

THE J. IDA JIGGETTS PAPERS

Finding Aid

Prepared for the

Westchester County Historical Society

by

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J[ohn] Isa [Dura] (Roberts) Jiggetts was born in Washington, North Carolina on April 4, 1901, the daughter of the Rev. John Wesley and Ida (Roberts) Roberts. The family moved back to Shelby, North Carolina during her infancy when her father became presiding elder of that district of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. He later was first principal of Cleveland County High School, while her mother taught at Love Joy Academy.

Ida, known as “Bobbie” in the family, finished Shelby Graded School in 1915, and continued her studies at Allen High School in Asheville, graduating from a three-year course in 1918. She then studied for her R.N. at Mercy Hospital and School for Nurses, and continued with college courses in Medical Social Work and Public Health Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania, ultimately earning a M.S.W.

In her twenties she married J(ohn) Philip Jiggetts, an attorney, born in Newport News, Virginia, June 13, 1898. He died at Flushing, New York, February 16, 1966.

They resided in Harlem. She continued her education, earning a B.A. from Teachers College Columbia, an M.A. from New York University and, in 1957, a Ph.D. from the same school.

Apparently when they settled in Harlem, she took a position with the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association. Later she was Director of Social Services at St. Mark’s Community House.

In 1942 she joined the Department of Welfare, New York City, as a supervisor and medical social worker, moving in 1946 to be a counselor at Furness Junior High School, Philadelphia. In 1948 she became a psychiatric social worker with the Veterans’ Administration in New York City, taking a similar position in 1951 with the Department of Mental Hygiene at Manhattan State Hospital. With the same agency, she moved to the Bronx After-Care Clinic as a social worker in 1954.

From 1958 to 1963 she was director of social services at Riverside Hospital in New York City. From 1963 to 1969 she was a consultant for the New York City Department of Health in public health social work.

She turned her attention to Mount Vernon, where she and her husband had owned a second home since 1951, when she became director and psychotherapist for Project Concerned. This led to the founding of the Mount Vernon Narcotics Guidance Council in December 1968. She served as chairman and executive director for many years.

In childhood, there were only two Jews in Shelby, North Carolina, one of them a peddler with beautiful goods. This, and her family’s deep faith and awareness of the Old Testament, led to a lifelong fascination with Judaism. After World War II she made several study trips to Israel and published two books: *Religion, Diet and Health of Jews* (Bloch, 1949) and *Israel to Me: A Negro Social Worker Inside Israel* (Bloch, 1957).

There were plans to publish her doctoral dissertation, *Integration and Absorption of Yemenite Jews in Israel*, but this does not appear to have happened.

Dr. Jiggetts remained active into her nineties, and was still living at 293 Westchester Avenue, Mount Vernon, at the beginning of 1992. Her health declined and a relative arranged her to move to a nursing home in Shelby, North Carolina where she died on October 13, 1992.

## **Box 1.**

### Address book.

Disbound pages of an address book of the 1920s to 1940s.

### Address lists.

Various loose address lists, one of them probably used for announcements of one of her books.

### Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Miscellaneous papers relating to Dr. Jiggetts's membership in Tau Omega Chapter of this sorority, and her service on its National Health Committee.

### Alpha Kappa Delta.

Letter announcing her election in 1950 to membership in Gamma Chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, National Honorary Sociology Fraternity.

### American Christian Palestine Committee.

Miscellaneous papers, 1954–57, of this organization which, despite its name, seems to have championed Israel over the displaced Palestinians.

### American Friends of Hebrew University.

Miscellaneous papers, 1954–59, of this organization in which Dr. Jiggetts took an interest, and which honored her for her publications.

### American Mothers Committee.

Miscellaneous papers, 1977–80, of this organization, of which Dr. Jiggetts was elected a trustee in 1979 at the behest of her friend, Dorothy Silverstone. It is unclear whether she accepted.

### Banking.

Passbooks, checks, and statements, 1953–90.

### Beebe, J.A. (Bishop)

An important manuscript biography, ca.1900, of a bishop of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, including his emancipation story.

