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Guide to Resources on Dance Arts

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Guide to Resources on Dance Arts



**Manuscript Department
Moorland-Spangarn Research Center**

**Featuring the Materials Related to
Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus**

Preserving The Legacy of the Black Experience **The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center**

Since early in its formative years, Howard University has collected materials related to people of African descent. Established in 1973 as a separate administrative unit, the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center continues to maintain that tradition of service. Moorland is recognized as one of the world's largest and most comprehensive repositories for the documentation of the history and culture of Black people in the diaspora. As one of the University's major research facilities, the center collects, preserves, organizes and makes available for research a wide range of resources chronicling the Black experience.

The Center is named for Dr. Jesse E. Moorland and Arthur B. Spingarn, two benefactors whose collections provided the foundation for later development. Following the re-organizing of the collections as the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center in 1973, separate Library and Manuscript Divisions were established, followed by the creation of the Howard University Museum in 1979 and the Howard University Archives in 1980.

While the Library Division expands the Center's extensive collection of books, newspapers, journals, and printed materials, the other units are an integral part of the Center's program to redefine approaches to documentation and research into the complexities of Black history and culture. MSRC's combined resources emphasize the identification, acquisition, preservation, research and exhibition of both primary and secondary material which transforms the existing special collections into one of the world's premier research facilities.



The Hunted Slaves was painted in 1861 by Richard Andsell and was reproduced as an engraving in 1865 by C.G. Lewis. It was donated to the Center by Julia Hamilton Smith, Howard University Class of 1929

The Manuscript Division

Organized in 1974 into four departments: Manuscripts, Prints and Photographs, Oral History, and Music, the resources of the Manuscript Division combine to provide important insight into the Black experience. The collections of primary materials in the Manuscript Division broaden the scope of areas for research by complementing the resources of the Center's other divisions.

The core of the Oral History Department is the *Ralph J. Bunche Oral History Collection* which contains more than 700 tapes and television transcripts documenting the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. *The Voting Rights Act Oral History Project* documents the impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 through oral history interviews and the collection of personal papers and other primary source material. Other oral history collections include memoirs of Howard University staff, faculty, and alumni. Recollections of World War II veterans of the 366th Infantry Regiment and the Tuskegee Airmen who served in segregated units in Italy document the Black military history of the United States. The Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners) and the Black Press also have oral interviews. For descriptions of oral history collections see *Finding Aid to the Ralph Johnson Bunche Oral History Collection*.

The Music Department's holdings document Black participation in and contributions to the development of jazz, folk, spiritual, popular and classical styles. Its collections are rich in sheet music, songbook albums, and instrumental concert material for voice and piano. The department contains work by more than 400 composers, dating from the 18th century to the present. Among the major composers represented are Will Marion Cook, William L. Dawson, R. Nathaniel Dett, W.C. Handy, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

The graphic collections in the Prints and Photographs Department provide an excellent resource for the study of the portrayal of people of African descent throughout history and offer an opportunity to study the work of a number of known, and unknown, artists and photographers. The department houses collections of photographs, postcards, illustrations, calendars, posters, engravings, broadsides, maps and other graphic images. Images may also be found in most manuscript collections in the Manuscript Division, in the holdings of the University Archives, and in the rare book collection of the Center's Library Division. For information on graphic collections, see *Guide to Graphic Collections in the Manuscript Division of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center*.

The Manuscript Department provides extensive documentation of African, Caribbean, and African-American life and history. Currently more than 200 processed collections containing correspondence, writings, diaries, photographs, and scrapbooks of notable individuals and organizations are available for research. Access to more than 400 unprocessed collections is determined on a case-by-case basis. Researchers must submit in writing to the Curator the nature of the research project, how the research will be used (e.g., dissertation, book, article, exhibit), and the specific materials to be reviewed (e.g., correspondence, writings). The Curator will respond in writing, although verbal permission may be given.

Introduction to the Guide:

Moorland-Spingarn research

Will Mercer Cook Papers, 1890-1985, 8 linear ft.

This papers includes documents relating to the life and career of Will Mercer Cook (1903-1987), scholar, author, teacher, and diplomat. The dance related materials is Cook's papers are contained in the Writings by Mercer Cook and Sheet Music series. This series contain materials such as Cooks article "Cuba's Dance, the Shuffle, Exhausts Even Spectators" published in the Afro-American and copy of Will Marion Cook's (Cook's father) composition Creole Dance, 1898.

