

Mabel Lewis Imes
1854 – 1935

Section 30 ID # 300009

On March 26, 1873, a U.S. Passport was issued to Mabel Lewis, resident of Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Her birthplace was listed as New Orleans, Louisiana, and her birth year as 1854. George L. White, the organizer of the Fisk Choir, vouched for her in front of Notary Public in order that she could obtain a passport and travel abroad with the Fisk Jubilee Singers

George L. White founded the Jubilee Singers at Fisk in 1871. They set off on their first tour on October 6, 1871. Mabel Lewis auditioned with the Jubilee Singers during the summer of 1872 in Acton, Massachusetts. In 1873, the Singers, now eleven members including Mabel Lewis, sailed to England. During a performance at the London home of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, Queen Victoria arrived unexpectedly. The Singers performed for her. In her journal, Queen Victoria recorded that “They sing extremely well together.” Her approval apparently opened many doors in England for the Jubilee Singers.

Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Marriage Records listed the marriage of Martin Imes and Mabel Lewis on April 22, 1885. Mabel M. Imes was listed in U.S. Census 1900 in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, as the wife of Martin Imes, with birthplace Louisiana, and her birth year as 1858 and the number of years married as 15 years. Cleveland, Ohio City Directory in 1917 listed Martin and Mabel Imes with an address at 2218 East 33rd Street. Ohio Deaths 1908-1953 recorded her death on August 1, 1935. Nashville City Cemetery Interment Books listed “Mabel L. Imes, Burial Date August 8, 1935, Female Colored Poplar (avenue), Fisk University lot, Member Jubilee Singers Original”

There is no information about the placement of Mabel Imes’ tombstone at City Cemetery with the misspelling of her first name as “Mable L. Imes” and with questionable dates “1858-1936.”

Every October 6th, Fisk Jubilee Singers visit and sing at the graves of the Jubilee Singers Mabel Lewis Imes & Maggie Sheppard Moore at City Cemetery and Minnie Tate Hall & Georgia Gordon Taylor at Greenwood Cemetery.

Sources

Fisk University History. On-line
Tennessean, May 21, 2015, “141 Years Later Fisk Jubilee Singers return to England” On-line
Jubilee Singers Archives. Fisk University
U, S. Passport. Mabel Lewis. March 26, 1873. On-line
Ohio Marriage Records 1885. On-line
Ohio Deaths 1908-1935. On-line
U.S. Census 1900 Cuyahoga County. Ohio
Cleveland, Ohio City Directories 1917. On-line

Fletch Coke 2017