

Josephine Woodbury Heermans Greenwood Papers

Josephine Greenwood was an early local educator. She was principal of the Whittier School in the Kansas City School District for many years. She was married for a short while to school superintendent James Greenwood before his death in 1914. This collection contains her correspondence.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Josephine Woodbury Heermans Greenwood
Title: Josephine Woodbury Heermans Greenwood papers
Dates: 1846-1928, bulk 1890-1914
Size: 1 box, 25 folders
Location: SC86-2

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Acquisition information: Exact date and source of acquisition unknown. Her papers may have been left with the Missouri Valley Historical Society upon her death according to a newspaper clipping dated October 20, 1928 located in the collection folder.

Citation note: Josephine Woodbury Heermans Greenwood papers (SC86-2), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

Josephine Woodbury Heermans Greenwood was born at White Pigeon, Michigan on December 25, 1859, the daughter of Caleb Chace and Jane (Minier) Woodbury according to *Who Was Who in America*, v. 4, 1961-1968. Her death occurred on October 13, 1928 in Norfolk, Massachusetts and she was buried in Mount Washington Cemetery in Independence, Missouri. According to the cemetery records she was buried on October 19, 1928 being 67 years, 9 months and 18 days of age. These dates would indicate her birth date being in 1860.

She received her formal education at Corning Academy, Park College, and at Columbia University in New York. She was married to Clinton W. Heermans, a civil engineer, on July 9, 1878. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, National Council of Education, and the Society for Scientific Study of Education.

According to the *Manual and Directory of the Public Schools of Kansas City, Missouri* for 1900-01, Josephine Heermans is listed with a date of September 6, 1888, as the time of her election to the district. In the report of the Kansas City schools for 1888-89 she is listed as 1st Assistant at the Morse School and this would be her first appointment in the district. Her previous appointments in other areas prior to this are unknown. She stayed at the Morse School until the 1891-92 school year when she became principal of Whittier School. She remained as

principal at Whittier until 1910 when she married Superintendent James M. Greenwood.

The correspondence found in the Greenwood series collection indicates that she and Mr. Greenwood had known each other well and corresponded for many years prior to their marriage. This relationship appears to be both professional and personal. Greenwood's first wife died in 1904 and Josephine did not marry James Greenwood until June 27, 1910, when she was 50 years old and he was 73. Her marriage to Greenwood lasted only four years as he died at his desk in the library building on August 1, 1914.

It is unknown what happened to her first marriage. However, it is assumed that Mr. Heermans did not come to Kansas City with her as he is not listed in the Kansas City city directory. He was found listed in a Steuben County, New York, 1891 directory. The first letter in this collection appears to be from her sister while on a trip to Europe. In the letter she refers to a young child named Wilbur and asked for Josephine to kiss the child for "Aunt Matie." This may have been Josephine and Clinton's son. There was no information available concerning this child.

The years after her widowhood until her death are not known in detail. She is listed in the Kansas City city directories from 1914 to 1926 as living at 2825 Troost. For three of those listings "Christian Science" is listed with her name. None of the entries give a job or occupation. Her home address on Troost was listed as apartments in the 1927 and 1928 directory. It may be that she moved back East at that time. She probably spent time traveling, as had been her pattern for many years.

In 1916-18 the Greenwood daughters contested their father's will and the judge ruled that Mrs. Greenwood was entitled to her specified share. She authored a book entitled *Our Heritage From the Old World* in 1921. Her first book was entitled *Stories From the Hebrew* and was published in [1903]. After her death in 1928, the provisions of her own will were published in the Kansas City newspaper. Her obituary indicates that she left no immediate relatives. Many of the beneficiaries were former schoolteachers who she had worked with at Whittier School and who met together with her for many years until she became too ill to attend their gatherings. She was also known and respected as a Christian Science practitioner. She was a well-read person who enjoyed traveling and being involved with the educating of young people.

This biographical information was gained from: newspaper clippings in Missouri Valley Special Collections mounted clippings section, *Who Was Who in America*, v.4, 1961-68, Internet searches in various genealogy databases, and SC86-1 and SC86-2.