### Biography.

Materials contributing to Dr. Jiggetts's biography, including diplomas and certificates (the earliest from Shelby Graded Schools, 1915), autobiographical statements, curriculum vitae, an obituary, and business cards.

### Bloch Publishing Company.

Five issues of *Bloch's Book Bulletin*, 1949–58, sales reports, a check, etc. Bloch was a Jewish publishing house and issued Dr. Jiggetts's books.

#### Book reviews.

Reviews of Dr. Jiggetts's published books in typescript, photocopy, and clipping form.

#### Clippings

Clippings from newspapers and magazines about Dr. Jiggetts. Many have been photocopied on bond paper in duplicate.

1949-59

1960-79

1980-92 and n.d.

#### Delaware State Tuberculosis Commission.

A handwritten report of Dr. Jiggetts's work for the commission for the year 1922, on its letterhead.

#### Education—General.

Transcripts, publications, and other ephemera of degree-granting institutions; the earliest is her transcript from Allen High School, Asheville, N.C., 1918 (but issued later). Included is a songbook of Furness Junior High, 1921, with her name written on the cover.

#### Education—Essay and note books.

Two notebooks from the Delehanty Institute, "the largest civil service school in the United States," where Dr. Jiggetts studied; an exam book for a course in Public Health; and a notebook in Biology and Chemistry.

#### Employment applications.

A broad collection of correspondence, applications, and reports as Dr. Jiggetts sought positions, most of them in the civil service system. A close reading of them might illuminate the difficulties experienced by a highly-qualified African American during the time period.

1930-39

1940-49

1950-59

1960-69 and n.d.

#### Ephemera.

Invitations, tickets, programs, membership cards, and other printed matter saved by Dr. Jiggetts. In a few cases the invitation was sent by her or was to honor her.

1930-49

1950-59

1960-69

1970-79

1980-92

n.d.

Expense record.

An expense record for 417 West 148 Street, New York, carefully kept for a three-year period in 1941–43.

Family Service Association of Mount Vernon.

Annual report, brochure, and outline for a talk by Dr. Jiggetts about a social service agency of which she was a director, 1954–56.

Foster Parents to Needy Mississippi, Westchester Chapter.

Clippings, correspondence and ephemera of a chapter of an organization that aided needy Black families in Mississippi, 1967–69. See also: Box 5.

George Washington Carver Center, White Plains.

Agenda, minutes, and committee list of a social service agency of which Dr. Jiggetts was a director, 1967–69.

Grace Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.

Invitations, press release, program, and part of a letter from a Mount Vernon church, 1953–73.

Greeting cards.

Undated cards received by Dr. Jiggetts.

Hebrew language.

Materials in Hebrew type collected by Dr. Jiggetts.

Income tax 1947.

Tax returns filled in by hand.

International Cultural Center for Youth (2 folders).

Reports, correspondence, ephemera and a photograph about this organization, which operated a center in Jerusalem, and was apparently largely driven by Dorothy Silverstone, a close friend of Dr. Jiggetts.

Israel—Ephemera.

Brochures, invitations, and other ephemera in English.

Israel—Miscellaneous.

Notes, mimeographed bibliography, and other papers contributing towards Dr. Jiggetts's research.

Jiggetts, J. Philip—Biography.

Materials contributing to JPJ's biography, including baptismal and discharge certificate, membership cards, rosters of "1923 CIAA Championship Team" and "Class of 1925," an oath of office, and typewritten and published obituaries.

Jiggetts, J. Philip—Business.

A miscellany including papers on employment and retirement, passbooks, etc.

Jiggetts, J. Philip—Estate.

Papers, mostly correspondence, relating to his estate, 1966–70.

Jiggetts, J. Philip—Letters received.

Letters, telegrams, and cards received by JPJ, 1940–65, including family letters from relatives.

Jiggetts, J. Philip—Phi Beta Sigma.

Mimeographed constitution and committee roster for 1937 of Epsilon Sigma Chapter, Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, of which JPJ was a member.

Katsh, Abraham I.

Biographical sketches, book reviews, and ephemera relating to Katsh, professor in the School of Education at New York University, and a friend and colleague of Dr. Jiggetts.

