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

Guide to the

Layle Lane papers

1933-1951

Sc MG 54

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Processed by Verna Hodge, 1980. Text converted and initial EAD tagging provided by Apex Data Services, April 1999. Revised by Terry Catapano April 2000 and Hillel Arnold, 2009.

Summary

Creator: Lane, Layle, 1893-1976

Title: Layle Lane papers

Date: 1933-1951

Size: .2 linear feet

Source: SCM77-42, SCM78-48

Abstract: High school teacher and civil rights advocate in New York City. Correspondence, political files, and printed material documenting Lane's opposition to racial discrimination and war. Includes letters from World War II soldiers relating to discrimination in the military, and material on the 14th amendment, National Committee on Rural Schools, and the Socialist Party, on whose ticket Lane ran for office.

Preferred citation: Layle Lane papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

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Creator History

Layle Lane was born in Georgia in 1893 and raised in New Jersey. Her father was a Congregational minister and her mother, a school teacher. Ms Lane attended Hunter College, graduated from Howard University in 1916 and received her Master's degree from Columbia University.

A teacher for over thirty years, Ms. Lane taught social studies at James Monroe High School (Bronx) during the 1930s and at Benjamin Franklin High School (Harlem) in the 1940s. She served as vice

president of the American Federation of Teachers and chaired the Human Rights Committee. She also wrote a column for the *"American Teacher,"* a professional newsletter, and established a summer camp on family property in New Britain Township, Pennsylvania.

After participating in a teacher exchange program in Puerto Rico, Ms. Lane retired from teaching in the 1950s and relocated to Cuernavaca, Mexico, where she died February 2, 1976. Ms. Lane never married.

An educator by profession, Ms. Lane was perhaps best known in the Harlem community for her civil rights activities and political activities as a member and candidate of the Socialist Party. She ran unsuccessfully on the Socialist Party ticket for several offices, including the Congressional seat in the 19th Congressional District in New York City, Congressman-at-large, New York City Comptroller and State Senator of the 23rd District, New York City. Among her political supporters for these offices were Richard Parrish, W. E. B. DuBois and Joel A. Rogers.

Although Ms. Lane did not hold political office, she perhaps made her greatest contributions through her involvement in civil rights activities. She was a principal planner in the organization of the 1941 March on Washington, and was involved in the campaign for a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. She also raised her voice against segregation and discrimination in the Armed Forces during World War II in an editorial column she wrote for the *"New York Age."* Using her contacts with former pupils and the column itself, Ms. Lane solicited letters from minority group soldiers in which they recounted personal experiences with discrimination. Ms. Lane in turn used these letters to protest the unjust treatment of these soldiers and the racial philosophy of the Armed Forces.

Organizations with which Ms. Lane was involved included the Workers Defense League, the National Committee for Rural Schools and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Scope and Content Note

The Layle Lane Papers, 1933-1951, document two aspects of Ms. Lane's life and activities: her opposition to racial discrimination and war, and her political career as a Socialist Party member and candidate. The collection has been arranged in three series; CORRESPONDENCE, POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FILES and PRINTED MATERIAL.

Arrangement: Papers organized into three series: I Correspondence; II Political Campaign Files; and III Printed Matter

Key Terms

Subjects

African Americans -- Civil rights
African Americans -- Political activity
African Americans -- Segregation
Civil rights -- United States
Discrimination -- United States
Peace movements -- United States
Rural schools -- United States
Socialist parties -- United States

Geographic Names

United States -- Armed Forces -- African Americans
United States -- History -- World War, 1939-1945 -- Afro-American troops
United States -- Politics and government -- 1933-1945
United States -- Social conditions -- 1933-1945
United States -- Social conditions -- 1945-

Names

Lane, Layle, 1893-1976
National Committee on Rural Schools
Socialist Party (U.S.)
United States. Constitution. 14th Amendment

Container List

Correspondence

The files are divided into three sections; Soldiers (World War II), Fourteenth Amendment, and Miscellaneous.

- b. 1 f. 1 **Soldiers** 1942-1946, n.d.
The file consists of letters from former students and other correspondents relating specific occurrences of discriminatory acts practiced by the military. Of particular interest are the letters from the noted attorney, Conrad Lynn. Lynn's letters deal with his experiences with discrimination in the Army and the trial of his brother, Winifred, for draft resistance.
- b. 1 f. 2 **Fourteenth Amendment** 1935, 1945-1947, 1951, n.d.
The file has letters to Ms. Lane concerning the proper application of the Fourteenth Amendment. A letter from Conrad Lynn, a practicing attorney by this time, is noteworthy in terms of the information he gives on this subject.
- b. 1 f. 3 **Miscellaneous** 1932, 1942, 1946
The file contains letters dealing with a variety of subjects, including Ms. Lane's affiliation with the National Committee for Rural Schools.

Political Campaigns

The series documents Ms. Lane's participation in six elections on the Socialist Party ticket and includes correspondence and campaign literature from these campaigns. Most of the letters are requests for her positions on specific issues and personal appearances for panel discussions and debates, expressions of support for her candidacy, and financial contributions to the campaign funds.

- b. 1 f. 4 **1933-1934, 1936-1937**
- b. 1 f. 5 **1942-1943**
- b. 1 f. 6 **1945, 1947**

Printed Material 1942-1944, N.D.

The series contains newspaper clippings dealing with World War II and an article by Ms. Lane, "*The Negro and War Activities.*"