

Yale University Library  
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

# Guide to the J. L. Ferrell Papers

WA MSS S-4556



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December 2024

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
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<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** WA MSS S-4556

**CREATOR:** Ferrell, J. L. (Joe Louis)

**TITLE:** J. L. Ferrell papers

**DATES:** 1936-1955

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** Materials are in English.

**SUMMARY:** The J. L. Ferrell papers provide an intimate look at African American life in the South during the later years of the Great Depression into the beginning of World War II. The collection is primarily comprised of correspondence to Joe Louis Ferrell (1915-1986) from his wife Hazel E. Pinkard (1913-1994), family members, and friends. The collection also contains materials related to Ferrell's employment as a driver including vehicle operator licenses, employment identification cards, and receipts for vehicle-related expenses. Ferrell's earning statements, layoff notices, and gasoline ration applications detail the economic reality of the 1930s and 1940s. Various papers relating to Ferrell's military service are also included. Hazel Pinkard Ferrell's letters primarily illustrate her academic and social life while attending Tillson College, a historic Black college located in Austin, Texas.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.ferrell>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.ferrell>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from James Arsenault & Company on the Arthur Corbitt Hoskins Memorial Fund, 2022.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

J. L. Ferrell Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Archival Description Unit Processing Manual.

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## Biographical / Historical

J. L. (Joe Louis) Elmer Ferrell was born January 23, 1915 in Coolidge Texas, one of the at least nine children of Tom Ferrell (1876-1959) and Pearl Briscoe Ferrell (1883-1947). Ferrell worked various jobs as a driver and construction worker around Texas and Oklahoma before serving in the United States Navy during World War II. By 1943, Ferrell was working at Camp Mexia, the largest of Texas' prisoner of war camps that predominately held German Nazis. Ferrell married Hazel Pinkard (born on September 5, 1913) who wrote Ferrell letters detailing her social and academic life while she attended Tillotson College, a historic Black College in Austin, Texas. They married in 1939.

J. L. Ferrell died on April 15, 1986. Hazel Pinkard Ferrell died in June 1994.

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## Scope and Contents

The J. L. Ferrell papers provide an intimate look at African American life in the South during the later years of the Great Depression into the beginning of World War II. The collection is primarily comprised of correspondence to J. L. (Joe Louis) Ferrell (1915-1986) from his future wife Hazel E. Pinkard (1913-1994), family members, and friends. The collection also contains materials related to Ferrell's employment as a driver including vehicle operator licenses, employment identification cards, and receipts for vehicle-related

expenses. Ferrell's earning statements, layoff notices, and gasoline ration applications detail the economic reality of the 1930s and 1940s. Various papers relating to Ferrell's military service are also included.

Hazel Pinkard Ferrell's letters primarily illustrate her academic and social life while attending Tillotson College, a historic Black college located in Austin, Texas.

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## **Arrangement**

Materials are organized by material type.

## Collection Contents

### Correspondence

#### J. L. Ferrell, incoming

##### From family

b. 1, f. 1-5	Pinkard Ferrell, Hazel	1936-1943
b. 1, f. 6	[Ferrell], Eliza Reed	1938
b. 1, f. 7	Ferrell, Homer	1938
b. 1, f. 8	Ferrell, Pearl	1943
b. 1, f. 9	Ferrell, Robbie Nell	1937-1939
b. 1, f. 10	[Ferrell], Virginia	1937
b. 1, f. 11	Ferrell, Worth	1942
b. 1, f. 12	Moffett, Amy	1938-1939
b. 1, f. 13	Owens, Sarah	1937
b. 1, f. 14	Etta, Rhodes	1937
b. 1, f. 15	Sparks, Vera B.	undated
b. 1, f. 16	Bell, Burna B.	1938
b. 1, f. 17	Bluitt, L.C.	1943-1944
b. 1, f. 18	Conner Rubles, Asilea	1938
b. 1, f. 19	Eastland, J.C.	1943
b. 1, f. 20	Gibbs, Olus	1943
b. 1, f. 21	Gregory, Woodrow	1938
b. 1, f. 22	Hobbs, CJ	1936-1938
b. 1, f. 23	Hollie, Lassie Mae	1937
b. 1, f. 24	Hunt and Williford Motor Company	1938
b. 1, f. 25	Keaton, Leola M.	1938
b. 1, f. 26	Pearl, Beulah	1936
b. 1, f. 27	Mrs. Price	1937
b. 1, f. 28	Simmons, Serdelia	1937-1938
b. 1, f. 29	Spiegel, Inc.	1939
b. 1, f. 30	Williams, E.W.	1944

J. L. Ferrell, incoming (continued)

b. 1, f. 31	Notice of assessment, Riddle Burial Association	1943
b. 1, f. 32	Invitation Box 1, Folder 32: In-process material pending conservation treatment. For further information, consult Access Services.	undated
b. 1, f. 33	Unidentified	1938, 1943, undated
Hazel Pinkard Ferrell, incoming		
b. 2, f. 1	Ferrell, J. L.	1941
b. 2, f. 2	Pinkard, Gladys	1942
b. 2, f. 3	Envelopes	1955
b. 2, f. 4	State of Texas operator's license	1936
b. 2, f. 5	United States Employment Services identification card	1936-1937
b. 2, f. 6	Application for Texas driver's license	circa 1943
b. 2, f. 7	Termination notice	1943
b. 2, f. 8	Earning statements and paychecks	1943
b. 2, f. 9	Mexia Camp business pass	1943
b. 2, f. 10	Renewal of Highway and Nonhighway Gasoline Rations application form (blank)	undated
b. 2, f. 11	Commercial operator's license	undated
b. 2, f. 12	Identification pins and clothing tag	undated
b. 2, f. 13	Vehicle service invoices	undated

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

African American families  
African Americans  
Depressions -- 1929 -- United States

### **Contributors**

Ferrell, J. L. (Joe Louis)  
Ferrell, Hazel E. Pinkard

### **Acquired From**

James Arsenault & Company , bookseller