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Shanklin Family Papers

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Shanklin Family Papers, 1899-1958

Extent: 1 document box and 1 oversize folder

Location: PU-4 and Pob+

Biographical Sketch of Shanklin Family

Graduates of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, India Gordon Shanklin (circa 1879-1939) and Joseph Shanklin (circa 1879-1957) spent most of their lives teaching at the Port Royal Agricultural and Industrial School, an educational institution founded originally for former slaves located in Bluffton, South Carolina, near Beaufort.

India and Joseph met and courted throughout college. They both graduated around 1899-1901. In 1903 Joseph accepted a job offer at Port Royal. He taught farming at the school for around two years until he was appointed principal. Soon after the time of his new appointment in 1906, he and India married. She joined him at the school where she served as the matron, housekeeper, and nurse in addition to teaching domestic science.

Joseph served at the Port Royal School for forty-two years; India served for thirty-three years until her death in 1939. Joseph officially retired from the school in 1946, but he continued to play a vital role within the institution and the Beaufort community until his death on June 1, 1957, at the Georgia Infirmary in Savannah where he had been a patient for several weeks.

The couple had three children: Joseph, Jr. (born circa 1907-October 1999), Thelma L. Shanklin West (born in 1913), and Foch Barnett Shanklin (born August 2, 1918). All three graduated from the school before attending college. Thelma graduated from South Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College (South Carolina State College) in 1936; Joseph graduated from Tuskegee in 1931; and Foch graduated from Johnson C. Smith College and South Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College. All three were employed at one time or another at Port Royal School.

Organizational History of the Port Royal Agricultural and Industrial School (S.C.)

On October 1901, the Port Royal Agricultural and Industrial School started with seven pupils. By January of 1905, 150 students attended. The school, founded by a group of northern abolitionists and prominent Beaufort citizens, aimed to instruct African American students in better cultivation of land, care of stock, and improved manner of living. Additionally, the institution offered instruction in carpentry, bricklaying, printing and other trades. Coursework for females included cooking, sewing, nursing, and homemaking. Implicit in all aspects of the program was an effort to achieve the moral elevation of its students. The 1903-1904 Annual Report stated the school's mission:

It is the aim of the Port Royal Agricultural School to teach these poverty-stricken folks how to farm intelligently. . . and to instruct the girls in cooking, sewing and general housekeeping. . . In the school room instruction is given in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and farming.

(Annual Report of the PRAS, Beaufort, South Carolina, For the Year 1904-1904.)

Edinburg Mahone (a Tuskegee graduate) accepted the position as the first principal. In 1904, however, he left his position in the midst of controversy. The board of trustees hired Joseph Shanklin, then working as the school's agricultural instructor, as his replacement. Joseph and his wife India would devote much of their lives to the school.

By 1919 Port Royal Agricultural School was well established with an endowment of around \$11,000 and situated on hundreds of acres of land in Beaufort. Expenses were high, though, and during that year the trustees applied for the institution to become a county training school as a means of receiving additional funding. During the winter of 1919, the South Carolina legislature put \$10,000 into the hands of the state superintendent of schools to be used for improving African American schools. To the Port Royal Agricultural School came the opportunity of assisting in the establishment of a county training school under the Smith-Hughes Act by deeding its school building and some forty acres of land to the trustees of Beaufort

School District Number One. This would put the school in a position to receive assistance from private funds, the John F. Slater Fund, and from the district taxes.

In 1920, Port Royal Agricultural School became the Beaufort County Training School, although it was always known as the Shanklin School to area residents. By becoming a county school, the institution was able to pool both public and private resources to promote its mission of industrial education and was able to meet the need for African American teachers since it was ostensibly known as a teacher's training site. The arrangement allowed the Port Royal trustees to maintain around 800 acres of land, as well as two barns, two dormitories, a power plant, equipment, and an endowment of around \$11,000.

Scope and Content Notes/Folder List

The collection contains approximately 201 documents and 4 volumes in 18 letter size folders and 7 documents in one oversized folder. The collection consists primarily of correspondence among members of the Shanklin family.

Researchers may find the following of interest in the collection:

- Early years contain (primarily) letters from Joseph S. Shanklin to India Gordon while the two of them attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. It appears that India finished college before he did and returned home to Abbeville, Alabama. The early letters (1899-1902) also contain some correspondence from India to various family members and vice versa.
- Stock certificate for Shell Road Business Corporation (30 June 1922. 30 shares at \$5 a share). Joseph was involved in this corporation in some way. The collection also contains leases and insurance policies for this corporation.
- A class registration form from the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute shows that India took two classes during the summer of 1924 (Care of Children and Nursing).
- Fire insurance policies for properties in Burton/Beaufort. Automobile insurance policies.
- 1 July 1932 State of South Carolina teaching certificate for Joseph Sherman Shanklin, Jr. (B.S. from Tuskegee in 1931).
- Letters to Miss Shanklin from students, some fighting in World War II, or preparing to do so.

Folder 1: Shanklin and Gordon family information, from letter, 26 Dec. 1958, Gil Guinn to Les Inabinet; and entry for Thelma Leronia Shanklin (b. 1913) from 1950 edition of *Who's Who in Colored America*. Folders 2 through 9 are arranged chronologically in date from 1899 to 1957.

Folders 10 through 14 contain undated material.

Folder 15: Beaufort County Training School, School Register belonging to India Shanklin, Oct. 1919 - Mar. 1920

Folder 16: *Tuskegee Institute Bulletin, Principal's Annual Report Edition*, 1927-1928 (published April 1929)

Folder 17: Bank book, Beaufort County Training School, Apr. 1941 - May 1942

Folder 18. Bank book, J. S. Shanklin, Mar. 1926 - May 1941

Folder 19. *King's Agricultural Digest*, ed. George F. King, [187 pages; undated but probably ca. 1922; title page missing)

Oversized folder:

Architectural plans for house [undated - floor plans and elevations]

Plat, Port Royal Agricultural School, Surveyed Sept. 1921 by Arthur O. Christensen, Beaufort, South Carolina

Head of Family Land Certificate, No. 1474, District of Beaufort, South Carolina, issued to Jackson Owens, 30 July 1912 (United States Treasury Department)

Lease: Nancy Green to J. S. Shanklin, ten acres of land on Port Royal, 20 Feb. 1912

Tax Returns (Eureka Lodge Society, Shell Road Business, J. S. Shanklin), for fiscal year commencing 1 Jan. 1934

Administrative Notes

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