Scope and content note

The collection consists primarily of correspondence covering the years 1880 to 1928 with the bulk being 1890 – 1914. Besides correspondence there are also a few tributes to Superintendent James Greenwood after his death in 1914, a few newspaper clippings found included with some correspondence, and a few ephemeral items.

Part of the correspondence in this collection is from Josephine Greenwood to James Greenwood as well as to her mother and what is believed to be other family relatives. Another large part of the correspondence is from James Greenwood to Josephine, many times while he was away from town on

numerous speaking and professional trips across the country. There is also correspondence from Josephine's relatives to her and a small amount of letters from unknown individuals. The bulk of the correspondence is of a personal nature.

The earliest two letters were written by Josephine's sister while in Europe and would have been sent before Josephine moved to Kansas City. The rest of the correspondence is dated at the time she was in Kansas City including the period after James Greenwood's death. Most all the letters are handwritten and do not include the envelope in which they were mailed. The majority of the correspondence is dated, but there are some which contain only the day of the week and no date.

Because many of the letters were written while traveling, there are numerous descriptions of the areas visited, people who they met while traveling, and the mode of transportation. Since letter writing was the main source of communications, correspondence follows closely almost day by day while the respondents were away from Kansas City. Included many times are discussions concerning riding the trains, the depots and schedules involved, difficulties in traveling, etc. Also mentioned frequently are the hotels, places stayed in while away, and the meals provided. The trips taken by both Josephine and James included national destinations as well as European sites. Josephine traveled back East frequently going to school, visiting relatives, and attending educational seminars.

The collection also contains correspondence received at the time of Josephine's marriage to James Greenwood as well as at the time of his death. That received at his death is extensive and was sent by many of the well-known educators of the day from all over the world. Those personal sympathies portray most vividly and sincerely the character of James Greenwood and how much respected he was in his field. Quotes from letters include: "I believe that he was the best-loved public school man in the country." – D. W. Springer, Sec., NEA, Folder 21, Aug. 4, 1914 "...of all the men I knew, Mr. Greenwood came nearest to being an ideal superintendent of city schools." – P. W. Horn, Superintendent, Houston Public Schools, Folder 21, Aug. 21, 1914

Letters between Josephine and James contain much discussion concerning philosophy and the books that they had read or were reading on different subjects. James Greenwood was a voracious reader, many times reading the same book over several times. They obviously were similar in their thinking and tastes concerning many ideas and philosophies. Mr. Greenwood often recounted his own philosophy of life and even predicted his own demise, "somehow I have an idea that like the 'Parson's One Hoss Shay'-one of these days that I shall 'keel over'!" – Folder 19, Sept. 15, 1911.

Interesting events include when Josephine attended the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. (Folder 25, June 13, 1893) She wrote her mother concerning the fair, describing the various state pavilions and the sights. James Greenwood describes an encounter he had in what he described as "the machine". (Folder 19, Oct. 4, 1911) He was involved and injured in an automobile accident which resulted in the car landing on its side on one of Kansas City's sidewalks. He was accustomed to railway travel and not the newly emerging automobile.

This collection occasionally mentions Kansas City events but not often. School business and personnel are mentioned but are sometimes out of context and include both local and national figures. Mr. Greenwood does have a letter concerning his first wife's death (Folder 13, July 14, 1904). There is also correspondence concerning the marble chair which was placed in the Library

building after the superintendent's death. The later correspondence contains references to Christian Science healings and Josephine's involvement in that area. Some of the correspondence apparently has been separated and some letters have no ending page while some have the ending page but no letter beginning. The material has basically been left as found.

