

Collection #
M 0825
CT 1520–1563
DVD 2355-2365

**JOSEPH T. TAYLOR
PAPERS, 1922–2000**

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department

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Indiana Historical Society

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: Manuscript Materials: 33 document cases; 4 boxes containing 75 cassette tapes; 11 audio DVDs
Visual Materials: 10 folders of photographs

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1928-1998; Bulk 1944-1996

PROVENANCE: Ms. Hertha W. Taylor, Indianapolis, Ind.

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 0350, SC 2847

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.1077, 2001.0006, 2002.0319

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joseph Thomas Taylor (February 11, 1913–September 23, 2000) was born in Rolling Fork, Mississippi. He was the son of Joseph T. Taylor and Willie Ann Price. Taylor married Hertha Mae Ward on February 16, 1944. Three children were born to this union: Bruce (known professionally as Meshach Taylor), Judith, and Joel Taylor (also known as Hussain).

Taylor's early education began in a church in rural Arkansas where attendance was spotty and students went when they had no work to do. At a young age, he spent time in Memphis and East St. Louis, Illinois. Taylor attended Lincoln High School, an all-black, K–12 institution in East St. Louis. He attended Wiley College located in Marshall, Texas. He also attended the University of Illinois at Urbana where he received a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in 1936 and a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in 1937. Taylor attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. He was selected as a Julius Rosenwald Fellow in 1938. He worked on the Flanner House Survey in 1938. He was a field investigator for the Carnegie-Myrdal Study, *The Negro in America (An America Dilemma)*, in 1939.

From 1939-1941 he was an instructor at Florida A & M College located in Tallahassee. He was an Area Director for the National Youth Administration from 1941-1942 (Area 7, Illinois). Additionally, Taylor returned as an instructor at Florida A & M College before going off to war.

Taylor served his country in the United States Army during World War II. His battalion was committed to combat in the European Theater of Operations and he fought at the "Battle of the Bulge." His World War II diary includes a number of observations about the horrors of war and many detailed accounts of his experience with institutionalized bigotry, racism, and segregation while in the US military.

Upon his return from war, Taylor became the assistant to the president at Florida A & M College. Between 1946 and 1950, he taught and was an administrator between Florida A & M and Indiana University. Taylor was Professor of Sociology and the Director of Arts and Sciences at Albany State College in Georgia from 1950 to 1951. He also served as a chairman for the Division of the Social Sciences Department and as a professor of Sociology at Dillard University from 1951 to 1955. Meanwhile, he received his Ph. D. from Indiana University in 1952, and later became the acting dean and professor of Sociology at Dillard.

Taylor became the Director of Program Development for Flanner House of Indianapolis in 1957. He was a lecturer at Indiana University—Indianapolis [now known as Indiana University, Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI)] and an associate professor of Sociology from 1962 to 1966. In 1965, he became the Assistant Director for Indiana University—Indianapolis. He became the acting dean of the regional campus in 1966.

Among Taylor's early academic papers are "The Rise and Decline of a Utopian Community," and "Mound Bayou, Past and Present," published in the *Bulletin of Negro History*, March and April, 1940. Following that he published "Crime in Mound Bayou" in

the *Quarterly Journal of Florida A & M College*, October 1940. After World War II he continued to publish sociological studies, including “The Changing Pattern of Race Relations,” *Central Christian Advocate*, May 17, 1954; “Desegregation in Louisiana—One Year After” in the *Journal of Negro Education*, 1955; and “Some Pertinent Issues in the Desegregation Crisis,” *Central Christian Advocate*, July 1, 1956. Taylor presented his analysis of social problems and conditions in speeches and studies throughout his life.

Taylor’s honorary degrees include an LL.D. from Berea College, 1969, and Martin University, 1990; Litt.D. from Marian College, 1979; and a DHL from Indiana University, 1984.