## **Box 2.**

Letters received.

Arranged chronologically, this series contains all surviving letters received by Dr. Jiggetts, including family correspondence, personal letters, business letters, and professional letters.

1931, 1933

1935

1937

1938

1939

1942, 1943, 1944

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949

1950 January–June

1950 July–December

1951 January–June

1951 July–December

1952

1953

1954 January–June

1954 July–December

1955 January–June

1955 July–December

1956

1957 January–June  
1957 July–December  
1958  
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1976  
1977  
1978  
1979  
1980–89  
1990–92  
Business n.d.  
Family n.d.  
Personal n.d.

Letters sent.

This series contains all surviving letters sent by Dr. Jiggetts, a mixture of carbon copies (most of them handwritten), drafts, photocopies of letters sent, and some letters sent that made their way back into her hands. Some carbons are filed elsewhere in subject folders.

1930–39  
1940–49  
1950–59  
1960–69  
1970–76 and 1988  
n.d.

Mayor's Commission on Unity, New York City.

Papers, mostly written by Dr. Jiggetts, 1946–47, documenting her position on such matters as segregated schools.



Miscellaneous papers.

Unclassified papers, including medical and insurance matters; an essay, "I Finally Arrived," by Lillian Goldberg, 1957; and papers in a lawsuit arising out of an auto accident.

Mount Vernon Narcotics Guidance Council (2 folders).

These are believed to be the only surviving records of the Council, founded by Dr. Jiggetts. They include a typescript of her essay, "A Miracle in Mount Vernon"; her booklet, "The Drug Addict and his Vocabulary"; clippings, minutes, benefit programs, etc. They span the history of the organization from its founding in 1967 until Dr. Jiggetts's resignation in 1989.

Mount Vernon study.

A report, "The College in the Community: The Institute for Community Studies and Mount Vernon," n.d. [1967], prepared by Sarah Lawrence College.

### **Box 3.**

NAACP, Mount Vernon Chapter.

Press release following a membership tea given by Dr. Jiggetts in 1972.

National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Westchester Chapter.

An interesting miscellany, 1954–72, of an interesting organization of which Dr. Jiggetts was a member; it includes a membership list, 1962, with addresses and professions.

New Rochelle, Inter-Community Garden Club.

Typewritten membership list, 1960–61.

New York City Department of Welfare—Case histories (2 folders).

These reports of 1944–45, surely intended to be confidential, offer insight into social conditions during World War II.

Papers.

This large series contains typewritten or handwritten papers, both for college courses and her later work, many of which are jumbled. Those of particular significance are noted.

Folder 1. Contains unorganized portions of a study of family dynamics of drug addicted children.

Folder 2. Contains "A Study of the Division of Prisons and the Department of Welfare in Israel (1950), handwritten and typewritten, and "A Study of 'Sherut Batei Haschar,' The Prison Services of Israel" (n.d.)

Folder 3. Contains materials for the Yemenite Jew in Israel (projected book).

Folder 4. Contains drafts of *Israel to Me*.

Folder 5. Contains miscellaneous Israel material.

Folder 6. Contains “The Value of a Cumulative Record to a Counselor in Helping Problem Children in a Junior High School Setting” n.d., with many sample printed forms.

Folder 7. Contains “The Drug Addict and his Vocabulary” (1969), in several drafts; later published (q.v.)

Folder 8. Contains “The Role of Mothers of Various Nationality Groups in American Culture” (1941).

Folder 9. Contains “The Social Service Aspect of Counseling in the Veterans Administration” (1948).

Folder 7.

Folder 8. Contains notes, drafts, and typescripts of a study of Yemenite Jews in Israel.

Folder 9. Contains notebook pages and school papers.

Folder 10. Includes “A Study of the Attitudes, Conflicts, and Social Adjustment of the Ethiopian or ‘Black’ Jew in New York City with Particular Emphasis upon the Origin of the Black Jew” (1950).

Folder 11. Includes “The Growth and Development of Mabel Dodge Luhan as a Comparison with My Own Growth Experience (1949), a heavily-autobiographical paper of particular interest to Roberts descendants, along with other school papers.

