Primary Source Material on African-Americans

in Special Collections and Archives*

--Photograph from the Charles Bowden Papers

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*This is a selected list of resources from our holdings. For a comprehensive list of materials in Special Collections, please consult the Regional History and the University Archives Collections Guides.
Recording of lecture by Ackenhead, a teacher who moved to Missouri where he was hired as a field representative for the Missouri Commission on Human Rights in 1955. In July 1966, he moved to Kennett and became a full-time investigator of human rights violations. In this recording, which took place on July 7, 1969, he addressed an audience at Southeast Missouri State University on the difficulties inherent in school desegregation in the 1960s. The end of the recording is a question and answer session with the audience. Running time: 01:06:51.

This oral history project was produced by two Historic Preservation classes, in order to demonstrate the meaning of “work ethic” in the Central Mississippi River Valley area. It consists of audio tape, videotape, and written transcription of interviews conducted by project team members, and biographical information on those people who were interviewed.

Letters, newspaper clippings, photographs (13) and yearbooks (2) relating to Bowden, a prominent African-American educator in Southeast Missouri and principal of the Lincoln High School, Charleston, [Mo], for 23 years. Yearbooks are from Lincoln High School (1950) and Lincoln University, Jefferson City, [Mo] (1950).

Carroll Manuscript, Frank, undated. 1 item. 2002.068.  
Photocopied typescript (3p) possibly by William [Kaempfer], City Clerk, Cape Girardeau, regarding Frank Carroll, an African-American food vendor in the city.

Clippings Collection, 1871-2001. 12.0 linear feet. 2007.204.  
Consists of newspaper clippings, from a variety of sources, on topics relating to the history of southeast Missouri and the surrounding region. Clippings are arranged by subject.

Two legal documents relating to the sale of slaves in Cape Girardeau County.

Millner, Louise R. Sparks Collection, 1941-1986. 21 items. 2008.014.  
Newspaper clippings, correspondence, and other materials relating to the life of Louise R. Sparks Millner, a prominent African-American businesswoman of Southeast Missouri. Millner owned and operated the Sparks Funeral Homes of Cape Girardeau and Sikeston, Mo for 48 years, and was an active member of the community, focusing especially on the educational needs of children.

NAACP Report: Investigation into the Lynching of Cleo Wright at Sikeston, Missouri, January 23, 1942 (Microfilm), circa 1942. 1 reel. 2007.082.  
Microfilmed copies from the NAACP Collection at the Library of Congress concerning the lynching of Cleo Wright in Sikeston.

President’s Office Subject Files, 1873-1983. 70.0 linear feet. 2007.206.  
Subject files from the Office of the President of Southeast Missouri State University, dating from the university's establishment as the Third District Normal School in 1873. Each president of the university, from 1873-1983, is represented in this collection. Some files are restricted.

Transcripts and 150 audio cassettes of interviews on the history of the cotton industry in Scott County [MO] 1920-1988. Also includes photographs of the people interviewed as well as other materials related to the operation of the oral history project.
3 scrapbooks of poems, songs, stories, and plays, some published, written by Myrtle Sheppard, an African American school teacher in rural southeast Missouri. Many of Sheppard’s works in the collection relate to directly Sheppard’s life experiences. Also included are articles written about Sheppard shortly before her death in 1979.

Reports and correspondence resulting from a senior sociology seminar at Southeast Missouri State Teachers College, intended to study race relations in Cape Girardeau. Included are the form given to students for interviews, the class’ final report, the report of a student, Alma Meyer, and her correspondence with local, state, and national organizations on the conditions of African-Americans throughout the nation.