

Fifty-two over Twenty-ONE:

**Highlights of 21 Years of Collecting Related to African American History and Culture in
the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University**

1997-2018

Manuscripts:

Phillis Wheatley, manuscript text, signed, of her poem “Hymn to Humanity” dated December 12, 1773. The poem contains significant textual variations from the version appearing in her book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, and identifies for the first time the person to whom the poem was dedicated. This is the first item I acquired for the newly-created focus on African American collections at Emory. I found it at the Boston Antiquarian Book Fair in November 1996.

Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America. Subcommittee of Management Records, 1849-1887. The collection contains six manuscript record books of the organization with inlaid printed material and correspondence. It constitutes a trove of information on one of the most influential African American fraternal organizations during the latter half of the 19th century. Fraternal and sororal organizations have been a longstanding collecting interest, given the importance of these organizations within the African American community.

New Orleans Gas Works: 1861 slave pass book, partially used, permitting enslaved persons to travel about New Orleans. This volume provides vivid evidence the complicated mechanisms needed to control the enslaved in the urban environment.

Original scores for the *Negro Folk Symphony* by William L. Dawson from the extensive archive of his papers donated to Emory by Dawson’s nephew, Milton L. Randolph, Jr. Since Dawson’s death, the materials had been housed in a storage facility in Birmingham. Mr. Randolph read about Emory’s collecting focus on African American history and culture and invited me to examine the collection, after which he agreed to donate the entire archive to us. In celebration of this gift, Emory held a major exhibition of Dawson’s papers in the Schatten Gallery. The exhibition was complemented by a three-day music symposium in 2005 organized by Dwight L. Andrews and culminated in an all-Dawson choral concert presented by Emory, Clark Atlanta University, and Tuskegee Institute choirs. The audience completely filled Glenn Memorial Auditorium.

Papers of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker came to Emory as a result of Walker's participation in the Dawson symposium and are now among the most heavily-used manuscript collections in the Rose Library.

Emory, along with Fisk University, is one of the two principal repositories for records of the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, the first African American Greek-letter fraternity in the United States, founded in 1904. Also known as the Boulé, this was the first Greek-letter fraternity to be founded by African-American men, and, unlike undergraduate fraternal organizations, membership is limited to individuals who have already achieved success within their chosen profession.

Books and Pamphlets:

Ionnis Leonis Africani (Leo Africanus), *Africae Descriptio IX Lib Absoluta* (Leiden: Elzevier, 1632). 2 vols., bound in vellum. One of the earliest books written by a person of African descent, we recently acquired the volumes from the collection of the late anthropologist, linguist, and historian Keith Baird. The late Professor Richard A. Long, chair of our African American collections advisory board, had introduced me to Baird and his wife Mary Twining Baird.

Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (London, 1773). Emory's copy is signed by the author. This is the first book written by an African American and the second book published by an American woman.

Ignatio Sancho, *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African, London, 1782*. Emory also holds the London, 1783 edition. Sancho (1729-1780) was reportedly born on a slave ship en route to the West Indies and was brought to England as a young child. He came to the attention of the Duke of Montagu, who, impressed with his abilities, taught him to read and write. He wrote songs, poetry, and stage plays, as well as extensive correspondence, and his letters were collected for publication by an admirer after his death.

James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince* (Dublin, 1790). Gronniosaw was an African slave who was taken to America, and then to England, where he told his life story to a woman who recorded and then helped secure its publication. It was first published in 1772. The 1790 edition was donated by Randall K. Burkett. Emory also has the Leeds, 1810 edition.

Benjamin Banneker, *Banneker's Almanack, and Ephemeris for the Year of Our Lord 1793* (Philadelphia, 1792) was acquired from the private collection of the prominent civil rights activist and rare book collector, the Rev. C. T. Vivian. Banneker was an extraordinarily talented man with a gift for mathematics. During his lifetime he published seven almanacs, all of which are exceedingly rare. Dr. Vivian was a member of the first program I organized at Emory, as part of a panel of collectors including Michael L. Lomax (whose library and family papers we now have) and William H. Cleveland.

Prince Saunders, *Haytian Papers* (Boston, 1818). The American-born Saunders was an active Freemason and was recruited by William Wilberforce to serve as adviser to the Haitian emperor Henri Christophe. This volume contains his translations, with commentary, of Haitian laws.

Robert Roberts, *The House Servant's Directory. Or A Monitor for Private Families Comprising Hints on the Arrangement and Performance of Servants' Work....* (Boston, second ed., 1828). Among the earliest African American-authored books published in the 19th century.

David Ruggles, *The "Extinguisher" Extinguished!: or David M. Reese, M.D., "Used Up"* (New York, 1834). One of two pamphlets at Emory by this author, it was "published and sold by D. Ruggles, Bookseller." According to biographer Graham Hodges, Ruggles established in his New York home "the city's first reading room and circulating library run by a man of color."

