A.G. Edwards Family Papers A&M 4593

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1927-1953



Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

A&M 4593

Unit ID

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1927-1931

Language

English .

Creator

Edwards, Ernest, 1909-2003

Creator

Edwards, James A.G., 1880-1965

Extent

4.71 Linear Feet 1 record carton, 15 in.; 1 document case, 2.5 in.; 2 flat boxes, 1.5 in. each; 1 barrel, 3 ft.

Physical Location

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Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Gift of Schaupp, Adelheid, 2018 May 18

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Biographical / Historical

Ernest Edwards' school papers make up the bulk of this collection. He attended West Virginia State College at the time its name changed from the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, 1929. At WVSC he was recognized as an outstanding athlete. After graduating with a degree in industrial/mechanical arts, he received a B.S. degree from West Virginia University and became a printer and teacher. He served in the U.S. Army as second lieutenant Field Artillery, unit commander. He taught mathematics at Charleston High School in Charleston, WV. His first wife was Vivian. His second wife was Virginia. He had no children.

Bessie Edwards, also from Morgantown, graduated from Howard University in 1926. She went on to teach and became the Dean of Women at Virginia Union University.

Edwards Family History:

John Edwards, a former enslaved person, arrived in Morgantown, West Virginia around 1863 after serving as a cook with the Union Army in Beverly, WV. He ran the first water service for Morgantown. He married Sarah Jackson in 1865 and started his water hauling business shortly after. He hauled from the Monongahela River and Deckers Creek for a per-barrel price, until 1889 when the city authorized another company to install a water works system.

He purchased a home in 1877, and eventually amassed 12 acres, on what was lately 477 White Avenue. The house was demolished in 1989.

John and Sarah had 6 children: William, James A.G., Alonzo, Hannah, Charles D., Evington Luzern; and Rosa Mae Evans (Sarah's daughter from previous marriage, who married Levi Holland, first black man to own a barbershop in Morgantown). John Edwards died April 9, 1904.

James A.G. Edwards had men working for him in his sanitation business (ca. 1900) – he'd started his business shortly after his fathers ended in 1889. He married Lucetta Dixon and had 6 children: John; James A.G. Jr.; Bessie; Ernest; Dixon; and Gwendolyn.

Between 1896 and 1927, James A.G. Edwards expanded the business, hauling garbage thru Morgantown and Westover. He employed a lot of the teamsters in the area. In 1926, the City of Morgantown took over his business. That year, he opened Edwards Quick Lunch on Pleasant Street, and also Way-Journ Lunch on 2031 University Ave. with Edward Brooks in 1931. Neither was successful.

During WWII, Dixon Edwards, grandson of John Edwards, worked at Morgantown Ordnance Works (segregation internally).

Sources:

FindAGrave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/128685934/ernest-eugene-edwards?_gl=1*1klygr*_gcl_au*MTk0MzU5MDQ1OC4xNzEzODk3NDYw, 2024 June 04

Rice, Connie Park. Our Monongalia: A History of African Americans in Monongalia County, West Virginia. Headline Books, 1999.

Scope and Contents

The James A.G. Edwards Family Papers relate to West Virginia State College, now West Virginia State University, and the Edwards family, particularly Ernest E. Edwards, son of James A.G. and grandson of James E. Edwards. Since Ernest was a mechanical arts student at West Virginia State College (WVSC), the papers include many WVSC publications, such as class schedules, calendars, bulletins, fraternity and sorority news, and the By-Laws and Constitution for Dawson Hall, a dormitory. Also included is math and calculus homework and ephemera in addition to physics and biology illustrated lab reports, tests, and class notes. Other school work includes studies completed by Ernest Edwards and, to a lesser extent, from his sister Bessie Virginia Edwards. Includes materials documenting West Virginia State College events (baccalaureate, convocation, plays, luncheons, etc.), and materials related to West Virginia State College football, including schedules, tickets, programs, and other material are included in the collection.

Personal items from Ernest Edwards and Bessie Edwards include correspondence and publications, including from The Women's Baptist Missionary Societies and the West Virginia State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. Later personal items, 1945-1952, include school work of Barbara Lucetta Brooks [later Atkinson] and Bettie Lee Brooks [later Bellamy], children of Bessie.

Family business items include receipts, checks, advertisements related to Edwards Quick Lunch (a Morgantown restaurant run by James A.G. Edwards), and bills and other ephemera from John A.G. Edwards's water company. Additionally, Box 3 contains business ledgers, circa 1921-1922.

There is one photograph of an unidentified man and a woman (Box 1, Folder 27).

Box 4 contains issues of West Virginia State's student newspaper, The Yellow Jacket, 1930-1932 (4 copies of the 1932 December 1 issue, 1 incomplete copy of the 1932 March 1 issue); one issue of WVSC's Das Deutsche Blatt, 1930-1931 (6 copies); and one issue of The Pittsburgh Courier, February 20, 1932.

This collection also includes the wooden water barrel where the documents were originally stored. It is presumed to be one of the barrels used by John Edwards to deliver water to Morgantown citizens.

Keywords

African American businessmen

Schaupp, Adelheid

Edwards family

Edwards, James A.G., 1880-1965

West Virginia State College (Institute, W. Va.)

Edwards, Ernest, 1909-2003

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Personal protection is recommended when using this collection due to its previous storage conditions. As such, gloves and face masks will be made available in the Reading Room for patron use.