



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

Guide to the

**Oakley C. Johnson papers**

1946-1957

Sc Micro R-972

Processed by Stanton F. Biddle.

## Summary

**Creator:** Johnson, Oakley C., 1890-

**Title:** Oakley C. Johnson papers

**Date:** 1946-1957

**Source:** Gift of Oakley Johnson, 1968

**Abstract:** Case files from the Louisiana Civil Rights Congress including pamphlets, legal transcripts and briefs, press releases, news clippings, and correspondence which documents the legal activities of the Congress, particularly its attempt to secure justice for Paul Washington and Ocie Jugger, both sentenced to death on rape charges. Material from Johnson's hearing before the House Un-American Activities Committee, 1957; and manuscripts and materials from his research for several writing projects, including "Marxism and the Negro," "Mask of Justice," and a "Glossary of Twenty-five Historic Civil Rights Cases." Also, notes, source materials, and manuscripts of his extensive writings on civil liberties and segregation, together with material concerning a trip through the South in 1957.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Researchers are restricted to microfilm copy.

**Alternative Form Available:** Collection available on microfilm; Scholarly Resources, Inc.; call number Sc Micro R-972

**Preferred citation:** Oakley C. Johnson papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Stanton F. Biddle; Machine-readable finding aid created by Apex Data Services; revised by Terry Catapano.

## Creator History

## Chronology

1890, March 22 Born in Standish, Michigan; son of Calvin and Elizabeth Gibbon Johnson.  
1908-1912 Served as rural schoolteacher and took summer courses at Ferris Institute, Big Rapids, Michigan.  
1912 Joined Socialist Party of America.  
1913 Married Mary Olmsted (d.1949)  
1917 Received diploma and state teachers' life certificate from Michigan State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Michigan.  
1919 Delegate to Chicago Communist Party Organizing Convention.  
1920 Received A.B. degree cum laude (Phi Beta Kappa) from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.  
1920-1928 Instructor in English and Rhetoric at the University of Michigan.  
1921 Received M.A. degree in English from the University of Michigan  
1928 Received Ph.D. in English from University of Michigan. Subject of doctoral dissertation was *Literary Allusion in Contemporary American Literature*, as characterized in the field of rhetoric and aesthetics.  
1928-1930 Assistant Professor of English at Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York  
1930-1932 Instructor of English at the College of the City of New York (evening session), New York, New York  
1933-1935 Newspaper reporter ( *Daily Worker*,) editor ( *The Monthly Review*), teacher (New York Worker School), lecturer  
1935-1937 and 1939 Traveled in Europe  
1935-1936 Assistant Professor of English at the Institute of Modern Languages, Moscow, U.S.S.R.  
1938-1942 Taught intermittently at the Workers Schools, New York, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
1940-1944 Served on staff of *Daily Worker*  
1945-1946 Taught at Augusta Savage School, New York (Harlem), New York  
1946-1947 Assistant Professor of English at Talladega College, Talladega Alabama  
1947-1948 Received Carnegie Grant-in-Aid for a study of "Preventive Remedial English in the Negro Secondary School."  
1947-1951 Associate Professor of English, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana  
1948 Married Mary Lea Jackson  
1949-1951 Served as Executive Secretary of the Louisiana Civil Rights Congress  
1951-1951 Received Carnegie Grant-in-Aid for a study of "Unequal Justice in Louisiana."  
1951-1952 Associate Professor of English, Tillotson College, Austin, Texas  
1954-1955 Taught at Jefferson School of Social Science, New York, New York  
1957, April Investigated by the House of Representative Committee on Un-American Activities for alleged communist activities  
1957 Took extended trip through the South, during which he became involved in the defense of the Jenkins couple. Co-Author of: *The Way of Composition* (1925) Author of: *The Arguer's Handbook* (1927) *The Day is Coming* (1957) *An American Century* (ed. 1967)

## Scope and Content Note

The Oakley C. Johnson Papers, numbering eight boxes, focus on the activities and interests of this English professor and civil liberties advocate from approximately 1946 to 1957. Of special interest is the data relating to Johnson's involvement with Louisiana Civil Rights Congress, and his manuscripts of writings on racial prejudice in the United States.

