

## Bronzeville Historical Society



(312) 428-8033

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**Institution:** Bronzeville Historical Society

**Collection Title:** Charles S. Jackson Funeral Home Records

**Date Span:** circa 1920 - 2012

**Extent:** \_\_\_ linear feet (TBD)

**Provenance:** Collected by Sherry Williams

**Processors:** Inspected by Sherry Williams in October 2016

**Restrictions:** Public Inquiries for burial locations are answered upon written request

### **Abstract:**

The Jackson Funeral Home business was established in 1867 in Philadelphia, PA. The funeral business was reportedly the first “Negro Funeral Home business” in the United States.” Emanuel Jackson (b.1841) and his three sons ran the prosperous undertaking and livery business in Philadelphia. Charles S. Jackson became a resident of Chicago, IL between 1900 and 1920. He is listed in the 1910 Chicago census as an undertaker and a white man.

In 1910, Charles S. Jackson and his wife Mattie (Laura) lived at 3423 S. Vernon. They had been married 5 years. The Charles S. Jackson funeral business opened at 3800 S. Michigan Ave. likely after 1901. His brother, Daniel M. Jackson established the Emanuel Jackson Funeral Home at 2959-61 South State Street as early as 1917. The Charles S. Jackson Funeral Home established an additional location at 7345 S. Cottage Grove Ave. Both business locations thrived. The 3800 S. Michigan location was closed in February 1963 and all business operations moved to the 7435 S. Cottage Grove location. The originator of the Charles S. Jackson Funeral Home business was born in July 1874 in Philadelphia, PA. Charles S. Jackson died on September 29, 1962. Business associates, Marshall Bynum, Glenna Nichols, Jack Link and Thomas Coleman continued the business along with widow Mrs. Mattie S. Jackson as principal shareholder.. Mrs. Jackson died in her home located at 5244 S. Michigan on April 14, 1964. She and her husband Charles S. Jackson had no children. The Board of Directors continued to make the financial and business decisions of the business through shared interest. The funeral home business continued with Mr. Marshall Bynum as Secretary and later President.

Mrs. Shirley Latham became director and President of the business after her husband Herschel Latham died on August 15, 1974. Processing of records started before the closing of the funeral home around 2012. Her profound understanding of the value of the historical burial records led to the records preservation project led by members of the Afro- American Genealogical and Historical Society of Chicago, Inc. The AAGHSC group created a surname index of more than 120,000 burials. The Bronzeville Historical Society secured permission from the State of Illinois to manage the care of the records.

The collection is organized into three series. The first series are burial record files generated by business office of the Charles S. Jackson Funeral Home. These records contain obituaries, death certificates, billing information, and burial locations of the deceased. The second series is documents that detail the incorporation and its board, annual reports, and board of trustees. Series three are combined newspaper

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clippings, census reports, advertisements, photographs, memorabilia, and phone directories that date from the 1920's to 2013. Most of the photographs added to this series in the collection were found comingled in business records, and through online newspaper resources that detailed the history of Charles S. Jackson Funeral Home, its founders, family members, businesses or board members who actively managed the business until it closed.

### Biographical/ Historical Note

Before the closing of Charles S. Jackson Funeral Home, Mrs. Shirley Latham honored the request from members of the Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society of Chicago. A team headed by Nettie Nesbary, Lettie Sabbs began processing the funeral records. Ms. Laurann Bibbs, Doris Morton and Sylvia Rogers joined in and spent over three years indexing the records from 1923 to 1990 into a surname database. More than 120,000 names were organized by name, birth date, birth place, and name of next of kin and burial locations if noted. The index project is ongoing. Attorney Sara Meek, a representative of the Illinois Comptroller's Office facilitated the transfer of the funeral home records to the Bronzeville Historical Society to preserve Chicago's African American history and to protect the records from destruction. The Bronzeville Historical Society will expand the AAGHSC surname index of the records with burial site references for public access.

### Access Headings:

#### File Cabinet List:

JACKSON Collection		File Boxes: Folders filed by Surname	
		Title: Death Certificate Folders	Dates from 1880's to 2011
Series 1 :		Boxed: Funeral plans and billing organized by Year of Death	
Series 2:	1	Boxed: Jackson Funeral Home Incorporation documents	
Series 3		Memorabilia, Newspaper clippings, Web postings	