David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles: Together with a Preamble to the Colored Citizens of the World* (Boston, 1829). This rare first edition of the most radical demand for freedom of enslaved Africans was formerly owned by W. E. B. Du Bois and has marginal annotations by him. The volume was purchased with the encouragement and assistance of Stuart A. Rose, who located it at an antiquarian book fair.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848 and 1849 editions). The rare 1848 edition was published by Douglass himself at the North Star Office, from which he published his famous abolitionist newspaper. Emory also holds the Dublin edition, published in 1845.

Victor Séjour, *Le Nozze Veneziane, Dramma in Cinque Atti* (Milano, 1855). Séjour (1821?-1874) was a Louisiana-born African American poet and playwright who expatriated to Paris around 1836. The Italian edition of his "Venetian Nights: Drama in Five Acts" is known in only one other copy. This volume was acquired, along with five other exceedingly rare Séjour-authored volumes, from the rare book dealers Philip and Sharon McBlain, who have played a key role in building our distinctive holdings at Emory.

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Boston, 1861). Emory's copy came with the library of Sue Bailey and Howard Thurman. Howard Thurman was a leading American theologian, and his wife Sue Bailey Thurman was a leader in the African American women's movement.

The Fables of Aesop (New York, 1867). This copy, formerly owned by Frederick Douglass, contains a bookplate indicating that it was one of a collection of books placed in the libraries of ministers of the African Methodist Episcopal Church by the American Unitarian Association. The book plate provides the only documentation we have been able to uncover concerning the Unitarians' role in supporting the education of A. M. E. clergy.

Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825-1874), *Love and Its Hidden History: Also, The Master Passion: or The Curtain Raised on Woman, Love, and Marriage....A Book for Woman, Man, Wives, Husbands, and Lovers, for the Loving, the Unloved, and the Yearning Ones of the World.*

(Randolph and Co., 1870). This is the oldest of seven volumes in the Rose Library by Randolph, a spiritualist, Rosicrucian, sex-magician, mail-order sex therapist and advisor. Two of the seven Emory volumes were published during his lifetime by his wife, and his works were widely reprinted well into the twentieth century.

Salesman's dummy: 1886. *Still's Underground Rail Road Records. Revised ed.* (Betts & Company, Hartford, CT). This is one of a half dozen salesman's sample books by African American authors donated by Randall K. Burkett. These were used to sell books door-to-door, primarily within the African American community.

Universal Negro Catechism (1921?) compiled by George Alexander McGuire, Chaplain General to Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. The Rose Library holds 32 boxes of papers of the Philadelphia Division, UNIA, acquired with the assistance of Philadelphia activist James G. Spady as a result of Emory's longstanding interest in Black radicalism and the Garvey Movement in particular.

L. Marshall, *Official Negro Year book. Atlanta's Official Negro Year Book* (Atlanta, ca. 1932). This is the only known copy of an early guide to Atlanta business and religious institutions and enrolls "5,000 names and addresses [of Atlanta citizens] according to their professions."

Distinctive Bindings:

African Methodist Episcopal Church. *The African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymn Book: Being A Collection of Hymns Designed to Supersede All Others Hitherto Made Use of in That Church.* Published by order of the General Conference. J. P. Campbell, General Book Steward. (Philadelphia, 1856). The small volume (4 ½" X 3") is bound in red leather with gold embossing and has gilt edges on three sides. We also have A.M.E. hymn books for the years 1872, 1898, 1924, 1946, and 1954.

Frederick H. Robb, editor-in-chief, *1927 Intercollegian Wonder Book or 1779-The Negro in Chicago-1927* (Chicago, 1922 (sic.) [1927]). Emory also owns a soft cover edition elegantly illustrated by Charles C. Dawson, as well as the rare 1929 volume of the *Intercollegian Wonder Book* which has a blue and gold embossed cover decorated with a winged scarab.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston, 1852). The magnificent binding for this copy was created by the firm of Bayntun Binder in Bath, England, probably in the 1930s, presumably for a private collector. The volume was donated to Emory by a dear friend, West Coast collector Leon F. Litwack.

Periodicals and Newspapers:

The Prospect: A Monthly Magazine for Colored People (New York: vol. 1, no. 1, 1898), ed. by Alexander Crummell. The only known copy, this periodical came in a small collection of 25 rare items, including five pamphlets published by the American Negro Academy, of which Crummell was among the founders.

Official Handbook: Interscholastic Athletic Association of the Middle Atlantic States (New York, 1912 and 1913), edited by Edwin B. Henderson and Garnet C. Wilkinson. These are the only known copies of this serial publication and were discovered in the library of the late Carroll Greene, Jr., founding board director and curator of the Acacia Collection, formerly housed in the Old Slave Mart, Savannah, Georgia. These items were included in more than thirty boxes of papers, photographs, and books that constitute Greene's collection.