The collection is organized into two series, corresponding to Johnson's years of teaching in the South from 1946 to 1952 and his activities after returning North in 1952.

**Arrangement:** Papers organized into two series: I Southern Period, 1946-1953; and II Post Southern Period, 1952-1959

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African Americans -- Civil rights  
African Americans -- Political activity  
African Americans -- Segregation  
African Americans -- Societies, etc  
Civil rights -- Louisiana  
Civil rights -- United States  
Criminal justice, Administration of -- United States  
Segregation -- United States  
Socialism -- United States  
Trials (Rape) -- United States

### **Occupations**

Civil rights workers

### **Geographic Names**

Louisiana -- Social conditions  
Southern States -- Description and travel  
Southern States -- Social conditions  
United States -- Politics and government -- 1953-1961  
United States -- Social conditions -- 1945-

### **Names**

Johnson, Oakley C., 1890-  
Jugger, Ocie  
Washington, Paul M., 1921-2002  
Civil Rights Congress of Louisiana  
United States. Congress. House. Committee on Un-American Activities

## Container List

### b. 1 r. 1 Southern Period 1949-1952

The first series Southern Period, 1946-1952, contains material relating to Johnson's academic pursuits at Talladega College (Alabama), Dillard University (Louisiana), and Tillotson College (Texas); as well as data concerning his role as Executive Secretary of the Louisiana Civil Rights Congress from 1949 to 1951. This material (pamphlets, legal transcripts and briefs, press releases, clippings, correspondence) involves the legal activities of the Congress, particularly its attempt to secure justice for Paul Washington and Ocie Jugger, two men accused, convicted, and sentenced to die on a charge of rape.

#### Talladega College 1946-1947

- b. 1 f. 1 r. 1 Financial Materials
- b. 1 f. 2 r. 1 Photographs
- b. 1 f. 3 r. 1 Student Publications And Programs

#### Dillard University 1947-1951

- b. 1 f. 4 r. 1 Class Register
- b. 1 f. 5a r. 1 Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 5b r. 1 Correspondence - Ira De. A. Reid
- b. 1 f. 6 r. 1 Pamphlets And Speeches
- b. 1 f. 7 r. 1 Programs
- b. 1 f. 8 r. 1 School Publications
- b. 2 f. 9 r. 1 Student Publications (four folders)

#### Tillotson College 1951-1952

- b. 2 f. 10 r. 1 Class Register
- b. 2 f. 11 r. 1 English Department
- b. 2 f. 12 r. 1 General
- b. 2 f. 13 r. 1 Personal
- b. 2 f. 14 r. 1 Student Publications
- b. 2 f. 15 r. 1 Yearbook

#### Louisiana Civil Rights Congress 1949-1951

- b. 3 f. 16a r. 2 Cases
- b. 3 f. 16b r. 2 Cases - Roy Brooks
- b. 3 f. 16c r. 2 Cases - Honeycutt
- b. 3 f. 16d r. 2 Cases - Trenton Six, "Trials For Murder (Alleged)"
- b. 4 f. 17a r. 2 Cases - Jugger / Washington (4 folders)
- b. 4 f. 17b r. 2 Cases - Jugger / Washington (3 folders)
- b. 4 f. 18 r. 3 Correspondence
- b. 4 f. 19 r. 3 Correspondence - Jugger / Washington Case (4 folders)
- b. 4 f. 20 r. 3 Miscellaneous (2 folders)
- b. 5 f. 21 r. 3 Press Clippings
- b. 5 f. 22 r. 3 Press Releases (4 folders)
- b. 5 f. 23 r. 3 Progressive Party
- b. 5 f. 24 r. 3 Young Progressive Party

#### Carnegie Grant-In-Aid For "Study Of Unequal Justice Louisiana," 1950-1951

Southern Period (cont.)

