



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

Guide to the

Doxey A. Wilkerson papers

1927-1993 [bulk 1950's-1980's]

Sc MG 386

Summary

Creator: Wilkerson, Doxey Alphonso, 1905-1993

Title: Doxey A. Wilkerson papers

Date: 1927-1993 [bulk 1950's-1980's]

Size: 26 linear feet (22 record cartons, 13 archival boxes)

Source: Gift, Doxey A. Wilkerson and Estate, 1989 and 2000

Abstract: The Doxey A. Wilkerson Papers reflect Wilkerson's activities from the 1950's through the 1980's. Documented is his role as director of curriculum at the Jefferson School for Social Science, his career at Yeshiva University and as an educational consultant, and his role as a board member for many Connecticut based civic organizations from the 1970's-1980's. Although he also taught at Virginia State College and Howard University from the 1920's to 1940's, there is very little information about these positions, his four years as executive editor of *The People's Voice* in the 1940's, or his membership in the Communist Party.

Preferred citation: Doxey A. Wilkerson papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Related Materials:

Associated materials Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Creator History

An African-American educator, Doxey A. Wilkerson, made significant contributions to early childhood education and teacher education for secondary school, especially with regard to minority and disadvantaged students.

Wilkerson was a professor of education at Howard University from 1935-1943 and served as a research associate for the Carnegie Corporation study of the Negro in America, 1939-1940. He served as

national vice president of the American Federation of Teachers (1937-1941), using his office as a vehicle to garner support for federal aid for education of black Americans. Wilkerson joined the Communist Party in 1943 and served on its national committee. He resigned in 1957. After leaving Howard University in 1943, Wilkerson became executive editor of the progressive Harlem newspaper, *The People's Voice*, leaving there in 1948 to serve as the Director of Curriculum with teaching responsibilities at Manhattan's Jefferson School of Social Science, known for its Marxist perspective.

From 1963-1973 Wilkerson was a professor of education and chairman of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction with Yeshiva University in New York. And from 1973 until his retirement in 1984 he was a technical coordinator and vice president for MediAx Associates, an educational consulting firm in Westport, Connecticut. This company sought to further the educational growth of children through professional staff development and worked with schools throughout the United States.

Wilkerson published numerous books, book chapters, and journal articles about equality of education for African Americans and the general populace. His earlier articles also focused on Communism. In 1962 he and his wife moved to South Norwalk, Connecticut where he served on the boards of numerous local civic organizations, some educational and black oriented. Throughout his retirement he devoted his energy to the improvement of this state. Wilkerson died at age 88 in 1993.

Scope and Content Note

The Doxey A. Wilkerson Papers reflect Wilkerson's activities from the 1950's through the 1980's. Documented is his role as director of curriculum at the Jefferson School for Social Science, his career at Yeshiva University and as an educational consultant, and his role as a board member for many Connecticut based civic organizations from the 1970's-1980's. Although he also taught at Virginia State College and Howard University from the 1920's to 1940's, there is very little information about these positions, his four years as executive editor of *The People's Voice* in the 1940's, or his membership in the Communist Party. The Personal Papers series includes biographical information and copies of his Masters thesis and Ph.D. dissertation. Material related to his membership and association with the Communist Party includes his testimony pertaining to the Smith Act in 1952 during which he provided testimony about his own participation in the affairs and activities of the Communist Party. Other documents related to Wilkerson's communist affiliation concern his appearance before the U.S. Senate's Jenner Committee (the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee) in 1953, his resignation from the Communist Party in 1957, and a statement presented to the House on Un-American Activities (HUAC) in 1958. There are also FBI reports on Wilkerson, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. Of interest is a 1983 interview about Paul Robeson conducted by Martin Duberman for his biography of Robeson. The Professional Papers series includes Wilkerson's A-Z File 1943-1993, bulk 1950's-1993, containing folders on Councilman Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.'s reelection in 1949. Other folders concern Paul Robeson's struggle to secure his passport and the attempt by Edna Winston to have the prison sentence of her husband Henry Winston (African-American Communist Party leader) commuted. The Employment subseries contains Wilkerson's manuscripts and supporting documentation for the research memorandum "Negro in American Education," 1939-1940 which he wrote for the classic Carnegie Corporation study, "The Negro in America." Wilkerson's years as director of curriculum at the Jefferson School of Social Science, 1948-1956 are represented by his teaching notes and study guides, as well as curricula for courses he taught in philosophy and psychology, political economy, and other courses. There are also printed material including course listings, and files about the closing of the school in 1956. Wilkerson's one-year stint at Bishop College in Marshall, Texas (1959-1960) is documented via a file regarding his forced resignation due to media reports that he was an instigator of student demonstrations. The Yeshiva University files, 1963-1973, focus on his involvement in designing programs for prospective elementary school teachers of socially

