



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

Guide to the

**Olivia Pearl Stokes papers : additions**

1972-1992

Sc MG 351

## Summary

**Creator:** Stokes, Olivia Pearl, 1916-

**Title:** Olivia Pearl Stokes papers : additions

**Date:** 1972-1992

**Size:** 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Gift of Olivia Pearl Stokes, June 1993.

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

**Abstract:** An educator, lecturer, author and administrator, Olivia Pearl Stokes was an ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches and was well known as a religious educator. Olivia Pearl Stokes papers (Additions) document aspects of Stokes' career, and include writings of others.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Olivia Pearl Stokes papers : additions, Sc MG 351, 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, June 1993.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

**Related Materials:**

Olivia Pearl Stokes papers, Sc MG 432, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

## Creator History

Olivia Pearl Stokes, educator, lecturer, author, and administrator, was born on January 1, 1916, in Middlesex, North Carolina, and raised in New York City. She received her B.S. and her M.A. in Education from New York University. In 1952, Stokes completed her Ed.D. at Teacher's College, Columbia University. She was an ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches and was well known as a religious educator.

Stokes began her professional career as the Associate Director of the Baptist Educational Center in Harlem. From 1953 to 1966, she served as Director of the Department of Religious Education for the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Her affiliation with the National Council of Churches included her work as an Urban Educational Consultant to their Department of Educational Development, 1966-1973, and as a consultant to the Division of Education and Ministry, 1975-1976. During her teaching career, Stokes was an associate professor at City University of New York (Lehman College and City College) and New York University. She also taught at the Colgate Rochester Theological School and the Andover-Newton Theological Seminary.

Stokes was a founder of the Greater Harlem Comprehensive Guidance Center in 1979, and served as its executive director from 1979 to 1990. The Center serves minority adolescent students through counseling, career guidance, and cultural enrichment programs. In 1986, as a Fulbright Fellow, she studied Yoruba civilization at the University of Ife, Nigeria. In 1990, Dr. Stokes was a fellow at the Mary Bunting Institute of Radcliffe/Harvard University.

As a lecturer, Stokes used her experiences as an educator and traveler to speak about religious topics, educational issues, and African society and culture. She published two books for children, *Why the Spider Lives in Corners* and *The Beauty of Being Black*. She also contributed to many religious and educational publications.

Among the honors awarded Dr. Stokes are the National Bethune Achievement Award of the National Council of Negro Women in 1976, and the International Award from the Business and Professional Women's Association in 1979. She was one of fifty-five Black women profiled in the 1981 Radcliffe College book *Women of Courage*. In 1987, she was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa from Marymount Manhattan College.

## **Scope and Content Note**

Olivia Pearl Stokes papers: additions document aspects of Stokes' career. They include writings of others, such as a speech about public school desegregation by Kenneth B. Clark, and information on organizations with which Stokes was affiliated, including the National Black Child Development Institute and Union Theological Seminary. There are two papers regarding American students at African universities, information on a tour to Africa which was led by Stokes for American educators, and a subject file about families.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American students  
African American women authors  
African American women clergy

African American women educators  
Authors, Black

**Names**

Stokes, Olivia Pearl, 1916-  
National Black Child Development Institute  
Union Theological Seminary (New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence 1992  
Writing by others
- b. 1 f. 2 1972
- b. 1 f. 3 Murphy, E. Jefferson. "The Development of United States Study Programs  
in Africa" 1974  
Organizations
- b. 1 f. 4 American Baptist Churches
- b. 1 f. 5 National Black Child Development Institute 1986
- b. 1 f. 6 Union Theological Seminary 1992  
Tours
- b. 1 f. 7 African seminars 1972
- b. 1 f. 8 1988
- b. 1 f. 9 Subject file on families
- b. 1 f. 10 Class notes