

Guide to the Merrill E. Nelson Reference Collection

1932-2014



Published for the African American Methodist Heritage Center By
General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church, Madison, New Jersey
P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940
2018-11-15

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aamc.in.gcah5663

The purpose of this finding aid is to help you understand the nature of this collection and to assist you in the retrieval of material from this collection. The following pages contain a brief biographical history of the person, or persons, who created or collected these papers, followed by a general description of the collection in the scope and content note. If more detailed information is warranted then series descriptions also appear. The container listing appears last and is the listing of material in each box, or container, of this collection. To request material you need to turn to the container listing section. It is essentially a listing of file folders, or artifact items, in the collection. Each folder, or item, has a call number associated with it. Each folder also lists the inclusive dates of the material in the folder. On the material request form list both the call number and the folder, or item, title. Use a different line for each folder, or item, requested. When your request sheet is complete, or full, bring it to the archivist and the material will be retrieved.

Biographical Note

Merrill E. Nelson (1908-1998), United Methodist Minister, was born on December 19, 1908, to Reverend D. W. Nelson and Lydia Jane Durrant Nelson in Althiemer, Arkansas. Nelson had eleven other siblings. He later graduated from Philander Smith College. Nelson would serve forty years of ministry in both the Lexington and West Ohio Annual Conferences. He began his career in 1938 as pastor of the Marietta Court Methodist Episcopal Church in Canfield, Ohio. Subsequent pastorates include Delaware-Marion (1940-1942), Columbus Wheatland (1942-1948), Cleveland Mt. Pleasant (1948-1959), Toledo (1959-1965), Braden (1965-1966), Clair (1966-1969), and Clair St. Luke (1969-1987). Nelson retired in 1978 but continued to serve local churches at Broadus UMC (Springfield) and St. Luke's UMC (Urbancrest) at the request of the bishop. If there was one unique gift he brought to these churches it was the ability to raise funds to pay off individual church building debts. This happened five different times during his tenures.

Nelson's ministry went beyond the local church as well. During his career he served on the secretarial staff in both the Lexington and West Ohio Conferences. This responsibility should not be understood as a clerical office position but rather as secretary for annual conference meetings. He played an active role in the Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) caucus, Columbus Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and Interfaith Campus Ministry at Central State University.

Nelson married Marguerite Sharp Flemming which lasted forty-nine years until her death. He died at the age of eighty-nine years old in 1998.

Scope and Content Note

The original gift included a run of Lexington Annual Conference journals that were transferred to the AAMHC serials collection. There are two publications in this reference collection. One is biography on Bishop Matthew Clair and the other is a printed supplement to the 1932-1933 Cincinnati Branch of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. There are two other records which seemed not to be part of the original collection but added later on. They are a clipping on African American delegates to the 1952 General Conference along with two promotional pieces from the Community Cornerstones organization which promoted historic African American communities in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Arrangement

Material has been arranged in the following manner. Arranged by folder title.

Related Material



Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding this collection.

Use Access

Detailed use restrictions relating to our collections can be requested from the office of the archivist at the General Commission on Archives and History. Photocopying is handled by the staff and may be limited in certain instances. Before using any material for publication from this collection a formal request for permission to publish is expected and required.

Preferred Citation

When citing material from this collection please use the following format: Direct reference to the item or its file folder, Merrill E. Nelson Reference Collection, African American Methodist Heritage Center - GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. Do not make use of the item's call number as that is not a stable descriptor.

Index Terms

Subject Terms

African American Methodists
Biographies
General conferences

Geographic Terms

Maryland
Ohio

Occupation Terms

Minister

Subject Names - Person

Clair, Matthew Wesley

Genre Terms

Biographies
Clippings
DVD-Video discs
Publications

Table of Contents



Container List

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2413-6-2:5	Bishop Matthew Wesley Clair Biography	1973
2413-6-2:6	Supplement to the Cincinnati Branch, Woman's Foreign Missionary Society Report, 1932-1933	1932
2413-6-2:7	Clipping: Race Methodists Play Prominent Roles in San Francisco Quadrennial - May 3	1952
2413-6-2:8	Community Cornerstones, Montgomery County, Maryland	2014

