

GEORGE W. JONES PAPERS

Mss. 4135

Inventory

Compiled by
Nick Skaggs

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2019
Revised 2021

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SUMMARY

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| Size | 3 linear ft. |
| Geographic Locations | Canton, Mississippi; Marion, Alabama; Florida; California; Louisiana |
| Inclusive Dates | 1902-1984, undated |
| Bulk Dates | 1942-1950 |
| Languages | English, Japanese |
| Summary | George W. Jones, from Canton, Mississippi, was a member of the U.S. Coast Guard during WWII and later a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve. Collection consists of correspondence and personal papers documenting primarily the lives of Jones and his family. |
| Access Restrictions | None. |
| Reproduction Note | May be reproduced. |
| Copyright | For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law. |
| Related Collections | Laura Boddie Jones Bowers Papers, Mss. 3546 Norwood Plantation Store Ledger, Mss. 3036 |
| Citation | George W. Jones Papers, Mss. 4135, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La. |
| Stack Location(s) | D:102-104, OS:J |

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

George W. (William) Jones was the son of druggist Ben H. (Hamlet) Jones (1879-1963) and Laura Boddie Jones, née West (1892-1971), of Canton, Mississippi. George was born on July 11, 1922. His other siblings were Laura Boddie West Jones (1915-2003) and Ellen S. (Sebastian) Jones. George was called Brother by his family. He graduated from Canton High School in 1940. He attended Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for one year before attending the Marion Institute in Marion, Alabama. He enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard on December 11, 1942 in Memphis, Tennessee and completed boot camp training in St. Augustine, Florida. He was stationed in various locations in Florida before being transferred to the U.S.S. Manasquan in New London, Connecticut. He was then transferred to the U.S.S. Harveson in California. After serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, he served in the U.S. Navy Reserve. He died on May 16, 1991 and is buried in Canton.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of correspondence and personal papers that document primarily the lives of George W. Jones, members of the Jones family, and members of the West family. Correspondence is mainly from George's family and friends. Correspondents include George's mother Laura, father Ben, sisters Laura Boddie and Ellen, grandmother Lily S. (Sebastian) West, and grandfather William A. (Alice) West. There are some letters written by George throughout the correspondence as well. Many letters include enclosures, chiefly of newspaper clippings and forwarded letters but also some photographic prints. Topics discussed include news regarding Canton, World War II, the Jones family's drug store, George's well-being and duties, and other family members and friends.

Personal papers include printed items, ephemera, notes, and picture postcards collected by George. These materials document chiefly George's time in the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy Reserve. Printed items include programs, bulletins, pamphlets, newspaper issues and clippings, and other materials generated by the U.S. Coast Guard, other military entities, religious organizations, and Canton entities. The picture postcard collection contains printed images primarily of New Orleans, Louisiana; Canton; and Japan. Additionally, there are postcards used as receipts and invoices by Bridges, West & Co. of Norwood, Louisiana. This was most likely William A. West's mercantile business.

LIST OF SERIES

Series I. Correspondence, 1937-1952, undated

Series II. Personal Papers, circa 1902-1908, 1940-1951, 1984, undated

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Correspondence, 1937-1952, undated

Series consists of letters written mainly by George W. Jones' father Ben and mother Laura from Canton, Mississippi. Other correspondents include George's sisters Laura Boddie and Ellen, grandmother Lily, grandfather William, family friends, and relatives. Most letters discuss news regarding Canton, the Jones family's drug store, World War II, George's well-being and duties, and other family members and friends. Many letters also include enclosures of newspaper clippings, printed ephemera, forwarded letters, and a few photographic prints.

Most letters from 1942 are addressed to George while he was attending the Marion Institute in Marion, Alabama. Letters of interest include: Ben discusses General Douglas MacArthur's strategy at Corregidor in Manila Bay (February 27, 1942). Laura Boddie, working as a librarian at Louisiana State Normal College in Natchitoches at the time, describes her visit to Camp Polk in Vernon Parish (postmarked April 27, 1942). Ben discusses his disbelief in evolution (postmarked April 30, 1942). Ben and Laura Boddie mention her interview in Grenada, Mississippi for a position as a special services librarian attached to the 346th Infantry Regiment of the 87th Division stationed at Camp McCain (November 22-23, 1942). Orders from the U.S. Coast Guard recruiting office in Memphis, Tennessee to George instruct him to report for active duty. Enclosures include a small photograph of George in uniform and an identification card (December 28, 1942).

