

PRELIMINARY INVENTORY
S0167 (SA2582)
HERMAN DREER PAPERS

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Introduction

Approximately 1 cubic foot

The Herman Dreer Papers contain correspondence, newspaper clippings, plays, and articles written by Dreer, pertaining to his life and career as an author, historian, educator, and minister. Included in this collection are handwritten notes from Dreer's interview he conducted for his Ph.D. dissertation, "Negro Leadership in St. Louis: A Study in Race Relations."

Herman Dreer was born in 1888 in Washington, D.C. He graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, in 1910. While teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia, Dreer received an M.A. in Latin Theology. In 1912 he married one of his students, Mary Thomas.

Dreer came to St. Louis in 1914 and taught History, English, Greek, German, chemistry, and sociology at Sumner High School and the normal school. Concerned over the lack of higher education for blacks in St. Louis, he established Douglas University in 1935. Dreer stressed the study of Afro-American history and was a life member of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. He supported the establishment of Stowe Teachers' College for blacks in 1940 and worked for the integration of Washington University in 1948. Dreer also researched and helped finance the Shelley vs. Kramer civil rights case as chair of the Citizens Committee--Shelley Restrictive Covenant Case in 1947.

In 1955 he received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago. He wrote his dissertation of "Negro Leadership in St. Louis: A Study in Race Relations." He interviewed white and black St. Louisans to ascertain the most influential black leaders and compiled questionnaires on over fifty St. Louis blacks for his dissertation.

As an educator and historian, Dreer published articles in the *Journal of Negro History*, *Negro History Bulletin*, *Crisis*, and *Opportunity*. He edited the *Masonic Journal of St. Louis*, the *St. Louis Tribune*, and *The Oracle*, the publication of Omega Psi Fraternity. At the request of McMillan Publishing Company, he compiled an anthology of Negro literature, *American Literature by Negro Authors* (1950). Dreer also wrote two novels, *The Immediate Jewel of His Soul* (1919), and *The Tie That Binds* (1958). Additionally, Dreer wrote poems and plays and helped organize the first Black theater group in St. Louis. From 1967-1975, he wrote a weekly column on black history for the *St. Louis Argus*. He was the minister of King's Way Baptist Church from 1950-1970.

Dreer was a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, Knights of Pythias, Prince Hall Lodge, and the Booker T. Washington Trading Stamp Association. He was an assistant principal of Sumner High School for fourteen years and left the administration to teach at Stowe

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Teachers' College and Harris-Stowe College. Dreer retired from Harris-Stowe at the mandatory age of 70 and taught a university in Salinas, Kansas, and at McMurray College in Jackson, Illinois. Dreer died in August 1981 at the age of 92.

Donor Information

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Vivian Dreer on December 6, 1983 (Accession No. SA2582).

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Box List

Box 1

Afro-American History, 1934-1975
American Literature by Negro Authors, 1946-1950
Correspondence, 1947-1976
Douglas University, 1934;1969
"The Education of the Negro with Respect to His Background," 1933
Harris-Stowe College, 1952;1963
Kinloch and Sumner High School, 1930;1969
Memorandum in support of Petitioners to Intervene - Washington University, 1946
Opportunities Industrial Center, 1971
Personal Papers, 1953-1974
Ph.D. Dissertation, Abstract, Outline, 1950;1954
Ph.D. Dissertation, Interviews, (A-I)
Ph.D. Dissertation, Interviews, (J-Z)
Program, University of Chicago, 15. Programs, 1943-1975
Religious Plays, Sermons

Box 2

Student Papers, 1946-1970
Writings
Photograph, 1973
Annotated bibliography of Herman Dreer, by Doris Wesley, 1993
Correspondence, 1969-1972
Newspaper articles, 1965-1977
Letters in the *St. Louis Argus*, 1959
Meditations of Herman Dreer, A Philosophy of Life, no date
"Mound City bar Has Activist Attorney," news article, no date
"My Inspiration," by Herman Dreer
National Black History Convention and Study Conference, 1975
Negro Business in St. Louis, 1904 Louisiana Purchase exhibition, no date
Negro History Week, 1935

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“The Negro, Social Status and Learning as Reflected in the Border City St. Louis,” 1946

Outline for an Integrated Course in American History, no date

Plays written by Herman Dreer, 1925-1940

“The Policy of Discriminating as to Race in the Choice of Teachers for Harris Stowe
Teacher’s College, 1954

Report of Finances of Shelley Restrictive Covenant Case, 1947

“Study in Race Relations,” by Herman Dreer

Plays written by Herman Dreer, 1925-1940

Microfilm Cabinet 1, Drawer 5

Printed and on one roll of microfilm: "Negro Leadership in St. Louis: A Study in Race
Relations," Ph.D. Dissertation