

Collection #:  
SC 1971

**EMMA LOU THORNBROUGH  
BREAKING RACIAL BARRIERS TO PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS  
FROM THE 1940S TO 1963, 1986**

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**COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 folders

COLLECTION DATES: Manuscript of a paper and a response presented at the Indiana Historical Society Spring Conference on 16 May 1986.

PROVENANCE: Emma Lou Thornbrough, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

RELATED HOLDINGS: See card catalog for listing of related works by Emma Lou Thornbrough. Also article, "Breaking Racial Barriers to Public Accommodations in Indiana, 1935 to 1963," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 83, #4. The article is based upon Thornbrough's paper in this collection. BV 2631 contains a significant unpublished work. "The Indianapolis Story: School Segregation and Desegregation in a Northern City," was originally completed by Emma Lou Thornbrough in compliance with a University of Illinois Press contract.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1986.0333

NOTES: None

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Emma Lou Thornbrough (1913-1994) was born in Indianapolis, where she received her early education. A recipient of degrees from Butler University and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan, she was a pioneer among professional historians who have researched and published in the field of African-American history. Although she wrote numerous scholarly articles and books, the concentration of her work was in Indiana history with a focus on African-Americans. Her vast range of interest and expertise is suggested by a selected review of her published works which include *Black Reconstructionists*, *Booker T. Washington*, *Eliza A Blaker: Her Life and Work*, *Indiana in the Civil War Years*, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900*, *Since Emancipation: A Short History of Indiana Negroes, 1863-1963*, and *T. Thomas Fortune, Militant Journalist*.

Thornbrough taught at Butler University from 1946-1983. While at Butler, she received many awards including the Outstanding Professor Award in 1965, an appointment in 1981 to the McGregor Chair in History, and an honorary doctorate in 1988. She was also a visiting professor at Indiana University and Case-Western Reserve. Emma Lou Thornbrough was active in many national and local historical organizations. She was a past president of the Indiana Association of Historians (IAH). The IAH annual fall lecture was recently renamed to honor Thornbrough and her sister, Gayle, a retired editor and former director of the Indiana Historical Society and the Indiana Historical Bureau. The Thornbrough award given annually to recognize the best article to appear in the *Indiana Magazine of History* also honors the sisters' contributions to the history profession.

Emma Lou Thornbrough was active in several professional and civil rights organizations.

She received numerous awards from her community including Indiana Author's Day recognition, Martin Luther King award, Indiana Liberty Bell, Roy Wilkins award, and the

Hoosier Historian award. At the time of her death, Thornbrough was working on a volume pertaining to Indiana African-Americans in the 20th century.

Sources: *Directory of American Scholars*, 8th ed. Jacque Cattell Press (ed.) New York: R. R. Bowker, 1982. *Indiana Magazine of History*, Volume 91, #1. (Volume includes a memorial tribute to Thornbrough; explanation of her place in American historiography; tribute by a mentor; and a bibliography of her works.)

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The two-folder collection contains a paper presented by Emma Lou Thornbrough at the 1986 Spring conference of the Indiana Historical Society and a response to the paper written by Richard Blackett, an Indiana University history professor. The paper, including endnotes, is 50 pages; the response, containing an introduction of Thornbrough, is 5 pages.

Thornbrough's manuscript is an overview of civil rights activities related to public accommodations in Indiana during the middle third of the twentieth century. She reviews the work of civil rights organizations and the leadership of individuals; examines laws and legislation, level of protest, and political and social issues; and discusses several types of public accommodations. This paper was used as a basis for an article ("Breaking Racial Barriers to Public Accommodations in Indiana, 1935 to 1963") Thornbrough authored that was published with photographs in the December 1987 issue (Volume 83, #4) of the *Indiana Magazine of History*.

## **CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 1971).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.