

## MSS. Collection #219

**Dean/Brown Family Papers, 1938-1994 [bulk 1975-1980]. ½ box (9 folders), 21 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

### INTRODUCTION

The Dean/Brown Family Papers consist primarily of printed materials such as certificates and newspaper articles relating to the lives of African American couple Laura Dean and Franklin Jenkins Brown. Most documents focus on their careers as educators in the Greensboro public schools. The collection also contains items relating to Abraham H. Peeler, the principal of J.C. Price School, and Margaret Dean Freeman, who was Laura Dean Brown's cousin and a graduate of Bennett College. Researchers interested in African American schools and educators in Greensboro and North Carolina may find this collection useful.

**Arrangement:** This collection is organized into three series by subject and arranged within series by subject and/or document type. The series are: **Brown, Franklin Jenkins**, 1976-1979; **Brown, Laura Dean**, 1938-1991; and **Miscellaneous**, 1977-1994.

**Provenance:** This collection was donated by Laura Dean Brown's niece, Sylvia Dean Stanback, in September 2013 and assigned the accession number 2013.31.1.

**Processing:** This collection was organized by volunteer Alina Ramirez in June 2022, and the finding aid was completed by volunteer Leah Nykamp in July 2022.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

**Franklin Jenkins Brown** (1914-1979) was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. After earning a bachelor's degree from Hampton Institute (later Hampton University) and a master's from New York University, he moved to Greensboro to become an industrial arts teacher at Washington Street School. In 1945, he began working at Dudley High School as a shop teacher, and he went on to become a guidance counselor and assistant principal before serving as the principal for eleven years. He was also a Mason, a potentate of the Khalif Court No. 144 Shrine, a member of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, and a trustee of Providence Baptist Church.

**Laura Dean Brown** (1912-1998) was born in Guilford County to Pearl Harris and James Monroe Dean Jr. In 1928, she married Willard S. Holt, and the couple had one son, Willard S. Holt Jr. (1928-2001). After her first husband's death, she married Franklin Jenkins Brown in 1939. She was an elementary school teacher at Washington Street Primary School from 1933 to 1936 and then at J.C. Price School. In 1957, Superintendent Ben L. Smith appointed her a supervisor for the city schools, a position from which she retired in 1974. Along with her second husband, she was a member of Providence Baptist Church.

Laura Dean Brown's paternal first cousin, **Margaret Dean Freeman** (1909-2012), was born in Greensboro to Alice L. Beville and Horace Dean. She started attending Bennett College in 1926, after it became a college for women, and graduated in 1930. After teaching for ten years at Booker T. Washington High School in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, she returned to Guilford County to teach. She married Selwyn Taylor Beavers (1903-1944) in 1935 and Fred Freeman in 1947. After her first husband's death, she succeeded him as a salesperson at Homeland Tailors in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**Biographical Sources:** The sources for this biographical note include materials in the collection, the Guilford County Register of Deeds database, [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), the Greensboro city directories, Laura Dean Brown's obituary (*News & Record*, March 31, 1998), and Willard S. Holt Jr.'s obituary (*News & Record*, May 19, 2001).

### **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

The types of materials in this collection include certificates, programs, and photographs, as well as photocopies of correspondence and newspaper articles. The bulk of the items relate to the careers of African American elementary school teacher and supervisor Laura Dean Brown and her husband, Dudley High School teacher and principal Franklin Jenkins Brown. Researchers studying local African American educational leaders or the Greensboro public schools during segregation may find this collection of interest.

### **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **1. Brown, Franklin Jenkins. 3 folders (4 items). 1976-1979, n.d.**

This series contains materials relating to the career and later life of Franklin Jenkins Brown. A newspaper article published at the time of his retirement in 1976 goes into detail about his career at Dudley High School (1:3). Also included are a photograph of him as an adult (1:1), a copy of his obituary in the *Greensboro Daily News* (1:3), and the program from his funeral at Providence Baptist Church (1:2).

#### **2. Brown, Laura Dean. 4 folders (13 items). 1938-1991.**

The career of Laura Dean Brown and the various organizations to which she belonged are the focus of this series. Accolades that she received throughout her life include her M.S. in Rural Education from the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina (later NC A&T State University), a certificate of membership in the Bennett College Century Club, and two certificates signifying her long history as a member of Providence Baptist Church (2:1). A photograph of her at age 79 has taped to its back an invitation to a reception in honor of her retirement as Supervisor of Greensboro City Schools (2:4).

Of particular interest is Laura Dean Brown's personnel file, which contains a form that she completed listing the schools at which she taught through 1938 (2:2). Also included in this folder are copies of several letters. A 1950 letter from Greensboro School Superintendent Ben L. Smith

informs her that she was selected to work in the experimental special education program because of her “outstanding teaching ability,” while a 1957 letter from him appoints her as an elementary school supervisor. Another letter discusses the music program at J.C. Price School. Abraham H. Peeler was the principal of that school when Laura Dean Brown taught there, and this series also contains copies of newspapers clippings written about him and a program from an appreciation banquet in his honor with a handwritten note from him (2:3).

### 3. Miscellaneous. 2 folders (4 items). 1977-1994, n.d.

Items relating to several individuals associated with Bennett College can be found in this series. A copy of an image shows Bette Beville Cash and claims that she was the first female graduate of Bennett College (3:1). Multiple newspaper clippings about her niece, Margaret Dean Freeman, discuss Freeman’s early life and various accolades that she received from her alma mater, Bennett College (3:2). Other articles feature the brickyard owned by her grandfather, James Monroe Dean, and Bennett College librarian Constance H. Martena, who wrote a biography of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, the founder of Palmer Memorial Institute (3:2).

#### FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Brown, Franklin Jenkins	-- Photograph (n.d.)
	2	“	-- Printed Materials -- Funeral Program (1979)
	3	“	-- Printed Materials -- Newspaper Clippings (copies, 1976-1979)
2	1	Brown, Laura Dean	-- Certificates (1948-1980)
	2	“	-- J.C. Price School -- Personnel File (copies, 1938-1957)
	3	“	-- J.C. Price School -- Printed Materials (copies, 1960- 1991)
	4	“	-- Photograph (ca. 1991)
3	1	Miscellaneous	-- Photograph (Bette Beville Cash, n.d.)
	2	“	-- Printed Materials -- Newspaper Clippings (copies, 1977-1994)