



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Ida Jones collection**

1931-1988

Sc MG 414

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

## Summary

**Creator:** Jones, Ida E., 1874-1959

**Title:** Ida Jones collection

**Date:** 1931-1988

**Size:** 0.21 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Gift of Roberta Townsend, 1991.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** The Ida Jones collection consists of letters Jones wrote to her friend and sponsor Roberta Townsend (1931-1958) concerning her artwork, personal matters, and health. There is also correspondence following her 1959 death, between her daughter, Ida J. Williams, Roberta Townsend, and representatives from various American art museums and civic organizations concerning the sale and exhibit of Jones's paintings.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Ida Jones collection, Sc MG 414, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Janice Quinter, February 1993.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: artwork.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

## Creator History

Ida Ella Ruth Jones, an American folk painter, was the daughter of a former slave who began her artistic career in 1945 at age 72. Most of her early years were spent working on her parents' farm and

caring for her younger brothers and sisters. In 1892, she married William Jones, minister of the Church of Christ in Ercildoun, Pennsylvania, and the village blacksmith. Together they raised ten children, including Ida J. Williams, who also became her biographer.

Jones devoted her time to her family, church, and community until she began painting in both oil and watercolor. With only three formal lessons in oil painting, she painted the things around her that she loved most: houses, fields, landscapes, flowers, fruit, and animals, as well as biblical parables. Eventually, her work was discovered which led to several exhibitions and one-woman shows. She first exhibited at the Chester County (PA) Art Association's 19th Annual Spring Show in 1950. In 1951, her first one-woman show was held at Lincoln University. Two years later, Mr. and Mrs. Walter P. Townsend, friends and patrons of the artist, sponsored another one-woman show in Pennsylvania. In 1952, Jones's paintings were exhibited with the work of 115 other artists at the Pyramid Club Art Show in Philadelphia. In addition, her work was shown at the Art Alliance in that city, where a New York collector took interest in her painting. In all, Jones completed over three hundred paintings in her fourteen years as an artist.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Ida Jones collection consists of letters Jones wrote to her friend and sponsor Roberta Townsend (1931-1958) concerning her artwork, personal matters, and health. There is also correspondence following her 1959 death, between her daughter, Ida J. Williams, Roberta Townsend, and representatives from various American art museums and civic organizations concerning the sale and exhibit of Jones's paintings.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American painters  
African American women  
African American women artists

### **Names**

Jones, Ida E., 1874-1959  
Townsend, Roberta

## Container List

b. 1 f. 1	1931
b. 1 f. 2	1951
b. 1 f. 3	1952
b. 1 f. 4	1953
b. 1 f. 5	1954
b. 1 f. 6	1955
b. 1 f. 7	1956
b. 1 f. 8	1957
b. 1 f. 9	1958
b. 1 f. 10	1959
b. 1 f. 11	1960
b. 1 f. 12	1966
b. 1 f. 13	1970
b. 1 f. 14	1974
b. 1 f. 15	1976
b. 1 f. 16	1977
b. 1 f. 17	1978
b. 1 f. 18	1979
b. 1 f. 19	1980
b. 1 f. 20	1983
b. 1 f. 21	1987
b. 1 f. 22	1988