Most letters from 1943 are addressed to George while he was stationed in Florida in the U.S. Coast Guard. Letters of interest include: Laura Boddie, working as a librarian at Camp McCain near Grenada at the time, mentions construction work at the camp to prepare for the arrival of new soldiers (January 28, 1943). She later mentions her engagement to Lieutenant Earle "Bud" C. (Cooper) Bowers, Jr. (March 8, 1943). George, stationed in Cocoa, Florida at the time, writes that he has been promoted from apprentice seaman to seaman second class (S 2/C; April 21, 1943). He also describes his watchtower duties on the Florida coast (May 1, 1943). George's parents and grandmother describe Laura Boddie's marriage to Earle at Grace Episcopal Church in Canton (May 9; postmarked May 10-11 and 15, 1943). Ben mentions Italy's surrender (September 8, 1943). George's parents and Laura Boddie congratulate George on his promotion to seaman first class (S 1/C; September 21; postmarked September 22; October 5, 1943). Laura Boddie describes the 346th Infantry's field training at Camp McCain (November 4, 1943). George's parents mention that Earle will leave Camp McCain for maneuvers in Tennessee (November 21 and 23, 1943). There is also a photograph of George attached to letters from his parents (postmarked December 4, 1943).

Most letters from 1944 are addressed to George while he was stationed in Florida; New London, Connecticut; and California. Letters of interest include: Ben mentions that George has been transferred to Fort Pierce, Florida (February 27, 1944). Laura Boddie, writing from Providence, Rhode Island, mentions that her husband Earle has received his deployment orders and that he will leave for Europe (March 26, 1944). Ben writes that some Hawaiian soldiers from Camp Shelby are in Canton and states that "their sole object in coming here was to find loose women" (April 9, 1944). There are several photographs of Laura Boddie and her dog attached to a letter from George's mother (postmarked May 1, 1944). Ben mentions that George has been

transferred to the U.S.S. Manasquan at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut (July 23, 1944). George's mother mentions that Laura Boddie's husband Earle Bowers was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded by a German paratrooper (postmarked August 15, 1944). Ben tells George that he should avoid interacting with any African American military members during service (August 27, 1944). George's parents and Laura Boddie mention that Earle was killed on September 27 in Holland (October 20-21; postmarked October 23-25, 1944). George's parents mention that Laura Boddie has given birth to a son, Earle Cooper Bowers, III (November 17 and 20, 1944). George's parents mention the death of their nephew George Sebastian West, Jr., son of George and Lillian West, in Germany (November 26 and 30, 1944). George's uncle George West also mentions the death (December 14, 1944).

Most letters from 1945 are addressed to George while he was stationed in California and on the U.S.S. Harveson. Letters of interest include: A broadside from mayor C. N. Harris announcing V-E Day services in Canton is attached to a letter from George's mother (May 8, 1945). A news-sheet from the Episcopal Student Center at LSU (called *The Rubric*) is attached to a letter from George's mother (May 18, 1945). The news-sheet gives updates about former affiliates and students, including Laura Boddie and George. Family friend Lionell Ellis, writing from Frankenthal, Germany, describes his time in Antwerp, Belgium leading up to the surrender of the German armies (May 30, 1945). George's parents mention the death of George's grandfather William on July 10, 1945 (July 12-13, 1945). Ben mentions the death of George's grandmother Lily (July 31, 1945). A broadside from mayor C. N. Harris announcing the surrender of Japan is attached to a letter from George's mother (August 16, 1945).

Letters from 1950 to 1952 are a mixture of correspondence received and sent by George. He was serving as a seaman in the U.S. Navy Reserve in Green Cove Springs, Florida at the time. Most letters discuss his duties and activities in Green Cove Springs. A letter of interest includes: U.S. Representative John Bell Williams writes to Ben regarding George's application for a hardship discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve (August 8, 1951).