His service to IUPUI included Associate Professor of Sociology, 1962-65; Acting Dean, Indianapolis Regional Campus, 1966 and Dean from 1967 to 1970, when IUPUI moved to the west side and he became the first dean of the School of Liberal Arts, a position he held until mandatory retirement in 1978. As Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Taylor continued to teach and also to serve as Special Assistant to Chancellor Gerald Bepko, IUPUI. In that capacity he served as director of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation at Indiana University from 1978 to 1979. Though retired, for the last twenty years of his life, he continued to go to the university and to write.

In 1972 Federal Judge S. Hugh Dillon appointed him as co-commissioner of the interim desegregation plan for the Indianapolis Public Schools. Taylor also accepted appointments to committees of the many civic organizations of which he was a member. He served on the boards of directors of Berea College (Kentucky), Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, the Community Service Council of Indianapolis, Family Service Association, Franklin United Methodist Home (Johnson County, Indiana), the Indianapolis Power and Light Company, Madame Walker Urban Life Center, Martin University, National Conference of Christians and Jews, New Hope Foundation, St. Elizabeth’s Home, the United Way of Greater Indianapolis, and the Indianapolis Urban League. He was also on the boards of directors of both the YMCA and the YWCA in Indianapolis. (Unless otherwise noted or understood, all the boards listed were in Indianapolis.)

Joseph T. Taylor died on September 23, 2000. At his memorial service at the Broadway United Methodist Church of which he was a longtime member, the poet Mari Evans described him by the manner in which he walked – “a rather implacable walk through chaos, inner-directed, apparently, to impact positively where he could, introduce nurturing changes whenever possible, and leave things better than when he found them. He defined for us ‘gentleman,’ ‘scholar,’ ‘sociopolitical activist,’ and, as he aged, ‘icon,’ a position he would not have understood nor necessarily welcomed, but one that spoke the truth of our relationship to him as he grew in our hearts and minds. Became, in fact, ‘emeritus.’”

Sources:

Ralph D. Gray. *IUPUI—The Making of an Urban University*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 2003.

Indiana Alumni Magazine. Volume 28, No. 9, (June-July 1966).

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Joseph Taylor Papers consists of twelve cubic feet of manuscripts and published materials, 75 cassette tapes, and some photographs. The materials are divided into eleven series and primarily originate in Taylor's years in Indianapolis, from 1957 until his death. Series one consists of correspondence. Boxes 1–3 contain both letters to him and copies of his replies. His correspondents include educators, community leaders, job-seekers, old friends, and new acquaintances. The letters reflect his many concerns about social issues as well as his courteous acceptance of invitations to address organizations, large and small. Series two contains a few of the many service and honorary awards Taylor earned, along with all photographs within the collection. In Series three, (boxes 3–5) one finds the key to Taylor's concerns and his approaches to defining and solving important issues of the day. Published and unpublished papers from 1939 through 1971 and some vignettes in race relations fill out box 3 and speeches from 1954 through 1993 are in boxes 4 and 5. Tapes CT 1509 through CT 1519 contain reflections on his career and his concerns. His reminiscences provide highlights of his many activities. When noted on the tapes, titles are listed in the collection guide. The processor has provided brief descriptions of the contents of each tape.

Series four (boxes 5–10) contains memos, bulletins, and letters from and to the many primarily civic organizations with which Taylor was affiliated. Series five (boxes 10–21) contains memos, bulletins, and letters from and to members of the educational institutions he served and that were of interest to him. Indiana University and IUPUI share the bulk of this section; however, Indianapolis Public Schools and the Crispus Attucks High School social history project are prominent as well. Series six (boxes 21 and 22) contains memos, agendas, and correspondence from councils, committees, and commissions on which he served. Taylor participated in numerous conferences and seminars. Evidence of that involvement, along with reports, is found in Series seven (boxes 23 and 24). Series eight (boxes 24 and 25) contains materials from his religious affiliations and interests.

