

1939

Letter, 1939-03-03, Lloyd Gaines to Callie Gaines;  
This letter is the last contact with his family before  
his disappearance.

Lloyd L. Gaines

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### Recommended Citation

Lloyd L. Gaines, Letter, 1939-03-03, Lloyd Gaines to Callie Gaines; This letter is the last contact with his family before his disappearance. (1939).

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Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A.  
3759 Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois  
March 3, 1939

Dear Mother:

I have come to Chicago  
hoping to find it possible  
to make my own way.  
I hope that by this letter I  
shall make very clear the reasons  
for such a step.

First, you will wonder why  
I gave up my job. This I resigned  
Thursday before leaving St. Louis  
because:

1. There were illegal "tricks of the trade" being practiced by the company that would certainly involve me should I have remained there until they were made public. This had to do with the practice of selling a cheap quality gas as "regular" gas and the selling of the "regular" gas as "Ethyl" or the highest priced gasoline. No doubt I was so employed as a "respected and trusted" man to gyp my unsuspecting friends.

2. The peculiarity of the station's location makes it virtually impossible to make it a paying enterprise, and though I had no say about business policies that drove trade away, I was nevertheless held responsible for



its inability to clear expenses.

3. I had to buy my own coal out of the small wages received.

4. The 12 hour day, seven days a week effectively cut off all my business and social contacts.

5. The very character and attitude of Austin forbade my remaining any longer at any price or consideration. The job was distasteful from the first.

I asked some of my "friends" in a position to do so to be on the lookout for another job for me long before I quit — but to no avail. So, I stayed as long as I could. They seem to think that I have a family that will gladly assume responsibility for my expenses while idle, even

though you know how ~~far~~ far  
this is from the true situation

Perhaps I myself am to blame  
for being unemployed, but not  
for my sense of independence,  
responsibilities of manhood,  
and my fighting spirit that  
asks no quarters and gives none.

As for my publicity relative to  
the university case, I have found  
<sup>that</sup> my race still likes to applaud,  
shake hands, pat me on the back  
and say how great and noble is  
the idea; how historical and  
socially important the case

But — and there it ends. Off  
and out of the confines of the publicity  
columns. I am just a man —  
not one who has fought and sacrificed



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to make the case possible; one who is still fighting and sacrificing - almost the "supreme sacrifice" to see that it is a complete and lasting success for thirteen million negroes - no! - just another man. Sometimes I wish I were just a plain, ordinary man whose name no one recognized.

I rode the stream-lined Burlington to Kansas City. The train (stream-liner) is truly a luxury in transportation - air conditioned, comfortable, clean, and radio equipped. In K. C., I spoke to a capacity crowd of about fourteen hundred

with hundreds being turned away. That is how enthusiastic they were over my coming. My room at the "G", my board and transportation cost me nothing. I must say I have never met such hospitality and friendships anywhere. They kept me busy almost an hour after the meeting was over shaking hands and signing autographs.

Monday A. M. I was taken over to the Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas where I addressed the school



assembly. AM

my first address,  
as of Sunday, was devoted  
elements of "unity & Cooperation"  
while my second was  
"Choosing and achieving  
your Purpose in life"

I enjoyed my brief  
stay in K. C., but find no  
possible opening for work  
there, & decided to come over  
here. So I left K. C. Monday  
9:00 P.M. in the mist of a heavy  
snow storm. Got here 11:00 AM  
Tuesday.



I found Eddie Mae Page at home (3504<sup>a</sup> Rhodes) and had her to cook lunch - ham and eggs, wheat cakes, and coffee. She had some of her charms to come over and so I stayed until Mrs Page came in from work, before getting my room here at the "Y" (room 203).

So far I haven't been able to dig up a single job prospect, but I am still trying. Paid up my room rent until March 7th. If nothing turns up by then, I'll have to make other arrangements. Should I forget to write for a time don't worry about it, I can look after myself ok. as ever, Floyd.

Gaines, Room 203  
Wabash Ave. Y.M.C.A.  
Chicago, Illinois



Mrs. Callie S. Gaines  
3932 W. Belle Place  
St. Louis, Missouri