

Collection #
M1541
OM0794

**JOHN JONES SR. FAMILY
COLLECTION, CA. 1880-2019**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Contents	4

Processed by

Susan Hall Dotson
Maire Gurevitz
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 1 half size photographs box, 2 OVB photographs boxes, 1 PAB Album

COLLECTION DATES: ca. 1880-2019

PROVENANCE: Gift of Aubaine Woods, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2020.0187

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Jones Sr. (June 15, 1844-October 13, 1931) was born to Alexander and Lucinda Jones, both of whom were enslaved at the Harrison Estate in Nash County, North Carolina. At age twenty-seven, Jones made his way to Indy to join his father, taking jobs along the way to pay for train fare. When Jones arrived, he found employment on Dr. H.R. Allen's farm. Through a loan from Dr. Allen, Jones was able to purchase land from which he started a business selling coal and kindling. When that business folded due to the gas boom, Jones began selling sand and gravel on a tract of land that he was loaned by Dr. Allen for \$450. The business expanded to the point where Jones was able to repay Dr. Allen and to build his first gravel plant near 21st Street and Fall Creek. The John Jones & Sons company supplied materials for building projects such as Shortridge High School, St. Vincent Hospital, and Butler University. When Jones realized the current plot he was using for the business was about to be exhausted, he purchased fifty-two more acres meant to last at least forty years.

Jones was also a founding member of the First Baptist Church of North Indianapolis. In fact, he initially mortgaged his home to pay for building the church. In 1926, he paid off the church's debt of \$4,000. He held positions in the church including treasurer, trustee, and deacon.

Jones was married to Anna E. Gibson of Greenfield, Indiana on January 1, 1872. The couple had nine children, John Jr., James, Henry, Cecil (C.F.), Sadie, Virgil, Lark, Pearl, and Solomon. Jones sons John Jr., Virgil, and Lark and his daughter Pearl took active roles in the John Jones and Sons business. Upon Jones' death in 1931, Virgil Jones inherited the family business as well as a fifty-acre farm in Maywood and two automobiles.

Anna Eliza Gibson Jones (October 5, 1847-July 7, 1927) was the daughter of Branson and Eliza Gibson, who were brought to Indiana from North Carolina and freed from enslavement. Anna appears on the 1850 census with her family in Nettle Creek Township, Randolph County, Indiana. Anna was orphaned as a young girl and the 1860 census shows her living with a family, the Jordans, in Wayne Township, Henry County. At the time she married John Jones Sr. in 1872, she was living in Greenfield, Indiana with the Butler family. She moved to Indianapolis with her husband, John Jones Sr., where they built a one-room house on Edgemont Avenue. The family later expanded their home on Edgemont and later moved to a home at Chicago Street (present day 8th and Illinois Streets). Anna was also an active member and participant in the First Baptist Church of North Indianapolis and was noted for providing hospitality to many visiting ministers.

John Jones Jr. (September 11, 1873-January 18, 1922) was the oldest son of John Sr. and Anna. He was married to Lula and he worked for the City as a Foreman for the Street Commission. He had no children.

Reverend Cecil Frank Jones (November 8, 1879-August 13, 1946) was the son of John Sr. and Anna. He was employed by the United States Postal Service and was ordained as a pastor in 1927. He was married to Rosabel (Rosa) Allen on July 9, 1902. The couple had four children, Vivian, Allen, Rosa LaVerne, and Larkin. Jones was part of the Cottage and Lot Owners Association of Fox Lake in Angola, Indiana. His wife, Rosa, was born in Haydonville, Kentucky and worked in Evansville, Indiana before her marriage to Jones. In Indianapolis, she was the Principal of School #79 and School #83 before retiring in 1947.

Virgil C. Jones Sr. (February 11, 1884-December 21, 1952) was the son of John Sr. and Anna. He worked at the family business, John Jones and Sons, and later took over as president of the company after this father died. Like his father, he was very involved with the First Baptist Church, where he served as the superintendent for the Sunday School for 46 years. Jones was briefly married to Mamie Helen Hunter of Whitaken, North Carolina in 1909 but the union was dissolved. In 1914, Jones married Lydia M. Grayson, a teacher and graduate of Fisk University from Georgetown, Kentucky. The couple had three children together, Grayson, Virgil Jr., and Ann. Sadly, Lydia died from tuberculosis in 1921. Virgil Sr. later married his brother John Jr.'s widow Lulu Downey in 1923.

Like their father and his siblings before them, Virgil Jr. (1918-1977) and Grayson (1915-1987) went on to run John Jones & Sons. Although they experienced financial difficulties after acquiring the Redi-Mix Concrete Company in 1956 and the resulting bankruptcy in 1958, Jones Gravel remained in business until Grayson's death in 1987.