Series nine (boxes 26 and 27) contains papers and correspondence directly related to Taylor's lifelong interest in race relations; to his involvement in the Indianapolis Public Schools desegregation case; and to racism in general. Series ten (boxes 28–33) contains the many publications, bulletins, and speeches which he collected and which reflect the range of his interests. In Series eleven there are speeches and broadcasts which Taylor recorded or collected on tape.

Because Taylor's interests were wide ranging and eclectic, the materials often defy categorization. It is useful to consult correspondence, educational institutions, and race relations when researching the IPS desegregation case, for example.

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Series 1: Biography & Correspondence

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Correspondence, 1983–88	Box 3, Folder 3
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Correspondence, (Richard G. Lugar) 1967–1980	Box 3, Folder 5
Flanner House Correspondence, (Chinamano Rhodesia) 1964–66	Box 3, Folder 6
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Virginia Blankenbaker and Family	Color photographs, Folder 3
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“Crime in Mound Bayou,” 1940	Box 3, Folder 14
“The Crises of the City & Equal Employment,” 1970	Box 3, Folder 15
“Desegregation in Louisiana—One Year After,” 1955	Box 3, Folder 16
“Desegregation in Louisiana—1956”	Box 3, Folder 17
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Speech, Luncheon Remarks, Dedication of Cavanaugh Hall, IUPUI, 1971	Box 5, Folder 8
Speech, “A Perspective for Improving Race Relations” 1971, Crispus Attucks High School	Box 5, Folder 9
Speech, “Some Guideposts for Adjusting to a Changing Pattern of Race Relations,” 1954	Box 5, Folder 10
“Some Reflections About School Desegregation,” 1976	Box 5, Folder 11
Speech, “Some Reflections on the Role of the Y.W.C.A.,” 1971–72	Box 5, Folder 12
Speech, “Some Thoughts About the Black College and the Changing Black Experience In America,” 1980	Box 5, Folder 13
Speech, “Some Thoughts to Youth Who Speak of Tomorrow,” 1955	Box 5, Folder 14
Speech, “Telling It Like It Is” n.d.	Box 5, Folder 15
Speeches, n.d.	Box 5, Folder 16

Speech and lecture notes

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Vignettes (reminiscences), Titles: “Up From the South,” “Firsts.” (Going to school in East St. Louis and effects of segregation on high school sports; joining integrated church and clubs in Indianapolis)

Box 34:
CT 1509

Titles: “Alabama GA Tallahassee FL,” “Nashville Fisk U.” (Experiences at Albany State University; rescuing Dr. William H. Gray from Florida A and M; leaving Albany because of rat infested housing; and driving to Dillard University; Community activities as a teaching fellow at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee; learning how to teach; finding ways of explaining concepts, incidents in race relations in Tallahassee in the late 1940s)

Box 34:
CT 1510

Titles: “Alabama GA Tallahassee,” “New Orleans.” (New Orleans, Fall 1951; meeting Alvin Bynum, a lifelong friend; joining the faculty of Dillard University, the Boards of the YWCA, Urban League, and Family Services Organization; reflecting on segregation in sports and on work in race relations and conferences on the effects of desegregation, when Community Chest challenged the Urban League for nefarious behavior-- supporting integration in education—and kicked them out; citizenship school for rural blacks acquainting them with voting and preparing them to participate; threats to black leaders)

Box 34:
CT 1511

Title: “Early School Experiences.” (Early life in Woebegone area of Arkansas; first school experiences with disciplinarian; parents divorced but remained good friends; going to live with father’s family in Memphis; excellent teacher, then outside St. Louis in segregated community and K—12 school where he was “country Joe” for a while but worked hard and graduated first in his class on the classical track. Reflections on the results of segregated education; yet some appreciation of efforts at arts education, learning to play the violin and singing classes. (How offensive some of those lyrics of “southern songs” sound now.)