Woman's Voice: A Monthly Magazine (Philadelphia: vol. 2, no. 32, 1921). James Danky and Maureen Hady's *African American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography* does not record a library holding for this issue.

FIRE!! Devoted to Negro Younger Negro Artists (New York: vol. 1, no. 1, 1926). The only issue published, this was among the first items I bought for African American collections. *FIRE!!* is an iconic publication of the Harlem Renaissance.

Black Opals (vol. 1, nos. 1, 2, and 4, 1927-28). This periodical was edited by Arthur Huff Fauset and his sister, Jessie, along with Nellie Bright, Mae V. Cowdery, and other members of the "Philadelphia Renaissance." Only four issues were published, and the three Emory issues were donated by Randall K. Burkett.

Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life (vol. 1, no. 1, November 1928). Edited by Wallace Thurman; Aaron Douglas, art editor. The only issue published, this periodical is even more rare than *FIRE!!*. Original copies are found in only four libraries nationwide. It was acquired as part of the library of Tom Wirth.

Ebony Sportsman (St. Louis: vol. 1, no. 1, May 1948). The only extant copy, this periodical was published by Bowie-Mason Associates and is not listed in James Danky and Maureen Hady's monumental *African American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography* (Cambridge, MA, 1998).

Photographs:

Robert Langmuir African American Photograph Collection. This extraordinary collection contains more than 10,000 vintage photographs of African Americans, dating from the beginnings of photography in the 1840s to the 1970s. All images have been digitized and are available through the Rose Library website. I had often met Mr. Langmuir at ephemera shows long before coming to Emory University.

The *Atlanta Daily World* photograph collection consists of 122 boxes of photographs from the ADW photo archive for the years 1970-2005, approximately ½ of which have been processed and are available by name of individual, organization, and (where available) photographer. Emory also holds business records for the newspaper for the years 1931-1970. The entire archive was nearly lost in a tornado but was rescued thanks to an Emory-led preservation team mobilized by Ann Frellsen and other members of Emory's preservation and special collections staff.

Ephemera:

William Henry Scott photograph as a youth in his Union uniform, along with the sword he snatched from a Confederate soldier during a lull in the battle of Fredericksburg. Emory holds a rich archive of Scott, a Baptist minister who was one of the original 29 members of the Niagara Movement, predecessor to the NAACP. Among the many rare items is a unique broadside, ca. 1910, announcing formation of the Boston chapter of the Niagara Movement, with an annotated list of members. The Scott papers and library were given to me in the 1980s by the widow of Rev. Scott's grandson, and I donated them to Emory. Members of the Scott family attended the opening of an exhibition drawn from the collection.

Scrapbook of a leading late-19th century intellectual and Wilberforce University professor, William S. Scarborough. The scrapbook contains numerous rare broadsides including programs in which Scarborough was a participant. This is one of more than 70 scrapbooks created by African Americans that have been preserved and cataloged at Emory under the auspices of a grant awarded to Emory by the Council on Library Information Resources.

Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling: Ticket stub to the historic fight, June 22, 1938, retained by writer Richard Wright, who attended the event. This item was located in the papers of Wright's biographer, Michel Fabre, a long-time African American book collector who—along with his wife Geneviève-- served as consultants to Burkett in acquiring papers of expatriate African American writers and artists such as Barbara Chase-Riboud. Much of the Fabre collection, including many of their books and manuscripts, are now at Emory.

Broadside, ca. 1960, "Notice: Stop! Help Save the Youth of America. Don't Buy Negro Records."

Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., *Animal Proverbs of the Grebo People* (1992). Emory is a principal repository of the books, broadsides, and print ephemera created by this talented book artist and activist. His work was brought to our attention by Sandra Still, who was then serving as one of the acquisitions specialists for the general Emory library collection.

Libraries and Collections:

The James Weldon Johnson papers include correspondence, literary manuscripts, printed materials, photographs, sheet music, and general ephemera. This collection was one of the first African American collections acquired by Emory University, and it came in late 1996, just after I had been hired as curator for African American collections. The collection is distinctive in that it holds not only books and manuscripts, but several items of furniture from the Johnson home as well as the family tea service and other memorabilia.

Camille Billops and James V. Hatch Papers. This collection, brought to our attention first by Michel Fabre, consists of the personal papers of Billops and Hatch as well as much of the massive archive they created in New York, the “Hatch-Billops Collection.” The collection focuses on art and art history as well as on theatre history, and includes hundreds of interviews they conducted over the past half-century with artists, writers, art historians, and other cultural leaders, as well as the films they produced through “Mom and Pop Productions.” In addition, Emory houses nearly 3,000 books from their library. A room in the Stuart A. Rose Library is named in their honor, and they were awarded honorary degrees in recognition of this seminal gift.