Folder 12. Contains various school papers.

Folder 13. Contains various school papers.

Folder 14. Contains various school papers.

Folder 15. Contains various school papers.

Passport.

Two U.S. passports issued to Dr. Jiggetts, 1953 and 1962.

Photograph album 1920s.

A black-page album of snapshots taken by Dr. Jiggetts as a young woman, with many subjects identified in ink.

Photograph identifications.

Typewritten and handwritten identifications of photo subjects, which have been detached from the images. They can be matched with them, given time and patience; most pertain to the Mount Vernon 8x10s.

Photographs.

These photographs are arranged by subject, as determined by examination and by photographers’ stamps. They require further identification while living persons are available. Those of Mount Vernon document civic activities, particularly of the Narcotics Guidance Council founded by Dr. Jiggetts.

Family pre-1950

Family post-1950

Harlem

Dr. Jiggetts pre-1950

Dr. Jiggetts post-1950 (2 folders)

## **Box 4.**

Photographs (continued).

Jews, books, Israel  
Mount Vernon 8x10 (2 folders)  
Mount Vernon 5x7b and 4x5

Real Estate.

Deeds, tax records, and tenant correspondence of property owned by Dr. Jiggetts and her husband. The Brooklyn house was at 329 McDonough Street; the Florida property was 40 swampy acres in Duval County, inherited by J. Philip Jiggetts and other heirs, and settled by his widow after much difficulty; the Mount Vernon property was their residence at 293 Westchester Avenue, purchased in 1951 (this file contains photographs: an 8x10 exterior and 5x7 interior views); the New Jersey property was in Mansfield Township, Warren County, consisting of unbuildable lots; the North Carolina property was the home place in Shelby; and the Suffolk County property was in North Amityville.

The three Harlem houses were income properties, and the documentation in the files can illuminate housing conditions in Harlem during the period. Dr. Jiggetts and her husband made their city home in one of them. See also "Expense Record," Box 1.

Brooklyn  
Florida (2 folders)  
Mount Vernon  
New Jersey  
New York City—158 W. 129  
New York City—246 W. 130  
New York City—417 W. 148  
North Carolina  
Suffolk County

Recognition

Programs, invitations, proclamations, certificates and telegrams relating to recognition of Dr. Jiggetts for her civic work.

Retirement

Correspondence and statements of Dr. Jiggetts's vestiture in the state system.

Roberts family—Clippings.

A large group of clippings from the 1890s, much of it C.M.E. church business.

Roberts family history.

Family reunion programs 1965, 1970; clippings about Dr. Jiggetts's parents, 1943, 1953; photocopy of adoption paper of nephew John W. Roberts by his grandparents, 1943; photocopy of death certificate of Joel Caviness, 1981.

Roberts, Rev. John W.—Estate.

Correspondence and legal papers of the estate, 1955; includes photocopy of holographic will of Dr. Jiggetts's mother, 1952.

Roberts, Rev. John W.—Miscellaneous.

Miscellaneous, including a birthday poem, several deeds, a 1989 clipping of his induction into the Cleveland County Hall of Fame, a single page of a typewritten biography (first page missing), a 1934 bill for 20 gallons of ice cream, a clipping of his golden wedding anniversary, and most importantly, a pencil drawing of a log cabin, ca. 1875-1900, inscribed "The house in which Dathula was borne, one mile from Landrum, S.C., Spartanburg Co."

Roberts, Rev. John W.—Papers from Dietz catalogue.

Materials removed at WCHS from a clothbound jewelry catalog; includes a handbill for an emancipation celebration in Shelby, N.C. on January 1, 1891; handbill of a Sunday School Union meeting; obituary of Mrs. Fuller Poston of Asheville, sister of J.W. Roberts; and many clippings relating to the C.M.E. church, some signed by J.W. Roberts.

Roberts Tabernacle Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, Shelby, N.C.

Manuscript history of the church, 1946; a convention program, 1915; and a ticket, 1958.

St. Mark's Methodist Church, New York City.