Box 34:
CT 1512

Titles: "Back to Florida," "Florida to Georgia."
(Wonderful reunion with wife at Lincoln Center in Chicago. Driven down to Tallahassee to be guests of Pres. William Gray, Jr. and to direct the Veterans Program at Florida A&M.) After two years went back to Bloomington; pressure of being a student forced illness; learned to cope and finally on way to Ph. D. Summer of 1949 back to Albany State University to help Dr. Gray; background of politics of academic control; how white institutions got out of accepting black students. Southern states were trying to make black facilities more equal, but felt if Dr. Gray got a new science building he should feel he owed them something. When a Gainesville student wanted to go to Florida University for law school, Dr. Gray refused to try to get him to go to Howard instead. Albany State suffered same kind of problem; the community was disrespectful. Dr. Brown was fired because his wife objected to being called by her first name by a store clerk, how attitudes have changed since then. Needed to go some other place, finally to Dillard as head of Sociology Department; working on civil rights; prodding places to end segregation. (Yet Indianapolis schools made no effort to comply with court decision, only what was absolutely necessary. Such a long time.)

Box 34:
CT 1513

No Title. (Dr. Gray's problems in refusing to tell black student to go to Howard rather than Gainesville, with 8 or 9 people smuggled Dr. Gray out of Florida, Dr. Gray's future work. To Bloomington to finish Ph.D.; then accepting offer from Dr. Aaron Brown at Albany State. Reflections on change, housing was atrocious, rats. License bureau clerk called him "boy," marked his test 70 without looking at it, but he needed the license in Georgia, so did not complain. The need to get along in racial power situations. No possibility for better housing, so he looked for a new place and went to New Orleans where he was offered a job. Reflections on administrators and negotiations regarding pay. Fine place to live, yet commitment to isolation by color or class here. Side A has a large blank section.)

Box 34:
CT 1514

No Title. Reflections on race relations. (Growing up in East St. Louis. Living next to Jewish family, but going to different schools; friendly competition in athletics and academics. Looking for summer jobs, hanging out on the corner with other black kids. Incidents showing hostility and resentment toward whites caused by almost total segregation of all facilities. Groups of youth from each community playing games, fighting. Reflecting on the question: what is race?) (Remembering time he was asked to speak to a Lions Club in Swayzee, Indiana, group did not expect a black, but listened to his remarks; good conversation possible when power situation is modified. Remembering how he got his training for administration in higher education, first at Fisk under Dr. Johnson who established relationships with other institutions and played a role in the Harlem Renaissance. Working with prominent sociologists on the Myrdal study, widening his horizons. At Florida A&M, finding ways around hierarchy in order to do his job. Prejudice in the south; joining the signal corps; after three years back at Florida A&M teaching and learning how higher education works.)

Box 34:
CT 1515

No Title. (Reflections on 3rd grade placement despite having already done that work. Stereotypes of southerners. Four years later Miss Maxwell got him skipped to 8th grade. Lincoln School was the only high school for blacks within a 15-mile radius. Being awarded a scholarship to Fisk University which covered tuition but not mandatory dormitory living, he was unable to go. Still dreaming of going to college, writing to Wiley College for an athletic scholarship, but being refused. Reflecting on the Depression and graduating in 1932.) Blank space. Side A is blank.

Box 34:
CT 1516

Title: "Miscellaneous LA GA KY" (Reflecting on great gaps in knowledge about what works and what doesn't in integrating schools). After appearing in Pine Bluff, AK, being invited to Berea College in Kentucky to speak with Dr. Drake; went to meet with classes in political science and history about the changing political status of blacks; reflecting on the history of Berea; being given an honorary degree and being a trustee. Many requests from people working on desegregation, usually using query about what race means really; asking if a person passes for white, should he and noting how the answer that he is denying his heritage works both ways. Accepting invitation from the University of Georgia to work on integration with teaching corps; going to college campuses; giving keynote address for a four to nine o'clock session of sharing experiences—what works and what doesn't—how to get over the rough spots.) (No title.) Continuation of vignette describing experiences in New Orleans, CT 1511. Team teaching course in race relations with Tulane professor who studied Japanese internment; new experience for black students at Dillard and white students at Tulane. Southern University law school used in the summer for citizenship schools; developed leadership until it was halted after four years. Remembering cases of blacks who did well, some who had a deadening effect on achievement in race relations; how prejudices are established. Attending a conference on higher education; spirited debate on whether to push for complete integration or to continue step by step approach. After the 1954 Supreme Court decision, wrote chapters reporting on kinds of resistance--every effort to keep from doing what the courts decided.