Collection Inventory

Box 1

Folder 1 – Correspondence, 1880-1899 – 9 letters (Category: Correspondence 1880-1928)

To: Josephine Greenwood, My Dear Friend [James Greenwood]
From: Matie, Josephine Heermans [Greenwood], James Greenwood

Folder 2 – Correspondence, 1902-1910 – 17 letters (Category: Correspondence 1880-1928)

To: Josephine Greenwood, My Dear Friend [James Greenwood], To Whom It May Concern, Mrs. and Mrs. Greenwood, Cousin Mick
From: Laura E. Lytle, Josephine Heermans [Greenwood], Irene Gilbert, Fannie P. Tangeman, James Greenwood, Mary, Mrs. James F. McCullough, Howard A. Gass, James Egbert, W. S. Sutton, Lucy and Winfield, and unreadable signature

Folder 3 – Correspondence, 1911-1918 – 14 letters (Category: Correspondence 1880-1928)

To: Josephine Greenwood, Dell, Grandmother
From: H. S. Stephensen, Alice Louise Harris, Irvin Shepard, Nelson Riley, Rice Monument Co., Dell, Library Committee of the School District of Kansas City, Ben, Eastham Greenwood, Nettie Grove (Missouri Valley Historical Society), Mrs. McCullough

Folder 4 – Correspondence, 1923-1928 – 40 letters (Category: Correspondence 1880-1928)

To: Josephine Greenwood
From: Lida Harvey, Frances Shroeder, Mary Pullen, Dell, James McCullough, Jen McCullough, Porter Godard, W.T. Longshore, Anna Mayer, Beatrice, Eva and Mama, Mrs. T. G. McKeehan, Irene Gilbert, Mrs. R. E. DeHaven, Nettie Lewers, Annie Laurie

Folder 5 – Correspondence, 1909-1916, undated – 28 letters (Category: Miscellaneous Correspondence to James M. Greenwood and/or Josephine Greenwood)

To: Mrs. and Mrs. Greenwood, James Greenwood, H. A. Tucker, Rose Wickey, Josephine Greenwood
From: Mary Nelson, George Bryant, G. W. Armstrong, J. Fairbanks, Ida Crowder, Alice Louise Harris, Thomas Johnson, S. E. Richards, Margaret DeWitt, Mrs. H. B. Brown, G. Johnson, L. E. Wolfe, Josephine Heermans, Nettie Lewers, John Ball, Dell, James McCullough, Jen McCullough, Mary

Folder 6 – Correspondence, undated – 15 letters (Category: Undated Correspondence of Josephine Greenwood)

To: Josephine Greenwood, James Greenwood, Mary
From: Dell, Josephine Heermans, James McCullough, Ethel ?

Folder 7 – Correspondence, undated – 21 letters (Category: Undated Correspondence of Josephine Greenwood)

To: Josephine Greenwood
From: Dell, Mary Nickerson, Addie Hancock Talbott, Martha J. Andrews

Folder 8 – Correspondence, undated – 24 letters (Category: Undated Correspondence of Josephine Greenwood)

To: Josephine Greenwood
From: Aileen, Mary Pullen, Dell, Jen McCullough, Ethel?

Folder 9 – Correspondence, undated – 15 letters (Category: Undated Correspondence of Josephine Greenwood)

To: Josephine Greenwood
From: Dell, Ethel McCullough Howell

Folder 10 – Correspondence, undated – 13 letters (Category: Undated Correspondence of Josephine Greenwood)

To: Josephine Greenwood
From: Dell, Jessie, Annie Laurie, Aileen

Folder 11 – Correspondence, 1895-1904 – 19 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1895-1904)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “My Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 12 – Correspondence, 1899-1900 – 12 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1895-1904)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “My Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 13 – Correspondence, 1901-1904 – 11 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1895-1904)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “My Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 14 – Correspondence, 1901-1904 – 13 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1895-1904)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “My Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 15 – Correspondence, 1906 – 17 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1905-1913)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “Dear Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 16 – Correspondence, 1907 – 11 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1905-1913)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “Dear Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 17 – Correspondence, 1908 – 21 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1905-1913)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Often addressed to “Dear Friend” or “My Dear Friend”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 18 – Correspondence, 1909-10 – 8 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1905-1913)

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Addressed as “Dear Friend”, “Dear Empress Dowager”, and “Dear Little Empress Dowager”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 19 – Correspondence, 1911-1913 - 19 letters (Category: Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine Greenwood, 1905-1913)