Ephemera and a letter, 1926–59, of the church, located at 137th and St. Nicholas Avenue in Harlem. Included are the program from the dedication, in 1926, of the substantial new building of this black-founded (1871) church; program from a Founders' Celebration, 1959; two Sunday bulletins; two letters to Dr. Jiggetts; a 1932 "Recreation Program and Exhibit" flyer listing her as its director of Social Service and Recreation; several announcements of Dr. Jiggetts speaking at the church; and other materials.

Scarsdale Children to Palestine.

A typescript history of "The Scarsdale Community Project of Children to Palestine, Inc. 1944–1955," with several other tissue carbons of typescripts, and a letter.

Sigma Wives.

Letters, ephemera, and clippings, 1944–60, of this auxiliary to her husband's fraternity, of which Dr. Jiggetts was president in 1959.

Social work miscellaneous.

Unsorted documents, 1944–65, generated as a result of Dr. Jiggetts's social work career in New York City.

Speaking engagements.

Invitations, programs, and a few letters for speaking engagements of Dr. Jiggetts, 1949–70, most if not all about Israel.

Third party correspondence.

This small series contains letters between third parties, many of them recommending or introducing Dr. Jiggetts.

1939–49

1950–59

1960–69

1970–79

Will.

Holograph will of 1958 and typewritten will of 1962, updated in pencil in 1970–71.

Urban League.

Souvenir booklet, 1956, on the dedication of a headquarters building in New York City.

Women United for Civic Action.

Mimeographed report, 1959, on “The Status of Negroes in the NYC Department of Purchase,” by the organization. It is unclear whether Dr. Jiggetts was active in it.

## **Box 5.**

Foster Parents to Needy Mississippi.

Drafts of eloquent essays by Dr. Jiggetts regarding the need, describing actual cases, housed in a legal-format folder.

*Family History of the Roberts, Borders, Mauney, Howell, Briggs, and Related Families of Cleveland County and Gaston County, North Carolina*, prepared for the 77th annual family reunion, August 21, 1983. Spiral-bound, offset. “Volume I.”

James D. Marler et al., *The Heritage of Cleveland County: Volume I — 1982* (Shelby, N.C.: Cleveland County Historical Association, 1982).

An account of the John Wesley Roberts family is on page 502.

*Illustrated Catalogue of the Busiest House in America* (1888). Cover stamped:

“Illustrated / Catalogue. / 1888. / L.L. Dietz, / Shelby, N.C.”

Used as a scrapbook by John Wesley Roberts, with ephemera on prohibition and C.M.E. church activities in Shelby and Washington, N.C., and clippings, chiefly about prohibition, pasted in. Loose clippings were removed and are filed separately in Box 4.

Medallion.

Women’s International Exposition. Engraved on reverse: “J. IDA JIGGETTS / WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT / 1956 / FOR HER / UNDAUNTED UNDERTAKING TO / AID ONE RACE — HUMANITY.”

Medallion.

Obverse: a Jewish man with side curls and a yarmulke. Reverse: Hebrew lettering on a slip of paper, with English message in ink, mostly undecipherable.

## **Box 6.**

Oversize photographs (8 items).

Group of women, unidentified, by Pittsburgh photographer.

Group of women, "testimonial luncheon honoring Mrs. Louise Fisher Morris," New York City, 1964.

Group of men, "30th Annual Dinner, The Reveille Club of New York, Inc.," 1962.

Mixed group, "5th Annual Dinner, Harlem Mortgage & Improvement Council," New York, 1958.

Mixed group, "Lord Mayor Robert L. Briscoe Scholarship Foundation Dinner, Jewish Community Center," New York, 1958.

Group of women, "11th Annual Luncheon, The Utility Club Inc.," New York, 1966.

Mixed group, "New York Branch, Association for the Study of Negro Life and History," New York, 1961.

Mixed group, unidentified.

## **Paintings.**

Painting 01 - Round Island; View From Blanks Cottage, Portsmouth, N.H., J. Ida Jiggetts, 1937. Includes a photograph of the cottage.

Painting 02 – North Congregational Church, Piscataqua River at Night, Portsmouth, N.H., J. Ida Jiggetts, n.d.