Box 34:
CT 1517

Titles: "Miscellaneous Vignettes 1 and 2" Reflecting on a set of ideas that ran through his mind when Tiger Woods won the Masters. A new generation of Americans began to comment on the victory; black Americans jubilant. Times change. Now political correctness. Tiger is proud to be African American, but not only that; his Asian mother is also part of him and there's some white back there too and Native American. So which is he? Group identity increasingly important to minorities; changes coming rapidly. In 2000 census new classifications; affirmative action undergoing change; identification of minority groups and even splintering of the majority group, i.e. the increasing power of the handicapped. How to get knowledge to look at commonalities too. W.E.B. Dubois suggested that race would be the dominant discussion in the 20th century. Mind of man constructed the concept of race; it can get rid of it. Destructive to the potential for good, missed opportunities. Changes he has seen in his lifetime. Back in youth everyone curtsied and bowed to whites; baseball teams in southern cities segregated by color; few places for traveling blacks to eat. A Bloomington professor offered a ride to St. Louis, after a while he said he was hungry and wanted to eat. I told him they wouldn't serve me, but he didn't believe me. So stopped in front of convenience store, got gas, asked for menu. Professor was told we can't serve him; we can serve you. He was puzzled; I said I can be comfortable in the car. Examples of other kind of behavior: In Marshall, Texas, tried to drink from the water fountain; attendant got a white paper cone for him. Incident on ferry going from Arkansas to Mississippi. Doing research in southern cities, needed letter from mentor Charles S. Johnson to explain the presence of two black men and reaction of sheriffs to erudite language saying nothing. How one sheriff responded to reasoned request for information on sources. (Telephone call interruption, nothing further.)

Box 34:
CT 1518

No Title. Right place, right time describes preparation for a career in higher education and community involvement. Injured at football, changed plans; went to University of Illinois, graduated with the senior class and got along. Different accreditation for black colleges; went for Master's; wanted to be a lawyer but changed plans when black graduate came back to homecoming and said he was a red cap at the bus station. At University of Illinois, met Howard W. Odum, a fine person and an advisor who helped him get a job—suggested Fisk. As a teaching assistant at Fisk, spent valuable two years, met fine people who put him at ease. Then went to Florida A & M as first person to teach Sociology which in many places was not taught as a major. After two years, filled a political job in East St. Louis, a year spent learning urban politics. Back to Tallahassee; then joining the army and after a year of training in the signal corps was put on active duty, where a segregated Army did not use the technical data he had learned. Finally completed work on his Ph. D. after several complications including death of first advisor and need to change topic. Ever grateful for all the help and for sixty-one years of teaching and working in academia. Other side: Tape being made on February 2, 1998, as Professor Emeritus at I.U.P.U.I.; recalling incidents of his professional career which may show commonalities which minimize differences and help people find effective ways of getting along together. Had many experiences in workshops and seminars around the country across the table from people of different views trying to exchange ideas, successes, and failures in trying to comply with the law and experiences; showing ways groups and institutions tried to obstruct implementation of the Supreme Court decision of 1954. Demanded changes in attitudes but that takes time, changes in behavior can be accomplished more quickly. Recounting experiences in segregated south and overt subsiding of discrimination because behavior changed, not necessarily attitudes.

Box 34:
CT 1519

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