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UA 0005

Jeffie O. Conner Papers

Collection Overview

Creator: Prairie View A&M University

Title of Collection: Jeffie O. Connor Papers

Dates: 1934 –1948

Extent: 0.5 linear feet (1 box)

Abstract: Jeffie Obrea Allen Conner was a cooperative extension worker who served as supervisor of home demonstration activities in seventeen East Texas counties and for McLennan County schools from 1948-1957. The Jeffie Conner Papers documents the extension services activities of Negro Extension agents in Texas from 1934-1948.

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research

Identification: UA 0005

Use Restrictions: Written permission must be obtained from the Special Collections/ Archives Department and all relevant rights holders before publishing quotations, excerpts or images from any materials in this collection.

Language: English

Repository: Special Collections/Archives Department, John B. Coleman Library, Prairie View A&M University

Biographical Note: Jeffie Obrea Allen Conner was a cooperative extension worker who served as supervisor of home demonstration activities in seventeen East Texas counties and for McLennan County schools from 1948-1957.

Born August 17, 1895, Jeffie was the eldest child of Meddie Lilian and Jeff D. Allen. She grew up on her family's farm in Harrison Switch, a small African American community in McLennan County. She attended Prairie View Normal School where she earned a teaching certificate in 1914. After graduating she returned to McLennan County and taught in several rural schools before she married a Waco doctor named George S. Conner in the 1920s.

Conner also left her job as a teacher the same year and accepted a position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), as home demonstration agent. Founded in 1912, the demonstration program sought to improve the quality of life in African American communities by teaching rural girls homemaking skills. With the help of federal funding and statewide organization, the program soon grew and provided jobs to African American women, who supported farm families by supplementing clothing, undertaking home improvement projects, and funding scholarships.

Due to racial segregation, which had been codified into federal law in 1896 after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* SCOTUS decision, Conner only worked with African American families. She stayed with her husband in Waco on the weekends and traveled throughout McLennan County during the week, staying in private homes, because segregation kept her from staying in hotels. With years of experience growing up on a farm, as well as teacher training, she proved an effective county agent. She taught practical skills, such as sewing, medical care, personal hygiene, and homemaking, and she also proved prodigious in helping rural schools prevent the spread of germs. Most school children, at the time, drank water from a shared ladle, but due to her influence, schools began offering individual drinking cups for school children.

Conner returned to Prairie View in the 1930s, and she earned a bachelor's degree in home economics. After receiving her degree, she was promoted to supervisor of home demonstration agents for Central Texas. After her husband passed away in 1939, Conner returned to Prairie View in 1944 to pursue a earning her master's degree in home economics.

Conner left her position with the home demonstration program in 1948, accepted a position as supervisor of the Black schools of McLennan County, where she fought to reform this injustice. Over the next four years, she made the most of the limited resources by consolidating thirty-five schools into fourteen.

Having accomplished the goal of school consolidation, Conner retired in 1952. She served as president of the Texas Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. In 1966, Governor John Connally asked her to work on the State's Committee on Public School Education. She was president of the Texas Association of Colored Women's Clubs and a member of the State Committee on Public School Education, and an active member of New Hope Baptist Church until her death on June 9, 1972. Conner was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Waco, Texas.

Scope & Contents: The Jeffie Conner Papers documents the extension services activities of Negro Extension agents in Texas from 1934-1948. Most of the letters are correspondence between Connor and the home demonstration agents within her district related to the daily activities of the agents and 4H Clubs. Some correspondence is related to the salary of Negro extension workers and contains both typed and handwritten letters. Also includes telegrams and postcards. There is no letters related to her personal life.

Arrangement: Arranged in one series chronologically by date.

Series 1 Correspondence, 1934-1948

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation: Jeffie Connors Papers. UA 0005. Special Collections/Archives Department, John B. Coleman Library, Prairie View A&M University

Subject Terms:

Connors, Jeffie (1895-1972)
Agricultural extension work—Texas
Home demonstration work
Cooperative Extension
4-H Clubs
Negro 4-H Clubs
Correspondence
African American Women—Texas
Agricultural extension workers—Texas--20th Century
Home demonstration work—Texas—History--20th Century

Inventory

Series 1 Correspondence

This series contains incoming and outgoing letters related to extension services in Texas.

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1	1	Correspondence, 1934 -1939
	2	Correspondence, 1942- 1943
	3	Correspondence, 1944
	4	Correspondence, 1945
	5	Correspondence, January- June 1946
	6	Correspondence, September - December 1946
	7	Correspondence, January 1947
	8	Correspondence, February 1947
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	10	Correspondence, April 1947
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	12	Correspondence, June 1947
	13	Correspondence, July 1947
	14	Correspondence, August 1947
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