Carnegie Grant-In-Aid For "Study Of Unequal Justice Louisiana," (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 25 r. 3 Correspondence
- b. 5 f. 26 r. 3 Proposal, Outline And Study
- b. 5 f. 27 r. 3 Source Materials (Clippings and Pamphlets)

General 1948-1952

- b. 5 f. 28 r. 3 *Federated Press Releases (Dillard Oaks)*
- b. 5 f. 29 r. 3 Genocide - Speech To Unitarians, Austin Texas 1952
- b. 5 f. 30 r. 3 Miscellaneous
- b. 5 f. 31 r. 3 Various Legal Documents

Post-Southern Period 1952-1959

The second series Post Southern Period, 1952-1959, covers Johnson's teaching, writing, and civil rights activities after he returned to New York in 1952. Notes, source materials, and manuscripts of his extensive writings on civil liberties and segregation are included in this section, together with material concerning a trip through the South in 1957.

- b. 6 r. 4 Professional Interests And Activities
- b. 6 f. 1 r. 3 Application Folder (Teaching)
- b. 6 f. 2 r. 3 Brooklyn College 1952
- b. 6 f. 3a r. 3 Civil Rights Congress - Statement Of Purpose 1954
- b. 6 f. 3b r. 3 Civil Rights Congress Publications 1952-1956
- b. 6 f. 4 r. 3 Clippings, Letters, Leaflets
- b. 6 f. 5 r. 3 Correspondence
- b. 6 f. 6 r. 3 Correspondence - Photo Evidence Of Segregation
- b. 6 f. 7 r. 3 Help To A Lawyer On A Brief 1954
- b. 6 f. 8 r. 3 House Un-American Activities Committee Material, (Investigation Of Hearing Regarding Oakley Johnson) 1957 -
- b. 6 f. 9 r. 3 March On Washington 1959
- b. 6 f. 10 r. 3 Patterson, William
- b. 6 f. 11 r. 3 Petition 1954
- b. 6 f. 12 r. 3 Tutoring And Special Classes
- Manuscripts, Publications And Materials
- b. 7 f. 13 r. 3 Book On Negroes - Various Planned Writings
- b. 7 f. 14 r. 3 *Caracas Letter: Six Year Retrogression Toward A Police State" (By W. L. Patterson)*
- b. 7 f. 15 r. 3 "Civil Rights Congress: Cases In The Courts" - Notes (3 folders)
- b. 7 f. 16 r. 3 "The Decline Of Freedom In The U.S.A."
- b. 7 f. 17a r. 3 Glossary Of Twenty-Five Historic Civil Rights Cases (2 folders)
- b. 7 f. 17b r. 3 Glossary - Preliminary Sketches
- b. 7 f. 18 r. 3 Marxism And The Negro (Material For Book) (2 folders)
- b. 8 f. 19 r. 3 "The `Mask' Of Justice" (2 folders)
- b. 8 f. 20 r. 3 "The `Mask' Of Justice" - Genocide Source Material
- b. 8 f. 21 r. 3 "The `Mask' Of Justice" - The Letter Of The Law
- b. 8 f. 22 r. 3 Metropolitan Music School Brochure 1954
- b. 8 f. 23 r. 3 Texas Efforts To Do A Study Of Unequal Justice In That State 1952-1954?

Southern Trip 1957

Post-Southern Period (cont.)

Southern Trip (cont.)

b. 8 f. 24 r. 3      **General Report**

b. 8 f. 25 r. 3      **Jenkins Case (3 folders)**

Appendix: Comprises Additional Materials Received Into The Oakley  
Johnson Papers Following The Collection's Initial Completion In August, 1968

b. 8 f. 1 r. 3      Article - "The South's Amended Barratry Laws," By G. Pearson Smith Jr.  
1963

b. 8 f. 2 r. 3      Correspondence 1966-1968

b. 8 f. 3 r. 3      National Committee To Secure Justice For Morton Sobell 1958