Charlotte Moton Hubbard Papers, Papers, 1934-1970, 3 linear ft.

The Charlotte Moton Hubbard (1912-1994) papers document her career in the fields of education and public relations in the private sector and in the federal government. The papers highlight Hubbard's activities with Hampton Institute's Creative Dance Group. The notebook series contains her choreography notes from her with Hampton's troupe. These papers also contain Scrapbooks which record Hubbard's involvement with dance.

Ophelia Egypt Papers, range, size

Ophelia Egypt (DATES) papers reflect the professional and personal life of Egypt as a sociologist, social worker, educator and writer. Her papers also reflect the varied vocations and interests of a multifaceted Black woman. The Memorabilia series of Egypt's papers contains programs featuring Black concert and theatrical performances which includes programs for dance performances.

Maryrose Reeves Allen Papers, 1914-1967, 12 linear ft.

The papers of Maryrose Reeves Allen (1899-1992), educator and administrator, reflect her personal life, education and the teaching positions she held during her lifetime. The teaching materials series contains course descriptions of dance classes and the photographs and oversized material series contain images of dance classes at Howard University and dance personalities.

Alain Locke Papers, 1841 to 1983, 116 linear ft.

The papers of Alain Locke (1885-1954), teacher, philosopher, author, and critic contain dance programs within the Programs from Black-related Events series.

C. Glenn Carrington Papers,

C. Glenn Carrington (1904-1975) was an avid collector of culture. The largest series in the Carrington Papers entitled Subject Files includes a unique collection of ephemera composed of news articles, programs (many autographed) and announcements. Individuals and/or events associated with art, dance, music, stage and literature can be in this series. The Dance files highlight the activities of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater and Katherine Dunham.

Baker's Dozen, 1861-1977 , 36 linear ft

Baker's Dozen (1944-1962) was a civic organization aimed to remedy the problem of juvenile delinquency in northwest Washington. In November of 1944, thirteen civic minded women met to discuss methods of working on the popular problem of juvenile delinquency in Washington, D.C. The collection includes student events and reports detailing the mission of Baker's Dozen. The Student Activities series contains materials related to dance classes sponsored (verify that this was sponsored by BD) by Baker's Dozen.

Southern Negro Youth Congress, unprocessed

The Southern Negro Youth Congress contains a variety of materials documenting black artists. This collection contains files relating to Pearl Primus in particular tours she participated in through the Southern North America..

Carl Van Vechten Collection, 1920- 1950, 2 1/2 linear feet

Carl Van Vechten was an author, fine arts critic, photographer, bibliophile, and philanthropist. The collection consists primarily of catalogs, programs, announcements, and invitations which serve to document Afro- American participation in the arts: visual art, photography, dance, drama, literature, and music. The Dance series includes programs, announcements and invitations related to dance performances of Afro-American individuals and groups. Some of the artists represented are Janet Collins, Francisco Moncion, Katherine Dunham and Asadata Dafora's African Dancers.

Pittsburgh Courier Washington Bureau, 1946-1968 , 13 linear feet

The collection documents the relationship between the Washington branch and the main office of the Courier in Pittsburgh. The collection contains a wealth of photographs including images of the individual dancers including Carmen de Lavallade, Donald McKayle, Katherine Dunham and Peg Leg Pete .

Anne Cooke Collection of Theater Materials Collection, c.1920-1931, 5 linear feet

The collection primarily contains the materials related to the career of Jesse A. Shipp noted "Negro Actor and playwright." The collection also contains an interesting dance related document in the Memorabilia series that being a program for the "First Negro Dance Recital in America" April 29,1931 which included a performance by Edna Guy.

Thelma Green Theater Collection, 1920s, .5 linear feet

The Green collection contains snapshots, publicity photographs, and albums of 1920s stage acts, mostly dancers. Of particular interest are the publicity photographs for *Shuffle Along* in which Thelma Green was a dancer.

The papers of Rayford Whittingham Logan (1897-1982), educator, administrator, author and civil rights activist, document his personal life, career as an educator at Howard University, and his role as a prolific author on a number of topics. These papers date from circa 1917, when Dr. Logan was enlisted in the U.S. Army, through the 1980's. They were acquired by Moorland-Spingarn from Dr. Logan's executor, Dr. Michael Winston, in 1983. There are approximately 43.5 linear feet or 36.2 cubic feet of materials. Correspondence 166-10 Katherine Dunham. Letters relating to ...