Michel Fabre Archives of African American Arts and Letters. The collection includes more than 60 boxes of materials gathered by Michel Fabre and his wife Geneviève, co-founders of the Center for African American Studies at the University of Paris. It contains correspondence, writings, and print material related to dozens of expatriate cultural figures, including correspondence of Chester Himes and files of Himes’ publisher Yves Malartic. The Atlanta-area rare book dealer, Cliff Graubart, spent a week in Paris to appraise the collection prior to its coming to Emory.

The William P. French Collection of African American Poetry consists of 274 volumes of poetry from the collection of the late noted New York book seller William French, proprietor of University Place Book Shop. French inherited the University Place Book Shop from Walter Goldwater, one of the premiere New York City book dealers. I spent many happy hours in this amazing bookstore, long before coming to Emory. French was one of those dealers who hated to have you discover some treasure he thought he had “hidden” on some out-of-the-way book shelf. A memorial tribute to French described him as “looking unkempt, decrepit, and seedy as any aging leftist,” and the store, located on the 11th floor of a warehouse, was accessible only by freight elevator. The memorial writer, Ralph Dumain, described the store as “a godawful, disorganized, filthy mess,” which is how I remember it as well. Other memorialists of French are Leon F. Litwack, Richard Newman, and the book dealers Philip and Sharon McBlain, from whom we acquired the collection.

The Carter G. Woodson Library includes more than 850 volumes formerly owned by Woodson, the “father of Negro history,” and of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History that he founded in 1915. I examined the collection at its home in Washington, D.C., and discovered that a back-up in the aging furnace had spread a fine film of only over all the exposed books. This resulted in the need for a massive cleaning job undertaken with the assistance of our preservation office. With then-graduate student Pellom McDaniels III and myself, an illustrated catalog of the Woodson library was published in 1999.

The Delilah Jackson papers document the lifelong work of the creator of the Black Patti Foundation to document and record the lives of African American entertainers, with a special emphasis on New York area dancers, vaudeville performers, actors and musicians. Thanks to

James Hatch, who had befriended Ms. Jackson in her later years, Emory rescued the collection as it was being readied for discard.

The Father Divine collection, housed in 19 boxes, includes typescripts of his sermons, correspondence, writings, songs, newspaper clippings, and many of his periodicals and newspapers. It came out of a dumpster where it had been tossed when the Peace Mission Movement closed one of its Philadelphia hotels, the Divine Lorraine. The dealer Robert Langmuir rescued it and sold it to Emory University.

The René Maran Library houses 230 books from the collection of this leading intellectual from Martinique who moved to Paris following receipt of the Prix Goncourt for his novel, *Batouala* (1921). The library had been sold by Maran's widow to Paris collector Michel Fabre, from whom we acquired it.

Mamie Wade Avant was a fortune teller in Savannah, and her small collection contains hand-written recipes for cures as well as amulets, books, and her crystal ball.

The Cedric Dover Library consists of more than 1,100 books and pamphlets assembled by Dover, the Anglo-Indian scholar who published an important book *American Negro Art* in 1960. Emory also holds more than 50 boxes of Dover's papers that my wife Nancy and I excavated over a series of four trips to Dulwich, England, home of his widow Maureen. This collection had come to our attention via a graduate student from Brown University, who told me about it while undertaking research in Emory's collections. I immediately called his widow, who invited me to come and examine the collection. After two days of discussion, the widow proposed donating the extraordinary collection to Emory, an offer I gratefully accepted.

Michel Fabre Archives of African American Arts and Letters. The collection includes more than 60 boxes of materials gathered by Michel Fabre and his wife Geneviève, co-founders of the Center for African American Studies at the University of Paris. Contains correspondence, writings, and print material related to dozens of expatriate cultural figures, including correspondence of Chester Himes and files of Himes' publisher Yves Malartic.

Tom Wirth collection of Langston Hughes materials: 89 Hughes-authored books plus hundreds of off-prints, pamphlets, and manuscript items by or about Hughes. Wirth was a great friend and an avid collector, and we always sat together at the annual Swann Auction of Rare Afro-Americaniana in New York City. Wirth was fastidious in collecting pristine copies of Harlem Renaissance and other African American authors, and we enjoyed hours-long conversations about books, writers, and collectors.

Collection Summary:

African American authors: 15,000 volumes

African American pamphlets: 3,547 items

African American illustrators: 759 illustrated books

African American newspapers: 852 titles cataloged

African American periodicals: 500+ titles cataloged; 2,260 titles uncatalogued

African American manuscript collections: 230+

Randall K. Burkett

11/21/18