To: Josephine Heermans Greenwood – Addressed as “Dear Chubby”, “Dear Little Chubby”, “Dear Little One”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 20 – Correspondence, undated – 23 letters (Category: Undated Correspondence-James M. Greenwood to Josephine M. Greenwood)

Also included in the folder are notes, newspaper clippings, receipts, and 1 envelope

To: Josephine Heermans [Greenwood] – Addressed as “Dear Friend”, “Dear Little Friend”, “Dear Chubby”, “Dear Little Chubby”
From: James M. Greenwood

Folder 21 – Correspondence, 1914, 23 letters; 3 telegrams, 1914; newspaper clippings, various dates (Category: Letters and essays on death of James M. Greenwood, August, 1914

To: Mrs. Josephine Greenwood

From: F.G. Blair, Mr. & Mrs. H.B. Brown, Robert Aley, Irwin Shepard, D.W. Springer, P.P. Claxton, J.H. Phillips, Charles Merrill, O.T. Carson, Nathan Schaffer, G.W.A. Luckey, John W. Cook, Gardiner Lathrop, A.W. Clancy, L.E. Wolfe, Earl Bauer, E.E. Bass, P.W. Horn, Frank Fitzpatrick, D.H. Christensen, W. Kerr, W.E. Pulsifer, John W. Withers, John D. Shoop

Folder 22 - Correspondence, August 26, 1914 – November 22, 1915, 14 letters

- Tribute by John R. Kirk, typed, September, 1914
- Typed tributes by educators, some lifted from letters in this folder
- Tribute by W.H. Williams, read at Kansas City Teacher's Institute, September 12, 1914
- (Category: Letters and Essays on Death of James M. Greenwood, August, 1914)
- **To:** Mrs. Josephine Greenwood
From: H.B. Wilson, Ben Blewett, Reed B. Teitrick, Joseph Swain, J.Y. Joyner, J.M. Green, James Hughes, Kate Devereiux Bla[tz?], L.D. Harvey, Elmer Brown, J.M. Frederick, Henry Jost, Stanley Brown

Folder 23 - Correspondence, 1914, 1 letter (Category: Letters and Essays on the Death of James M. Greenwood (August 1914)

- "In Memoriam, Superintendent James M. Greenwood: Address Before the National Council of Education, February 22, 1915, typed, 7 pages
- Published tribute "James Mickleborough Greenwood", Ohio Educational Monthly, n.d., 2 p.
- Budget sheet, National Educational Association, 1893-94, typewritten, 3 p.
- Grand Army of the Republic, McPherson Post, No. 4, Kansas City, Missouri-Tribute for James Greenwood, August 25, 1914, Typewritten, 2 copies, 4p. and 5p.
- Knights of Pythias, Sicilan Lodge No. 39, Resolution on Greenwood's death, August 17, 1914, typewritten, 1 p.
- Published tribute, "James Mickleborough Greenwood", The School Bulletin, August, 1914, 2 p.
- Published tribute, "His Death, Sketch of His Life, and His Connection With the Kansas City Schools", Missouri School Journal, n.d., 4 p.
- Handwritten data on Mr. Greenwood's association with the NEA, Jan. 18, 1915
- "Preamble and Resolutions of the American Checker Association at its Tournament in Chicago, Illinois, Jan. 11, 1915", typewritten, 1 p.

Folder 24 – Correspondence, 1846-1928 and undated, 16 letters/portions of letters (Category: General Miscellaneous correspondence, dated and undated)

To: My Dear Friends, My Dear Children, Levi and Jane, Mrs. Cahoon, Josephine Greenwood

From: Josephine Heermans, Mother, Wm. P. Sprague, Mrs. Floyd Chapman, Irene Gilbert, DAR, James Greenwood

**Folder 25 – Correspondence, 1890-1893, undated, 19 letters (Category:
General miscellaneous correspondence, dated and undated)**

To: Josephine Greenwood's mother
From: Josephine Heermans

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Sara J. Nyman, April 2002.