



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Shelton Hale Bishop collection**

1945-1957

Sc MG 408

Home to Harlem Project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

## Summary

**Creator:** Bishop, Shelton Hale, 1889-1962

**Title:** Shelton Hale Bishop collection

**Date:** 1945-1957

**Size:** 0.02 linear feet (2 folders)

**Source:** Gift, Davis, Elizabeth Bishop, 1990

**Revision History:** This finding aid was updated by Allison Hughes.

**Abstract:** The Shelton Hale Bishop collection consists of photocopies of sermons, letters and an address briefly touching on his career as rector of St. Philip's Church. The letters are from Reverend Bishop to his former congregation of St. Philip's following his retirement and relocation to Hawaii. The letters are lengthy and describe his activities and feelings about his experiences in Hawaii. There are seven sermons, three of them are for Advent Sunday in 1956 and one is his homecoming Sunday talk. Additionally, there is a printed address Bishop wrote for the radio program "New World A-Coming" in honor of Franklin D. Roosevelt on the day of his burial. Note that the collection is not comprehensive and does not discuss the breadth of his activities at St. Philip's.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Shelton Hale Bishop collection, Sc MG 408, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

## Creator History

Shelton Hale Bishop's long church career culminated during the years he served as rector of St. Philip's Church in Harlem from 1933-1957. Born in 1889 in New York City, his parents were Estelle and Hutchens Chew Bishop, who was rector of St. Philip's Church from 1886 to 1933. When Shelton Bishop was seven years old he entered the service of St. Philip's as an acolyte. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia University in 1911 and graduating from General Theological Seminary, Bishop was ordained in 1914. He was rector of Church of the Holy Cross, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



from 1916 to 1923. For ten years beginning in 1933 he was director of young people's work. He retired as rector of St. Philip's Church in 1957 and relocated to Hawaii where he became involved in local church activities.

Bishop's accomplishments with St. Philip's included introducing increased church activity directed against crime, alcoholism and drug addiction. He strongly supported the Katie Ferguson Home, an institution in Harlem for unwed mothers, and was involved in other social welfare activities. In the 1940's the Lafarge Clinic, Harlem's first psychiatric clinic operated free of charge from St. Philip's. Early on he supported admission of women to membership on the vestry. The membership of the church reached 3,800 by the mid 1950's.

Bishop's achievements outside the church include his membership on the Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was a leader in first drawing attention to the de facto segregation of New York City public schools, as well as being a leading figure during the 1940's in articulating demands that the United States Armed Forces be desegregated. Bishop was a founding member of the Wiltwyck School, the first residential institution to serve emotionally disturbed African American children who came to the attention of the courts.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Shelton Hale Bishop collection consists of photocopies of sermons, letters and an address briefly touching on his career as rector of St. Philip's Church. The letters are from Reverend Bishop to his former congregation of St. Philip's following his retirement and relocation to Hawaii. The letters are lengthy and describe his activities and feelings about his experiences in Hawaii. There are seven sermons, three of them are for Advent Sunday in 1956 and one is his homecoming Sunday talk. Additionally, there is a printed address Bishop wrote for the radio program "New World A-Coming" in honor of Franklin D. Roosevelt on the day of his burial. Note that the collection is not comprehensive and does not discuss the breadth of his activities at St. Philip's.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American clergy -- New York (State) -- New York  
African American Episcopalians  
Sermons, American -- African American authors

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Sermons

### **Names**

Bishop, Shelton Hale, 1889-1962  
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945  
St. Philip's Church (Harlem, New York, N.Y.)