disadvantaged children including a report and related information about Project Beacon and teaching material for the course "Teaching the Black Experience."|||Wilkerson's employment with Medix Associates, an educational firm, is represented by files for projects such as the Boston Middle School Reading Program, Head Start Program, and various projects for Public Education Associates (PEA) which affected education in New York State. Among the documents in the PEA files is Wilkerson's testimony regarding the value of Board of Examiners' teacher examinations.|||The Consultancies subseries, 1962-1990 contain files on the American Jewish Congress (New York City school integration project, 1962-1963), Chicago Public Schools, and Norwalk (Connecticut) Public Schools (several programs involving minorities and poor students, including blacks, and desegregation).|||The subseries Subject Files, 1947-1987 contains printed material, correspondence and notes. Of special interest are files pertaining to W.E.B. Du Bois which include his 1947 address, "The United Nations and Colonies," a 1954 typescript by Du Bois, "The Passing of Alain Locke," Wilkerson's manuscript regarding Du Bois' indictment of the Peace Information Center, in addition to correspondence between the two men. In addition, in the folder "School for Drug Addicts," 1972, there is information about ideas for a school independent of community school board control in New York City.|||The subseries Writings is divided into Wilkerson's writings about communism and education. Most of his writings concern ways of improving teaching methods for black and disadvantaged youth and reporting on the changing social status of blacks in the North. There are also writings by other authors concerning educational themes.|||In the Professional Affiliations subseries are files, 1937-1979, bulk years 1960's-1970's, from Wilkerson's service on boards of national and New York based educational organizations. Of interest are his addresses given before the American Federation of Teachers (1937), one with an appeal for federal aid to schools in the South teaching black children (1937-1944). Records from the Little Red School House and the Elisabeth Irwin High School in Manhattan, a progressive private school, include minutes, director's reports, and financial records related to the operation of the school, 1975-1979. Files for the National Committee on the Education of Migrant Children reflect some of the activities of this organization, 1974-1977.|||The series Civic Affiliations also reflects Wilkerson's commitment to education and the advancement of blacks. He served on the board of a wide range of organizations in his home state of Connecticut, particularly Norwalk. Some of the organizations include the George Washington Carver Foundation (a community-based organization which provides programs for low income minority youth), Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now (provides assistance programs to economically disadvantaged residents of the greater Norwalk area), the Operation SPEAR, Norwalk Drug Abuse Committee, and the Village Creek Homeowners Association (a cooperative community formed in 1949 that was open to blacks and other minorities; Wilkerson resided in this community). The records of the organizations in this series consist of minutes, reports, correspondence, planning documents, and financial records, most files date from the 1960's-1980's.

Arrangement: Papers organized into four series: I. Personal Papers; II. Professional Papers; III. Civic Affiliations; IV. Wilkerson - "To Read and File."

Key Terms

Subjects

African American civic leaders
African American college teachers
African American communists
African American educators
African American intellectuals
African Americans -- Education
Black author
Communism -- United States

Communism in education
Education, Elementary
Educational sociology
Segregation in education -- United States
Teachers -- Training of

Geographic Names

Norwalk (Conn.)

Names

Wilkerson, Doxey Alphonso, 1905-1993
American Federation of Teachers
George Washington Carver Community Center (Norwalk, Conn.)
Jefferson School of Social Science (New York, N.Y.)
Little Red School House (New York, N.Y.)
Norwalk Drug Abuse Committee
Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now
Operation SPEAR (Norwalk, Conn.)
Village Creek Homeowners Association (Norwalk, Conn.)
Yeshiva University