

Henry Jackson Lewis Collection
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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

DuSable Museum of African American History
April 11th, 2012
Chicago, IL

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Summary Information

Repository	DuSable Museum of African American History
Title	Henry Jackson Lewis Collection
Date [inclusive]	1891-1990
Extent	1.0 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Henry Jackson Lewis (1837?-1891) was an African American artist who gained notoriety for his political cartoons, the majority of which were published while he worked for The Freeman, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Henry Jackson Lewis collection spans from 1891-1967, and contains copies of cartoons by Henry Jackson Lewis that were originally drawn during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era, personal material of his sons Chester Arthur and Henry W. Lewis, information regarding the collection, and research on Henry Jackson Lewis.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Henry Jackson Lewis (1837?-1891) was an African American artist who gained notoriety from the political cartoons that he published for *The Freeman*, an Indianapolis newspaper and the first national African American illustrated newspaper. Lewis was born a slave in Mississippi circa 1837. He married Lavinia Dixon in 1872, and the two had seven children. In 1879, he lived in Arkansas and worked as a freelance artist, selling pencil sketches of landscape scenes to national magazines such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. From 1882 to 1883 he drew prehistoric Indian land mounds in Arkansas and maps of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee while working as an assistant to Dr. Edward Palmer of the Smithsonian Institute, although he was not formally acknowledged for his work. In the mid 1880s, Lewis worked as a porter for the *Arkansas Gazette* and sold cartoons to *Puck* and *Judge*. In 1889, he moved to Indianapolis and worked at *The Freeman* until his death in 1891. Lewis's political cartoons were notable for their criticism of the new Republican administration of President Benjamin Harrison.

Scope and Contents note

The Henry Jackson Lewis collection spans from 1891 to 1967 and is arranged into three series, "Henry Jackson Lewis," "Henry Jackson Lewis Family," and "Collection Information." The collection contains photocopies of cartoons by Henry Jackson Lewis that were originally drawn during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era, personal material of his sons Chester Arthur and Henry W. Lewis, information regarding the collection itself, and research by Marvin D. Jeter on Henry Jackson Lewis. Lewis' original drawings are located at the DuSable Museum of African American History, but are stored separately from this collection. Of note in the collection is a manuscript titled *H.J. Lewis: Freeman Artist*, edited by Marvin D. Jeter that contains commentary on the artwork and life of Henry Jackson Lewis. Researchers interested in African American art and artists should note this collection because of the uniqueness of Lewis's career during and after Reconstruction.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

DuSable Museum of African American History April 11th, 2012

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Jeter, Marvin D.
- Lewis, Chester Arthur
- Lewis, Henry Jackson
- Lewis, Henry W.

Subject(s)

- African American artists
- African American cartoonists
- Political cartoons

Cited Sources

Jeter, Marvin D. and Cervenka, Mark. "H.J. Lewis, Free man and Freeman artist." *Common-Place*. Vol. 7 no. 3, (April 2007).

Series I: Henry Jackson Lewis,

Collection Inventory**Series I: Henry Jackson Lewis, 1891-1944****Scope and Contents note**

This series contains copies of Henry Jackson Lewis's cartoons that were originally drawn in the late 1800s, as well as material regarding exhibits of his work after his death.

	Box	Folder
Cartoons, undated	1	1-8
Obituary, 1891	1	9
Southside Community Art Center Exhibit Program, 1944	1	10
Museum of Negro History Exhibit Press Release, undated	1	11

Series II: Henry Jackson Lewis Family, 1907-1967**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains personal material of two of Henry Jackson Lewis's sons, Chester Arthur Lewis and Henry W. Lewis.

	Box	Folder
Chester Arthur Lewis – Medals, 1907-1944	1	12

Series III: Collection Information,

Chester Arthur Lewis – Inventions, 1913	1	13
Chester Arthur Lewis – Patents, 1932	1	14
Chester Arthur Lewis – Doctor of Divinity Diploma, 1958	1	15
Chester Arthur Lewis – Doctor of Letters Diploma, 1958	1	16
Chester Arthur Lewis – Senior Adult Planning Committee, 1965	1	17
Henry W. Lewis Memorial Service Program, 1967	1	18
Chester Arthur Lewis - Society of Ethiopia, undated	1	19
Chester Arthur Lewis – Frame, undated	1	20

Series III: Collection Information, 1968-1991**Scope and Contents note**

“Collection Information” includes research on Henry Jackson Lewis and information about the acquisition of the collection. It contains correspondence between the DuSable Museum of African American History and Arthur C. Lewis, Marvin D. Jeter, and other parties interested in the collection. Research done by Marvin D. Jeter includes a transcription of an interview with Chester Arthur Lewis and a manuscript about Henry Jackson Lewis’s life.

	Box	Folder
DuSable Museum of African American History Binder, 1968-1991	2	21

Series III: Collection Information,

Henry Jackson Lewis Cartoon Collection Inventory, undated	2	22
Arkansas Archeological Society, 1989	2	23
Marvin D. Jeter Research, 1989	2	24-25
H.J. Lewis: Freeman Artist, manuscript, 1990	2	26
DuSable Museum Exhibition File and Correspondence, 1989-2005	2	27