Series II. Personal Papers, circa 1902-1908, 1940-1951, 1984, undated

Series consists chiefly of papers, printed items (mainly newspaper issues and clippings, programs, bulletins, and pamphlets), and ephemera created and collected by George before and during his time as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy Reserve and during his travels. Some items were designated by George as scrapbook materials and sent home to Canton while he was away. Despite this, he never compiled an actual scrapbook. Materials of interest include George's confirmation certificate from Grace Episcopal Church in Canton (July 26, 1942); programs from recruit shows at the Coast Guard Training Station in St. Augustine, Florida (January-February 1943); a map, hand drawn by George, of Barracks No. 5 in Cocoa, Florida (August 12, 1943); an issue of *The Helios* (vol. X, no. 2) published by Canton High School (oversize, November 9, 1943); an activity program from the United Service Organizations (USO) in Fort Pierce, Florida (oversize, February-March 1944); another USO activity program that also lists separate services for African American soldiers in Jacksonville, Florida (oversize, undated); a movie program, annotated by George, from the U.S. Coast Guard Section Base in Key West, Florida (March 1944); a leave request card allowing George to visit Providence, Rhode Island while he was stationed on the U.S.S. Manasquan in New London,

Connecticut (July 30, 1944); a football program regarding a game between the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Tufts University (September 23, 1944); printed Japanese ephemera and a metallic item (circa 1944); U.S. Coast Guard insignias and patches (undated); and a variety of matchbook cases (undated).

In addition to the aforementioned items, there are issues of *The Key Outpost* by the United States Naval Operating Base of Key West, Florida (October 1943; March-May 1944); issues of *Khaki Keynotes* by the Harbor Defenses of Key West (March-May 1944); George's picture postcard collection depicting chiefly scenes and images of New Orleans (some oversize) but also some scenes of Canton and Japan (circa 1902-1908, undated); and postcards used as receipts and invoices by Bridges, West & Co. of Norwood, Louisiana (circa 1903).

INDEX TERMS

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found throughout the entire collection.

Bowers, Earle C. (Earle Cooper), Jr., -1944.
Bowers, Laura Boddie Jones, 1915-2003.
Canton (Miss.)--Social life and customs--20th century.
Drugstores--Mississippi--Canton.
Jones, B. H. (Ben Hamlet), 1879-1963.
Jones, George W. (George William), 1922-1991.
Jones, Laura Boddie West, 1892-1971.
Jones family.
Letters (correspondence)
Marion Institute (Marion, Ala.)
Pharmacists--Mississippi--Canton.
Picture postcards.
Photographic prints.
Printed ephemera.
United States. Coast Guard.
United States. Navy Reserve.
West family.
World War, 1939-1945--United States.

CONTAINER LIST

| <u>Stack Location</u> | <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> | <u>Contents (with dates)</u> |
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| D:102-104 | 1 | 1-41 | Correspondence, 1937-May 1944 |
| | 2 | 1-40 | Correspondence, June 1944-1950 |
| | 3 | 1-4 | Correspondence, 1951-1952, undated |
| Series II. Personal Papers, circa 1902-1908, 1940-1951, 1984, undated | | | |
| | | 5-17 | Papers, printed items, and ephemera, 1940-1951, 1984, undated |
| OS:J | -- | 1 | Papers, printed items, and ephemera, circa 1943-1946, undated |
| D:102-104 | 3 | 18 | Class notes, circa 1943-1944 |
| | | 19 | <i>The Key Outpost</i> (Key West, Florida), Oct. 1943, March-May 1944 |
| | | 20 | <i>Khaki Keynotes</i> (Key West, Florida), March-May 1944 |
| | | 21-24 | Picture postcard collection, circa 1902-1908, undated Bridges, West & Co. (Norwood, Louisiana) postcards, circa 1903 |
| OS:J | -- | 1 | Picture postcard collection, circa 1902-1908, undated |
| D:102-104 | 3 | 25 | Bridges, West & Co. (Norwood, Louisiana) postcards, circa 1903 <i>A Prayer Book for Soldiers and Sailors</i> , circa 1941-1945 |