Lark C. Jones (August 11, 1886-December 6, 1977) was the son of John Sr. and Anna. Lark married Nettie Allen on May 27, 1911. He worked as a mail carrier for twenty-five years and was a member of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees and the National Association of Letter Carriers. He was also spent time as leader of the John Jones & Sons gravel company. Lark and Nettie regularly entertained at their home on Boulevard Place and were members of the Thirteen Black Cats social and charitable club.

Pearl E. Jones (August 9, 1888-March 16, 1928) was the daughter of John Sr. and Anna. She was a Sunday School teacher at the family church, First Baptist, and she worked at John Jones & Sons gravel with her father and brothers. Had she survived her father, the business would have been split between her and her brother Virgil Sr.

Not much is known about James, Henry, Sadie (1881-1903), or Solomon Jones (1891-1901).

Sources:

"Obituary and Narrative of the Life of John Jones Sr.," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 24 October 1931, Page 2.

"Expansion Is Memorial to John Jones Sr.," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 20 October 1956, Page 10.

"John Jones Sr. Bequeaths Bulk of Fortune to Son, Virgil Jones." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 14 November 1931, Page 1.

"First Baptist Church, N.I., Breaks Debtor's Chains Third Time in 68 Years of Progress." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 16 January 1954, Page 7.

"Close Activities at Fox Lake." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 21 September 1940, Page 5.

"Hold Rites for Mrs. Rosa Jones, Retired Teacher." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 31 March 1956, Page 1.

"With the Churches." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 8 January 1927, Page 8.

"Virgil C. Jones Sr." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 27 December 1952, Page 1.

"Miss Jones Lived In City 39 Years." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 24 March 1928, Page 5.

“Jones Gravel Company Makes Big Stride With New Service.” *Indianapolis Recorder*, 27 October 1956, Page 2.

“Jones Gravel Company Folds.” *Indianapolis Recorder*, 25 January 1958, Page 1.

“Rites Wednesday for Grayson Jones.” *Indianapolis News*, 16 March 1987, Page 30.

Ancestry.com

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains photographs, correspondence, clippings, insurance policies, and a photo album relating to John Jones Sr., his family members and their business, the John Jones and Sons Gravel Company. Of special interest in this collection is a portion of a 1922 issue of the *Indianapolis Recorder*.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Christmas Greetings, John Jones & Sons, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 1
Clippings and Notes, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 2
Crown Hill Proprietors Tickets, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 3
John Jones & Sons Album, n.d.	PAB Album Storage [Use Digital File]
Portrait, John Jones Sr., ca. 1880s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Portraits, [Jones Children], ca. 1880-1900s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Insurance, Lark C. Jones, 1892	Box 1, Folder 4
Portraits, [Pearl Jones?], ca. 1900s-1910s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Checks and Invoices, 1901-1931	Box 1, Folder 5
Portrait, Lena Mason, ca. 1910s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Portrait, Unidentified Man in Fringed Buckskin Coat and High Boots [_____ Gregory?], ca. 1910s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Certificate, Veteran Policyholders League, John Jones, 1914	Box 1, Folder 6
Virgil Jones Sr. and sons Virgil Jr. and Grayson, ca. 1920s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Birth Certificate, Ann Jones, 1921	Box 1, Folder 7
Registration, Industrial Board of Indiana, 1921	Box 1, Folder 8
Cemetery Marker Agreement, 1922	Box 1, Folder 9
Section of <i>Indianapolis Recorder</i> containing John Jones Jr. Obituary, 1922	OM [Use digital file]
Will, John Jones Sr., 1923	Box 1, Folder 10

Obituary and History of the life of Anna E. Jones, 1927	Box 1, Folder 11
Correspondence, John Jones & Sons, 1932-1968	Box 1, Folder 12
“Socials, Parties, Picnics and Stunts for Church, Grange, and Community, 1932	Box 1, Folder 13
Report Card, Virgil C. Jones, 1935	Box 1, Folder 14
Vehicle Lease and Insurance, 1936; 1948	Box 1, Folder 15
Fiftieth Anniversary of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, 1940	Box 1, Folder 16
Insurance Policies, Virgil C. Jones, 1934-1977	Box 1, Folder 17
Insurance Policies, Grayson W. Jones, 1940-1981	Box 1, Folder 18
Land Titles, 1945-1952	Box 1, Folder 19
Jones Gravel, Trucks and Employees, ca. 1950s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Insurance Policies, 1952-1987	Box 1, Folder 20
Portrait, Carolyn Jones Woods, ca. 1960s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Funeral Program, Lulu Jones, 1964	Box 1, Folder 21
Appointment Book, Odessa Jones, 1969	Box 1, Folder 22
Unidentified Couple in Formal Wear, ca. 1970s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder
Death Certificate, Lark C. Jones, 1977	Box 1, Folder 23
Death Certificate, Virgil C. Jones Jr., 1977	Box 1, Folder 24
Funeral Program, Martha Rouse, 1993	Box 1, Folder 25
Funeral Program, Carolyn Jones Woods, 2019	Box 1, Folder 26